



STANDARDS *and* TRADE
DEVELOPMENT FACILITY



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

GENDER ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN

Enhancing Food Safety Practices to Unlock Market Access for Gambian Cashew (STDF/PG/921)



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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources
FGD / FGDs	Focus Group Discussion(s)
FSQA	Food Safety and Quality Authority
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GNAIP II	Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan II
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
KII / KIIs	Key Informant Interview(s)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MFI / MFIs	Microfinance Institution(s)
MSME / MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise(s)
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
ToR	Terms of Reference
TGSB	The Gambia Standard Bureau
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Executive Summary

The Gender Analysis and Action Plan has been developed under the UNIDO STDF project “*Enhancing Food Safety Practices to Unlock Market Access for Gambian Cashew*” to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are systematically integrated into project implementation. The project seeks to strengthen food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) compliance, improve the capacity of cashew producers and processors, strengthen quality infrastructure, and enhance enterprise competitiveness and access to domestic, regional and international markets. The gender analysis shows that women are important actors in the cashew value chain, particularly in processing, trading and other downstream activities, but their participation does not necessarily translate into equal access to productive assets, finance, technical information, testing and certification services, markets, or decision-making. The available evidence should be interpreted cautiously because the consultation evidence is qualitative rather than statistically representative.

Primary evidence was collected through seven key informant interview (KII) engagements and one focus group discussion (FGD), constituting eight consultation engagements involving 14 participants (10 women, 71.4%; and 4 men, 28.6%). The participant list includes representatives of the Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce, National Women Farmers Association, Cashew Farmers Federation women members, cashew processors/farmer organizations, Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA), The Gambia Standard Bureau (TGSB) and other institutions. The consultation dataset does not identify any participant explicitly as a cashew exporter, and it does not provide membership totals for women’s associations; therefore, sector-wide estimates of women’s and men’s participation in cashew exports or association membership are not presented. These gaps should be addressed through the project baseline and cluster diagnostic.

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) adopts a twin-track approach, calling for gender mainstreaming across all project activities, including beneficiary selection, training, technical assistance, enterprise development, food safety, SPS compliance, communication, monitoring, and reporting. At the same time, targeted measures will address specific barriers that disproportionately affect women. The Plan is aligned with relevant national policies and institutional frameworks, as well as with UNIDO and STDF guidance on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming.

The Action Plan identifies nine priority areas: (i) gender-responsive food safety and SPS capacity building; (ii) identification and support of bottlenecks affecting women-owned and women-led enterprises; (iii) gender-responsive project support and implementation; (iv) increased participation of qualified women as trainers, facilitators and technical resource persons; (v) improved access to appropriate financial services; (vi) strengthening women’s leadership and decision-making; (vii) gender-responsive communication and awareness; (viii) gender-responsive monitoring, evaluation and learning; and (ix) integration of gender considerations into project budgets, workplans and resource mobilization.

Particular emphasis is placed on practical and accessible support for women, including decentralized and flexible training, appropriate communication methods and local-language materials, practical demonstrations and coaching, enterprise diagnostics, linkages to business development and financial services, and opportunities for women to serve as trainers and technical experts. The Plan also recognizes that some structural constraints, such as land ownership and broader financial barriers, extend beyond the direct scope of the project and should therefore be addressed through partnerships, referrals and longer-term policy engagement.

Gender-responsive monitoring will focus not only on women’s participation but also on changes in access, knowledge, capacity, decision-making, food safety compliance, certification, market opportunities and enterprise performance. Sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive indicators will be integrated into the project’s monitoring and reporting systems to support accountability, learning and adaptive management.

Within the approved STDF contribution of US\$798,000, approximately US\$109,143 (13.7%) has been identified as indicative gender-responsive expenditure embedded across project outputs, project management, communication and monitoring activities. This is not a separate gender-only budget but represents the proportion

of existing activities that will be implemented in a gender-responsive manner. The allocation should be reviewed and validated through annual work planning, procurement and budgeting processes.

Overall, the GAP provides a practical and measurable framework for ensuring that women and men can participate meaningfully and benefit equitably from the project. Successful implementation will require commitment from project management and partners, adequate resourcing, sex-disaggregated monitoring, continuous stakeholder engagement and regular review of progress. By addressing gender-related barriers within its approved scope, the project can contribute not only to improved food safety and SPS compliance, but also to greater economic opportunities, leadership and market participation for women across the Gambian cashew value chain.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Project Context

The STDF Cashew Food Safety Project is situated within The Gambia's broader efforts to strengthen food safety, SPS compliance, quality infrastructure, enterprise competitiveness and export performance. The project context identifies three major areas of intervention: updating the food safety legal and regulatory framework; building the compliance capacities of cashew producers, processors and cooperatives; and strengthening national quality infrastructure institutions responsible for testing, certification, inspection and metrology.

Gender mainstreaming is relevant to each of these areas. Women are active in processing, post-harvest handling, packaging, trading and small-scale agribusiness, while structural and practical constraints can reduce their access to training, technology, finance, certification and higher-value market opportunities. The existing gender analysis identifies these constraints as material to the project's ability to achieve inclusive and sustainable results.

1.2 Purpose and Objective of the Gender Action Plan

The purpose of the GAP is to present the findings of the gender analysis and provide an evidence-based, practical and measurable framework for integrating gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment throughout project implementation. Based on the UNIDO/STDF gender-mainstreaming framework, the GAP has assessed the roles, constraints and opportunities affecting women and men in the cashew value chain and translates those findings into the following objectives and recommended measures:

- assess the different roles, responsibilities, needs and priorities of women and men within the cashew value chain;
- identify structural, institutional, economic and socio-cultural barriers affecting women's participation and benefits;
- identify opportunities to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment;
- ensure women and men can access and benefit equitably from project resources and services;
- provide realistic and cost-effective gender measures within project scope and budget;
- establish gender-responsive indicators, baselines and monitoring arrangements; and
- support learning and institutionalization of gender-responsive SPS and food-safety practices.

1.3 Methodology

The gender analysis and GAP used a mixed-methods, participatory and gender-responsive methodology. The assessment drew on four complementary sources of evidence: (i) international gender-mainstreaming guidance, particularly UNIDO and STDF frameworks; (ii) relevant national policies, legislation and institutional frameworks of The Gambia; (iii) project documents; and (iv) primary evidence generated through stakeholder consultations. This methodology enabled the GAP to move beyond general statements about women's participation and identify the specific factors affecting whether women can participate meaningfully and profitably in the cashew sector. The resulting findings form the basis for the recommendations and action areas presented in this document; subsequent project baseline and monitoring activities should establish indicator values and track implementation progress rather than repeat the gender analysis.

1.4 Scope

The GAP covers the cashew value chain from input supply and production through harvesting, post-harvest handling, aggregation, processing, packaging, marketing, certification and export, as well as the institutional ecosystem supporting SPS, food safety, standards, testing, finance, cooperatives and enterprise development.

CHAPTER TWO: POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 National Gender Policy Framework

The Gambia National Gender Policy 2025–2034¹ provides the overarching national framework for gender equality and women's empowerment (Government of The Gambia, 2025). The policy priorities relevant to the project include mainstreaming gender into policies, programmes and budgets; addressing gender inequalities in economic development; increasing women's participation in decision-making and leadership; and strengthening institutional mechanisms for gender equality.

For the STDF project, the analysis indicates that these policy commitments should be operationalized through gender-responsive planning, budgeting, beneficiary selection, capacity development, monitoring and reporting. Women should be supported not only as beneficiaries but also, where qualified and relevant, as trainers, facilitators, mentors, resource persons, cooperative leaders and food-safety champions.

2.2 Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy

The Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy 2017–2026 provides a sectoral basis for gender-responsive agricultural development and emphasizes wider and more effective participation and representation of women and youth in modern and commercial production, agribusiness and trade². This aligns closely with the STDF objective of moving the cashew sector toward safe, value-added and market-oriented agribusiness.

2.3 Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP II)

The Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan II 2019–2026 provides a framework for agricultural transformation, value-chain development and improved agricultural-sector performance³. A gender-responsive value-chain interpretation requires attention to where women participate, what resources they control, what income they receive and how much influence they have over decisions.

2.4 Food Safety and SPS institutional Framework

The Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) is a critical institutional partner for gender-responsive implementation because its mandate includes official food-safety control, inspection, sampling, certification, inspection of establishments and processes, monitoring across the production and distribution chain and assessment of laboratory capacity. The gender analysis indicates that women are strongly represented in processing, sorting, handling, storage and packaging, where food-safety requirements are particularly relevant. Project cooperation with FSQA should therefore ensure that information, training and relevant services are accessible to women operating in these activities.

2.5 Institutional Coordination

Implementation requires collaboration among institutions responsible for gender, agriculture, food safety, standards, trade, investment promotion, finance, cooperatives, private-sector development, research and training. Relevant stakeholders include the institution responsible for gender, the Ministry of Agriculture, FSQA, The Gambia Standards Bureau, trade and investment institutions, financial institutions, producer organizations, cooperatives, women-led businesses and training institutions. Their roles should focus on implementing, coordinating and monitoring the recommendations of this GAP rather than commissioning additional gender assessments.

2.6 Policy-to-Implementation Gap

¹ Government of The Gambia (2025). National Gender Policy 2025–2034.

² Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy 2017-2026

³ GNAIP II 2019-2026

The analysis identifies a gap between policy commitments and project-level implementation. The principal response is to translate the findings and recommendations of this GAP into specific targets, responsibilities, budgets and monitoring mechanisms so that gender equality becomes part of routine project management rather than a stand-alone commitment. Subsequent project monitoring should measure progress against these commitments and inform implementation adjustments, not repeat the gender analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: ALIGNMENT WITH UNIDO AND STDF GENDER FRAMEWORKS

3.1 UNIDO Gender Mainstreaming Framework

The GAP follows the UNIDO Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming the Project Cycle (UNIDO, 2021), which provides practical entry points for integrating gender considerations across project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation⁴. The Guide also emphasizes gender analysis, gender-responsive indicators, sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. The GAP has applied these principles to assess the cashew food-safety and SPS context and translate the findings into the implementation measures, indicators and monitoring arrangements set out in this document.

3.2 UNIDO Agribusiness and Value-Chain Relevance

UNIDO's gender-mainstreaming resources include specific guidance for agribusiness development projects (UNIDO, n.d.). This is particularly relevant to the cashew project because gender differences in labour, access to productive resources, enterprise ownership, technology and markets can influence the performance and inclusiveness of agribusiness value chains. Drawing on UNIDO's gender mainstreaming guidance, the GAP applies gender analysis not only as a social inclusion requirement but also as a factor affecting enterprise performance, access to resources, productivity and participation in higher-value markets.

3.3 STDF Gender Action Plan

The STDF Gender Action Plan identifies two complementary objectives: (i) advancing and supporting women's capacity to meet trade-related SPS requirements; and (ii) promoting greater attention to gender mainstreaming in SPS capacity-development work (STDF, 2023)⁵. For the Gambian cashew project, these objectives are operationalized through combining targeted support for women with systematic mainstreaming across SPS and food-safety interventions. The GAP reflects the STDF approach in three practical areas: awareness and knowledge sharing on gender and SPS; gender mainstreaming within project implementation; and capacity building and institutional support for gender mainstreaming.

3.4 STDF Gender Analysis ToR, Gender Action Plan Template and Package for Implementing Organizations

The STDF Package for Implementing Organizations provides dedicated Gender Analysis Terms of Reference and Gender Action Plan resources for implementing organizations. The present GAP follows this logic by translating the completed gender analysis into project actions, indicators, targets, responsibilities and monitoring arrangements. It addresses gender differences, access to resources and services, institutional and socio-cultural barriers, stakeholder participation, gender-specific risks and sex-disaggregated monitoring. The GAP is also designed to be integrated into the STDF implementation and monitoring architecture. Gender-related indicators and results should, where applicable, be incorporated into project baseline measurement, annual workplans, progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and end-of-project reporting. Baseline activities should establish starting values for agreed indicators, while subsequent monitoring and evaluation should measure implementation and results rather than repeat or complete the gender analysis. This approach ensures that gender results are considered alongside the project's core SPS, food-safety, enterprise and market-access results.

⁴ UNIDO, Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming the Project Cycle (2021)

⁵ STDF, Gender Action Plan 2023–2025 (2023)

3.5 UNIDO Gender Marker

The project's current UNIDO Gender Marker clearance is GM1. The Gender Action Plan should therefore be implemented consistently with the existing GM1 clearance and the approved project design. The GAP does not propose a reclassification of the project. Instead, it operationalizes gender commitments within the project's existing outputs, activities, beneficiary processes, technical assistance, communication, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Under the GM1 clearance, gender mainstreaming should be practical and proportionate to the project's food-safety, SPS, enterprise and quality-infrastructure objectives. The proposed actions are intended primarily to improve equitable access, participation and benefit within existing project interventions, rather than create a separate gender project or introduce activities outside the approved scope without additional resources. For implementation purposes, the GM1 approach means that gender measures should be embedded in routine project management and results monitoring, with targeted support applied where the gender analysis demonstrates a specific barrier that could undermine equitable access to project benefits.

3.6 Twin-Track Approach

The GAP adopts a twin-track approach, combining gender mainstreaming across the project cycle with targeted measures to address the gender-specific barriers identified in the analysis. This approach is consistent with UNIDO's gender mainstreaming framework and the STDF's emphasis on both mainstreaming gender in SPS capacity development and strengthening women's capacity to meet SPS requirements (UNIDO, 2021; STDF, 2023). In the cashew project, mainstreaming will apply to beneficiary selection, training, technical assistance, enterprise development, food safety, SPS, finance, communication, monitoring and reporting. Targeted interventions may include accessible women-focused training where warranted, tailored technical assistance and improvement planning for selected women-owned and women-led enterprises, participation of qualified women as trainers and resource persons, financial literacy and loan-readiness support, leadership development and referral-based financial linkages.

Table 1. Alignment of the GAP with UNIDO and STDF Gender Frameworks — Application of principal framework requirements and corresponding evidence sources.

Framework / requirement	Application in this GAP	Evidence / section
UNIDO gender analysis	Gender-responsive value-chain and institutional analysis	Chapters 3–4; Annex IV
UNIDO project-cycle mainstreaming	Gender entry points across planning, implementation, M&E and learning	Chapters 3, Annex II and III
UNIDO gender-responsive indicators	Sex-disaggregated and gender-specific indicators and targets	Annex III and VI
UNIDO Gender Marker	Output-level gender relevance and marker logic	Chapter 3; Annex VIII
STDF Gender Action Plan	Women's SPS capacity and gender mainstreaming in SPS work	Chapters 3, 5 and Annex I
STDF Gender Analysis ToR	Roles, constraints, access, institutions, risks and stakeholder participation	Chapters 1–4
STDF IO Package	Integration with baseline, progress reporting, MEL and end-of-project assessment	Annex III
UNIDO agribusiness guidance	Gender-responsive value-chain and enterprise development	Chapters 4–5
Project TOR	Gender tools, baseline, self-assessment, application guide and M&E instruments	Annexes VI–X

Supplementary Alignment Table. Application of STDF Gender Action Plan Objectives in the GAP — Links each STDF gender objective to the GAP action areas through which it will be implemented.

STDF Gender Action Plan objective	Application in this GAP
Strengthen women’s capacity to meet SPS requirements	Action Areas 1, 2, 4 and 5 through training, enterprise diagnostics, compliance support, technical assistance and financial-service linkages.
Mainstream gender within SPS capacity-development initiatives	Action Areas 3, 7, 8 and 9 through gender-responsive implementation, communication, monitoring, budgeting and reporting.
Improve gender-responsive evidence and learning	Action Areas 8 and 9 through sex-disaggregated data collection, monitoring, learning and accountability mechanisms.
Promote women’s participation in SPS leadership and technical roles	Action Areas 4 and 6 through support to women trainers, resource persons, leadership development and decision-making roles.

CHAPTER FOUR: GENDER SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CASHEW VALUE CHAIN

4.1 Methodology, Evidence Base and Limitations

The gender situational analysis combines desk review, policy and institutional analysis, available secondary research, and stakeholder consultations. The analysis examines how women and men participate in the Gambian cashew value chain and the extent to which they have equitable access to the resources, services, information, and decision-making opportunities required to participate safely, productively, and profitably.

Particular attention is given to gender differences in roles and participation; access to food-safety and SPS information and training; technology and infrastructure; testing and certification; finance and markets; leadership and decision-making; and the institutional and social factors that may influence participation.

Evidence Base

The analysis draws on three complementary sources of evidence:

1. Project documentation and national policy and institutional materials, including the STDF Cashew Food Safety Project documentation and relevant national policies, strategies, and institutional frameworks;
2. Available research on the Gambian cashew value chain, including the study by Bojang and Emang (2024); and
3. Stakeholder consultations undertaken with relevant institutions, value-chain organizations, and women stakeholders as part of the preparation of this Gender Action Plan (GAP).

The project documentation provides an important starting point for the gender analysis. It recognizes the underrepresentation of women in industry decision-making, the need to include women-led businesses in consultations, potential time-related barriers to participation, and the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data. These considerations are particularly relevant because the project's food-safety and SPS interventions affect actors operating at different stages of the value chain and with varying levels of access to resources, services, information, and decision-making opportunities.

The available research provides additional contextual evidence. Bojang and Emang (2024), in their study of the cashew value chain in Kombo East, found that the chain involves a large number of producers and relatively few intermediaries operating through different marketing channels. The study identified weak farmer organization and collective marketing as constraints affecting producers' ability to access markets fairly. It also reported that local cashew-processing activities are primarily undertaken by women, highlighting women's

important role in value addition and domestic market activities. However, the study sample was predominantly male, comprising 25 male and five female respondents. Its findings therefore provide useful contextual and value-chain evidence but should not be interpreted as a comprehensive assessment of gender inequalities across the Gambian cashew sector.

The stakeholder consultations undertaken for this assignment comprised seven KII engagements and one FGD, constituting eight engagements involving 14 participants (10 women and 4 men), conducted by Adama Njie from 12–20 August 2026. One KII was conducted jointly with two Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce representatives and was recorded as one institutional response. The single FGD involved six women members of the Cashew Farmers Federation and was recorded as one group response. All engagements used the same eight-question guide; responses were consolidated at engagement level and thematically coded. The consultation dataset comprised 14 participants: 10 women (71.4%) and 4 men (28.6%). Participants represented women's business organizations, cashew farmer organizations and women members, a cashew processor, FSQA, TGSB, , and other sector-support institutions.

Limitations and Validation

The consultation sample was purposive and relatively small. Consequently, the 71.4% female and 28.6% male composition describes the consultation sample only and does not represent the gender composition of the Gambian cashew sector. Similarly, the qualitative findings from the consultations should not be interpreted as statistically representative estimates of the entire sector.

The analysis is therefore intended to provide a gender-sensitive understanding of key participation patterns, barriers, opportunities, and institutional considerations, rather than a definitive quantitative assessment of gender disparities across the value chain. The findings presented in this GAP provide the basis for the recommended action areas. Project baseline activities and the Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic should establish starting values and more comprehensive sex-disaggregated data on participation, enterprise ownership and management, access to services and productive resources, and other agreed indicators; they should support implementation and monitoring rather than repeat or complete the gender analysis.

Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the available evidence indicates that women are already important economic actors in the Gambian cashew value chain, particularly in processing and related value-addition activities. However, women's participation does not necessarily translate into equal access to productive assets, finance, technical services, markets, information, certification opportunities, or decision-making processes. The analysis that follows therefore examines these dimensions in greater detail, with the aim of identifying gender-specific barriers and opportunities and informing targeted measures under the Gender Action Plan.

4.2 Women's Participation and Roles in the Cashew Value Chain

Women and men participate differently across the cashew value chain. Available evidence indicates that women play an important role in local processing and in activities such as sorting, peeling, drying, packaging, retailing and trading. Bojang and Emang (2024) similarly identified women as important actors in local cashew-processing activities, including the processing and marketing of cashew products. The stakeholder consultations broadly support this picture of gendered participation. Women were reported to be particularly active in processing and other labor-intensive activities, while men are more strongly associated with production, land ownership, heavy labour, aggregation, transport and some export-oriented activities. The Women's Focus Group Discussion and consultations with organizations representing farmers and women entrepreneurs further highlighted women's involvement in processing, trading and other downstream activities.

Women are therefore visible across several stages of the value chain, but the available evidence suggests that they are more concentrated in processing, trading and other downstream activities requiring comparatively less land, fixed capital and productive-asset ownership. Men are more strongly associated in the consultations with

primary production, land ownership, heavy labour, aggregation, transport and some export-oriented activities. This gendered concentration matters because activities with lower capital requirements may offer fewer opportunities to capture higher margins or move into higher-value market segments. The finding is indicative rather than statistically representative; project baseline and cluster-diagnostic data should establish the corresponding starting values and enable progress to be monitored.

At the same time, stakeholders identified limited ownership or control of land and productive assets as an important constraint affecting women's ability to participate more substantially in production. Limited asset ownership can also have implications for access to formal finance, as land and other assets are often used as collateral. Overall, the key gender issue is not women's absence from the value chain, but unequal access to productive resources, finance, technical opportunities, markets and decision-making across the different stages of the chain.

4.3 Access to Food-Safety Training, SPS Information, Technology and Infrastructure

The STDF project recognizes capacity building as central to improving food-safety compliance, while practical constraints may affect women's participation in training and workshops. Consultations indicate that training opportunities are generally available to both women and men, but availability does not necessarily translate into equal access or benefit. Distance, literacy, limited access to information, social norms and women's responsibilities can affect participation.

The women's FGD particularly highlighted limited exposure to SPS-specific information and training. FGD While some food-safety and labelling information is available, participants indicated that SPS requirements and related compliance processes are less familiar. This points to a gap between general food-safety awareness and the more technical knowledge required to meet SPS and export-market requirements.

Women also face challenges in accessing appropriate processing equipment, hygienic facilities, storage and packaging technology, with limited finance identified as an important underlying constraint. Overall, the gender issue is not simply whether women receive training, but whether training, SPS information, technology and infrastructure are accessible, affordable and appropriate to enable women to improve food-safety practices and enterprise performance.

4.4 Access to SPS, Testing, Inspection and Certification Services

Compliance with food-safety and SPS requirements is a central challenge identified by the STDF Cashew Food Safety Project. The project documentation highlights weaknesses in food-safety compliance and the limited availability of internationally recognized conformity-assessment services as important constraints to the development of the cashew export sector.

The consultations reinforce the importance of this issue. Stakeholders identified the cost, complexity and time requirements associated with testing, inspection, certification and compliance as significant challenges for cashew enterprises. Smaller enterprises may face particular difficulties in meeting these requirements because of limited financial and technical capacity.

Consultations further indicated that some actors, particularly smaller businesses, may have limited knowledge of the procedures required to access testing, inspection and certification services. In this context, the barrier is not necessarily the absence of services alone but also the ability of enterprises to understand, navigate and afford the compliance process.

These challenges have potential gender implications. Women are strongly represented among smaller processing and trading enterprises and may therefore be particularly affected where compliance requires significant investment in premises, equipment, testing, certification and documentation. However, the consultations do not provide sufficient evidence to quantify the extent to which women face greater barriers than men in accessing specific testing or certification services. The project should therefore respond through accessible information,

technical assistance and referral pathways for relevant testing, inspection and certification services, while baseline and monitoring data should track service use by sex where feasible.

4.5 Finance, Markets and Enterprise Development

Access to finance emerged as a major constraint, with stakeholders citing limited capital, high interest rates, collateral requirements, repayment conditions and limited financial literacy. These challenges are particularly relevant for women-owned and women-led enterprises, where limited ownership of land and other assets can restrict access to conventional finance and working capital.

Market access and bargaining power were also identified as concerns. Bojang and Emang (2024) found that weak farmer organization and collective marketing constrain fair market access, with farmers receiving approximately 66% of the final market value in the channels examined. From a gender perspective, women's involvement in processing and trading does not necessarily translate into strong bargaining power or control over value. The consultation list does not explicitly identify any of the 14 participants as a cashew exporter; therefore, the number of interviewed women and men participating in cashew exports cannot be established from this dataset. The analysis does not infer an export-participation ratio where the evidence is not available. The project baseline and cluster diagnostic should record export participation by sex as a starting value for implementation and monitoring, without reopening the gender analysis.

Existing women's organizations and business platforms, including the Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce, provide potential entry points for improving access to business information, finance and market linkages. Overall, limited access to finance, market information, infrastructure and organized marketing can constrain the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of women's enterprises in the cashew value chain. The consultations included the Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce (GWCC), the National Women Farmers Association (NAWFA), women members of the Cashew Farmers Federation, the Cashew Farmers Federation and the Cashew Farmers Alliance. The available consultation record does not provide the membership size of these organizations or a reliable estimate of how many members are engaged in the cashew value chain. The project baseline and cluster diagnostic should record available membership and cashew-participation figures for implementation and monitoring, without treating them as a further gender assessment.

4.6 Women's Leadership and Decision-Making

The STDF project documentation explicitly recognizes the underrepresentation of women in industry decision-making and commits to promoting more balanced participation in consultations and related project processes. The stakeholder consultations support the relevance of this issue. Women were generally described as less represented in leadership and decision-making positions within some parts of the cashew sector. In some organizations and enterprises, women may be present in administrative or operational positions without having equivalent influence over strategic decisions.

This distinction between participation and influence is important for the Gender Action Plan. Counting the number of women attending meetings or belonging to organizations does not necessarily demonstrate meaningful participation. Attention should also be given to women's representation in leadership positions, participation in committees, influence over decisions and control over resources.

At the same time, the consultations identified positive examples of women in leadership and technical roles, including women leaders within sector organizations and women who have been trained as trainers. These examples provide a useful foundation for strengthening women's leadership rather than approaching the issue solely from a deficit perspective.

4.7 Time, Participation and Institutional Barriers

The project documentation identifies time poverty as a potential barrier to women's participation and proposes that training and workshops should be organized in ways that do not unnecessarily conflict with domestic and livelihood responsibilities.

The consultations identified several practical and institutional barriers that may affect women's participation. These include distance to training or service locations, literacy limitations, limited access to information, social norms and women's responsibilities within households and businesses. The Women's FGD particularly highlighted distance and literacy as practical constraints. These findings suggest that gender-responsive implementation should consider how services are delivered, rather than focusing only on whether women are formally eligible to participate.

4.8 Women as Food-Safety and SPS Resource Persons

An important dimension of the gender analysis is women's participation beyond their role as beneficiaries of project activities. The consultations identified examples of women who already contribute as trainers, leaders and technical resource persons.

The Cashew Farmers Federation reported experiences involving women who have been trained to support training activities. However, the available consultation evidence does not establish that these women were specifically trained as SPS technical resource persons. The project should verify the relevant qualifications and experience of available women trainers when selecting resource persons and, where appropriate, include qualified women in training-of-trainers, coaching and resource-person roles on SPS and food-safety topics.

4.9 Cross-Cutting Gender Gaps

The evidence reviewed and consultations undertaken point to a number of interconnected gender gaps within the cashew value chain. Not all of these gaps can be addressed directly through an STDF food-safety and SPS project. They are therefore grouped into three categories: (i) core project actions that can be implemented within the approved project scope; (ii) facilitation and linkage actions that can be pursued through partners; and (iii) longer-term structural issues that should remain contextual findings or recommendations for national and sector institutions. This distinction is intended to keep the GAP realistic and accountable.

Methodological Note on Figures 1 and 2: The figures below are based on qualitative coding of stakeholder consultation responses. Frequencies represent the number of consultation engagements in which a theme was coded, not the number of participants or individual respondents. One engagement could mention more than one issue or recommendation. The figures illustrate the relative prominence of themes raised during consultations and are not statistically representative of the Gambian cashew sector.

Figure 1. Cross-Cutting Gender Issues Mentioned in Consultation Responses — Relative frequency of coded constraints across consultation engagements; multiple themes could be recorded per engagement and results are not statistically representative.

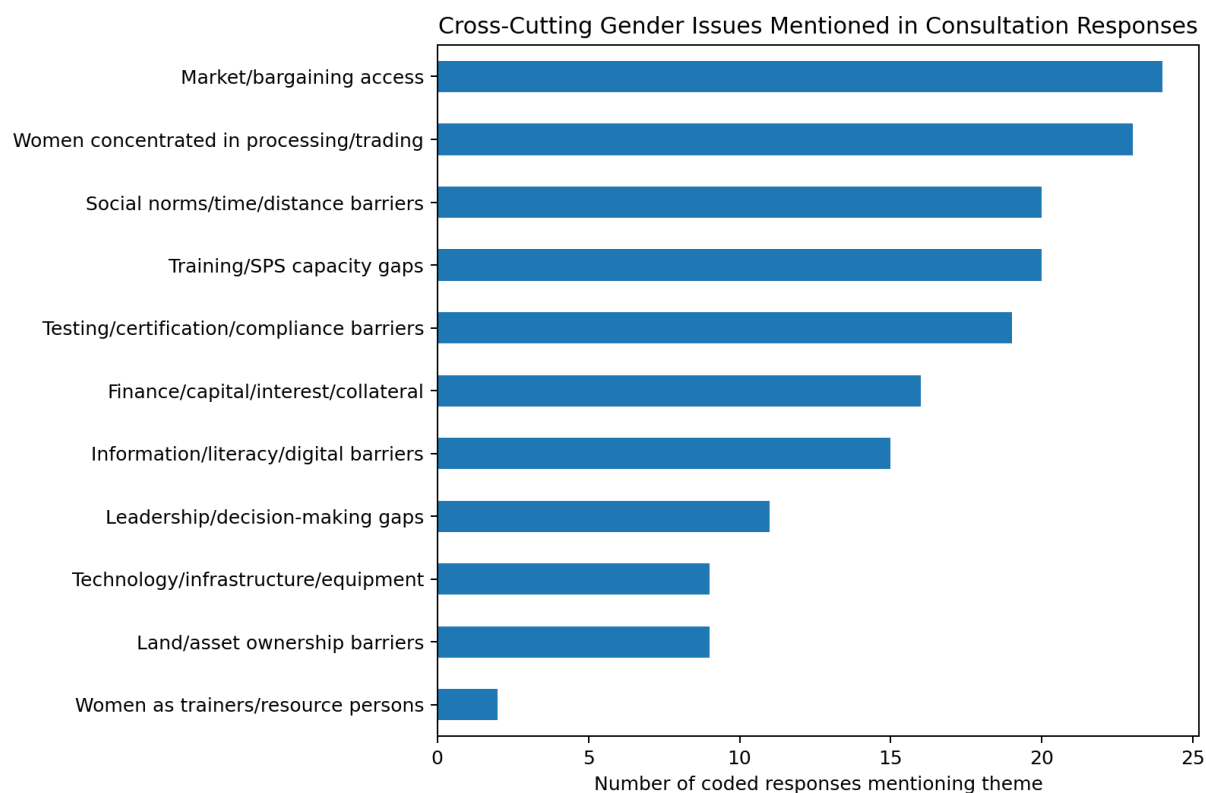


Figure 2. Priority Areas Emerging from Stakeholder Recommendations — Relative frequency of coded response priorities across consultation engagements; multiple priorities could be recorded per engagement and results are not statistically representative.

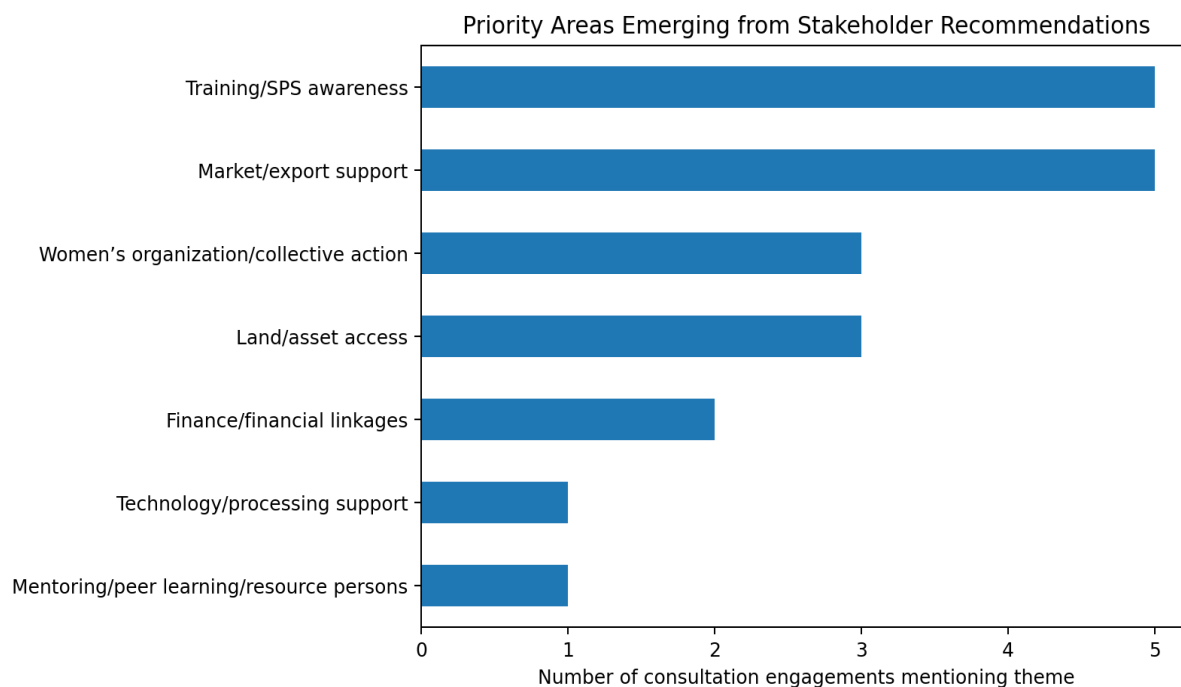


Table 2. Cross-Cutting Gender Gaps Identified in the Cashew Value Chain — Principal gaps and their implications for women’s participation and economic opportunities.

Gender Gap	Key Issue Identified	Implication for Women
1. Gendered concentration in lower-capital/value-chain activities	Women are significantly involved in processing, trading and other activities but are less represented in land ownership, production, technical operations and some higher-value market activities.	Limited ability to capture greater value and expand into higher-value activities.
2. Unequal access to productive assets and technology	Limited ownership or control of land, equipment and other productive assets.	Constrains enterprise expansion, productivity and participation in higher-value activities.
3. Limited access to SPS and technical information	Training and information may be available, but distance, literacy, information gaps and social norms can limit effective access and application.	Limited knowledge and capacity to meet food-safety and SPS requirements.
4. Compliance and certification barriers	Testing, inspection, certification and compliance can be costly and technically complex.	Smaller women-led enterprises may struggle to meet food-safety and market requirements.
5. Limited access to appropriate finance	High interest rates, collateral requirements, repayment conditions and limited financial literacy constrain access to finance.	Limited ability to invest in equipment, infrastructure, certification and business growth.
6. Limited influence in decision-making	Women participate in the value chain and sector organizations but are not consistently represented in strategic decision-making positions.	Limited influence over decisions, resources and sector priorities.
7. Limited visibility of women as technical actors	Women are present as processors, entrepreneurs, leaders and trainers, but opportunities to expand their roles as technical experts, trainers and resource persons remain limited.	Fewer professional opportunities and limited representation of women in technical SPS and food-safety roles.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENDER STRATEGY AND ACTION AREAS

The GAP operationalizes the gender findings from the situational analysis through the nine action areas below, with emphasis on measures that are feasible within the approved STDF project scope and budget.

5.1 Action Area 1: Gender-Responsive Capacity Building and Food-Safety Training

Training design and delivery should respond to the barriers already identified in this GAP and distinguish the practical circumstances of women producers, processors, traders, cooperative leaders and entrepreneurs. During routine training planning, organizers should confirm preferred languages, locations, timing, digital access, literacy needs, care responsibilities and other participation considerations so that delivery can be adapted without commissioning a further gender assessment. The following measures translate these findings into practical requirements for the design and delivery of project-supported training within the approved activities and budget:

- Develop contextualized training packages using practical examples from Gambian cashew businesses.
- Use simple language, visual materials, demonstrations, checklists and enterprise-level compliance tools.
- Use decentralized and flexible delivery, shorter sessions and local-language options where appropriate.
- Use women-only sessions where a specific barrier warrants them.
- Integrate Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and practical food-safety risk management.
- Link training to follow-up coaching and enterprise improvement plans.

Table 7. Proposed Content of Context-Specific Gender-Sensitivity Training — Recommended training themes and their practical focus for project delivery.

Training Area	Key Focus
Gender & cashew value chain	Roles, norms and participation
Resources & finance	Access to assets, loans and technology
Food safety & OHS	Hygiene, compliance and safe working conditions
Enterprise development	Registration, certification, markets and business skills
Leadership	Women's participation and decision-making
Inclusive delivery	Accessible language, timing, location and methods
Follow-up	Coaching and practical application

5.2 Action Area 2: Women-Owned and Women-Led Enterprise⁶ Bottlenecks

The gender analysis identified practical bottlenecks faced by women-owned and women-led cashew enterprises along the pathway from business establishment to food-safety compliance and higher-value market access. These include limited access to start-up and working capital, loans, collateral and suitable repayment conditions; inadequate premises, hygienic processing facilities, storage and packaging areas; limited access to processing, drying, sorting, packaging and digital equipment; challenges related to business registration, licensing, documentation and record-keeping; gaps in food-safety systems, including Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)-related requirements where applicable, traceability and hygiene controls; the costs, procedures and time associated with testing, inspection and certification; limited business-development and technical training; and barriers to higher-value domestic, regional and export markets, including access to buyer information, contracts, standards and negotiation capacity. The project should respond to these findings, where feasible within the approved scope and budget, through targeted technical assistance, capacity building, enterprise support and strategic linkages to relevant service providers and partners. Project support should distinguish knowledge and training gaps that can be addressed through existing activities from constraints requiring finance, infrastructure, technology, institutional reform or partner support.

All support measures should be implemented within the approved project scope, budget and results framework, with additional needs addressed through referrals, partnerships or future resource mobilization where appropriate. The following measures set out how the project should translate the identified enterprise bottlenecks into practical support within these parameters:

- Use the approved Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic and routine enterprise-support processes to classify bottlenecks as knowledge, service-access, financial, infrastructure/equipment, compliance or market constraints.
- Develop practical improvement plans for selected women-owned and women-led enterprises, prioritizing actions deliverable through existing project technical assistance, training, testing/certification and enterprise-support activities.
- For HACCP implementation, provide awareness, gap assessment, coaching and stepwise technical support where this falls within the project food-safety capacity-building scope; major capital investments should be separately costed and referred to financing or partners.
- Facilitate linkages to registration, testing, inspection, certification, finance and business-development services rather than assuming the project will directly finance all such services.

⁶ For the purpose of the GAP, a “*women-owned enterprise*” means an enterprise in which women hold at least 51% of ownership, equity or controlling interest, based on registration records or, where enterprises are informal, a documented owner declaration.

A “*women-led enterprise*” means an enterprise in which a woman has primary day-to-day management and strategic decision-making responsibility, irrespective of the formal ownership structure. An enterprise may therefore be women-led without being women-owned. These definitions should be included in enterprise registration/assessment tools and used consistently in project reporting.

- Track whether support results in compliance improvements, formalization, improved market access or other agreed outcomes.
- Use practical enterprise-support tools to apply the findings of this GAP to selected women-owned and women-led enterprises.
- Prepare improvement plans for selected women-owned and women-led enterprises.
- Link enterprises to technical assistance, business development, testing and certification services.
- Monitor whether support results in actual compliance improvements and market opportunities.
- Document enterprise-level cases of change and lessons.

5.3 Action Area 3: Gender-Responsive Project Support & Implementation

Support to producers, processors and cooperatives should be designed around their different functions, capacities and constraints. For processors, consider food-safety systems, hygiene, HACCP-related implementation, traceability, documentation, worker safety, equipment suitability, premises and certification readiness. For producers, consider post-harvest handling, harvesting/picking, drying, storage, contamination prevention, access to information and collective marketing. For cooperatives, consider governance, transparent membership and benefit-sharing, women's leadership, collective purchasing/marketing, business planning, record-keeping and management of shared facilities/equipment. Across all groups, consider training language and timing, affordability, access to equipment/services, ownership and control of project-supported assets, workload and OHS, and linkages to FSQA, standards, testing, certification, finance and business-development services. Technology dissemination should include user training, maintenance, affordability and suitability to women and men using the equipment.

5.4 Action Area 4: Women as Trainers, Facilitators and Resource Persons

The project should identify qualified women professionals and practitioners and establish a roster of potential trainers, facilitators, mentors and technical resource persons in food safety, SPS, laboratories, inspection, certification, agribusiness and enterprise development. Where qualified women are available, they should be actively considered for project training and consultancy assignments. Training-of-trainers, mentoring and networking opportunities should be used to strengthen women's capacity to serve as technical resource persons and food-safety champions. Gender focal-point, coordination and technical-support functions will be assigned to existing project personnel or delivered through already approved expert and technical-assistance resources. Any additional personnel, consultancy or dedicated support beyond these resources will require separate approval and funding.

5.5 Action Area 5: Finance and Financial Services

The gender analysis identified limited capital, high interest rates, collateral requirements, repayment conditions, documentation requirements, geographic accessibility and limited financial literacy as constraints affecting women-owned and women-led cashew enterprises. The project should respond through information on available financial products, financial literacy and loan-readiness support, and referrals to suitable financial institutions and partner programmes. Where partner cooperation and data availability permit, the project should track referrals and available information on applications, approvals and utilization of finance by supported women entrepreneurs. Any broader measures, including cooperative or asset-financing mechanisms, credit guarantees or suitable Islamic finance options, should be pursued only through separately approved partnerships or additional resource mobilization.

Any support related to finance should remain focused on information, awareness raising, financial literacy, referral mechanisms and partnership development unless additional resources and approvals are secured. The project does not provide direct loans, guarantees, subsidies or grant financing under the approved budget.

5.6 Action Area 6: Women's Leadership and Decision-Making

Women should be supported to move from membership to meaningful leadership and influence within cooperatives, producer organizations, marketing committees, finance committees, food-safety committees and other project structures. Leadership interventions should include governance, negotiation, financial literacy, business planning and confidence-building.

5.7 Action Area 7: Gender-Responsive Communication and Awareness

Communication should use channels women actually access, including community meetings, radio, women's groups, cooperative meetings, WhatsApp groups, local-language materials, visual materials and peer communication. Messages should focus on practical information about training, finance, food-safety requirements, certification, market opportunities and project support.

5.8 Action Area 8: Gender-Responsive M&E and Learning

Gender indicators should be integrated into the project's M&E system. The project should collect sex-disaggregated data for beneficiaries, training participation and completion, trainers, facilitators, cooperative membership and leadership, enterprises supported, financing applications and approvals, food-safety compliance, certification, market access and income/business performance where feasible. Outcome-level measures should be prioritized over participation statistics alone.

5.9 Action Area 9: Gender-Responsive Budget and Resource Mobilization

Gender considerations should be integrated into annual work planning, budgeting, procurement, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Relevant gender-responsive expenditures should be identified and tracked within approved budget lines, particularly where proportionate delivery adaptations are needed to enable women's meaningful participation and equitable access to project benefits. Where identified gender priorities cannot be fully addressed through the approved budget, the project should pursue resource mobilization and strategic partnerships with government, development partners, financial institutions, private-sector actors and other relevant programmes. This may include complementary support for women's skills, technology, enterprise development, financial literacy, certification, mentoring and participation. Any direct financing, grants, guarantees or subsidies should only be pursued where separately approved and resourced.

By applying this approach, the project will move from simply identifying gender issues to systematically integrating gender considerations into resources, implementation decisions, participation, monitoring and accountability. This will strengthen the likelihood that women and men participating in the Gambian cashew value chain can access and benefit equitably from the project's food-safety capacity development, technology, certification, market-access and institutional-strengthening interventions.

Table 3. Relationship between GAP Action Areas, Approved Project Activities and Budget Treatment — Alignment with the approved results framework and treatment through existing budget lines, referrals or partnerships; corresponding actions, indicators, responsibilities and timelines appear in Annex I.

GAP area	Approved project linkage	Budget treatment
GAP Action Area 1 – Gender-responsive capacity building	Output 2 Activities 2.1–2.7; Output 3 Activities 3.1–3.3	US\$49,700 + US\$13,100 portions of relevant lines
GAP Action Area 2 – Women-owned/women-led enterprise bottlenecks	Output 2 Activities 2.3–2.7	Included primarily in Output 2 experts, subcontracts, training and equipment shares
GAP Action Area 3 – Gender-responsive implementation	Outputs 1–3; project-wide	Embedded across travel, consultation, technical assistance and delivery costs

GAP Action Area 4 & 6– Women as trainers/resource persons, leadership	Output 2 Activities 2.3, 2.6 and related training	Included in Output 2 capacity-building and training shares
GAP Action Area 5 – Finance and enabling linkages	Cross-cutting; not a dedicated STDF-funded activity	No direct loans/grants/guarantees/subsidies included; referral/partnership measures only
GAP Action Area 7 – Communication and awareness	Output 2 Activity 2.1; project communication	Included in relevant subcontract/training/miscellaneous shares
GAP Action Area 8 – Gender-responsive M&E and learning	Project Management, Communication and Reporting	Included in PM technical services, experts, training and miscellaneous shares

Table 4. Major Gender-Specific and Gender-Mainstreamed Expenditure Areas — Approved budget lines supporting gender-responsive delivery and the purpose of each indicative expenditure area.

The project does not contain a dedicated gender-only budget line in the approved budget. The quantified amount is therefore predominantly gender-mainstreamed. The major areas are:

Major area	Relevant approved lines	What the gender-responsive expenditure covers
Gender-responsive capacity building and training	Output 2 BL 3000; Output 3 BL 3000; relevant Output 1/PM training resources	Accessible training schedules and locations; sex-disaggregated participation; women trainers/resource persons; practical food-safety/HACCP support.
Enterprise diagnostics, coaching and technical assistance	Output 2 BL 1100/1700/2100	Identify and address bottlenecks affecting women-owned/women-led enterprises and support practical compliance improvement.
Gender-responsive consultations and participation	Output 1 BL 1500/1700/3000; PM travel	Ensure women participate meaningfully in legal, regulatory, implementation and stakeholder processes.
Technology and quality-infrastructure access	Output 2 BL 4500; Output 3 BL 4500	Ensure technology dissemination and testing/certification capacity-building respond to different constraints faced by women and men.
Communication and IEC	Output 2 BL 2100; PM BL 2100/5100	Accessible and practical food-safety messages, including communication channels appropriate for women beneficiaries.
Gender-responsive M&E and learning	PM BL 1101/1700/3000/5100	Sex-disaggregated indicators, monitoring, gender screening, documentation of barriers and adaptive management.

Prioritization Framework

The actions proposed in this Gender Action Plan are grouped into three categories:

Priority 1 – Core Project Actions: Activities that fall directly within the approved project scope, budget and results framework and should be implemented as part of routine project delivery.

Priority 2 – Partnership and Facilitation Actions: Activities that can be pursued through coordination, referrals, technical partnerships and stakeholder engagement but do not require substantial additional project resources.

Priority 3 – Longer-Term Structural Actions: Issues such as land ownership, broader financial-sector constraints, major infrastructure requirements and systemic policy reforms that extend beyond the direct mandate of the project and should inform future programming and policy dialogue.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The Gender Action Plan provides a practical framework for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into the STDF Cashew Food Safety Project. The analysis recognizes that women and men participate differently across the cashew value chain and face different levels of access to training, technology, finance, quality infrastructure, markets and decision-making. The GAP therefore adopts a twin-track approach: mainstreaming gender across all project activities while implementing proportionate targeted measures, within the approved project scope, workplan and budget, to address the barriers identified in this GAP, particularly women-owned and women-led enterprises.

The success of the GAP will be measured not only by women's participation, but also by improvements in access, capacity, influence, food-safety compliance and economic opportunities. Gender-responsive monitoring, sex-disaggregated data and regular stakeholder engagement should measure implementation and results, support accountability and inform adaptive management without repeating the gender analysis.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations translate the findings of this GAP into priorities for implementation; they should be applied within the approved project scope, results framework and available budget, with additional needs addressed through referrals, partnerships or separately approved resource mobilization:

1. Strengthen gender-responsive food safety and SPS capacity building through accessible training, coaching and technical assistance.
2. Support selected women-owned and women-led enterprises, within approved project activities and available resources, to identify and address food-safety and SPS constraints through the approved Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic, technical assistance, training and linkages to relevant equipment, infrastructure, testing, certification and market-access services.
3. Facilitate women's access to finance and technology through information, financial literacy, referrals, partnerships and project-supported technology activities within the approved scope and budget.
4. Facilitate women's access to quality-infrastructure services, including testing, inspection and certification, through information, referrals and project-supported activities within the approved scope and available budget.
5. Promote women's leadership and meaningful participation within cooperatives, producer organizations and relevant project structures through existing capacity-building and governance activities within the approved workplan and budget.
6. Promote the participation of qualified women as trainers and technical experts, subject to availability and technical requirements, through mentoring, training-of-trainers and professional networking delivered within approved project activities and resources.
7. Institutionalize gender-responsive M&E through sex-disaggregated data, gender indicators, targets and regular monitoring.
8. Integrate proportionate gender-mainstreaming measures into project workplans and approved budget lines, and subject any additional resource requirements to separate approval, partnership support or resource mobilization.

Annex I: Gender Action Plan Matrix

The implementation matrix translates the Gender Action Plan's strategic priorities into specific actions, measurable indicators, targets, responsibilities and timelines. It is aligned with the approved project outcomes, outputs, activities and indicators. It covers seven key areas: gender-responsive capacity building; women's enterprise empowerment; gender-responsive implementation; women's participation as technical resource persons; leadership and access to finance; communication; and gender-responsive monitoring, evaluation and learning. The matrix provides a practical basis for tracking progress and accountability throughout the three-year project period. Targets will be refined where necessary following the establishment of the gender baseline, while sex-disaggregated data and periodic monitoring will be used to assess progress and inform adaptive implementation.

Note: Quantified Gender-Responsive Budget by Output and Budget Line table is also added as a complement to the action plan matrix. *See below after this matrix*

Gender participation benchmark: Where numerical participation targets are proposed, a benchmark of at least 40% women's participation is used for relevant project activities and beneficiary groups. This benchmark follows the recommendation of UNIDO's gender mainstreaming division for this project and reflects a realistic but ambitious participation threshold within the Gambian cashew value-chain context and the approved project scope. Final targets should be validated against baseline findings, technical eligibility requirements and the composition of the available beneficiary pool.

Table 5. Gender Action Plan Matrix

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
1	Gender-responsive training	Apply the GAP findings when planning project-supported training and confirm practical delivery requirements with intended participants	Training plans document how identified language, location, timing, literacy, digital-access and care-related barriers will be addressed	Applied to 100% of project-supported training plans from Y1; annual participation targets set through work planning	Existing project personnel designated by project management, with support from approved technical experts	Y1	Output 2 BL 1700, BL 2100 and BL 3000, as applicable; no separate assessment budget	Training plans, participant communications, attendance and completion records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activity 2.3 (cluster diagnostic) + 2.6 (capacity-building). Indicator: at least 100 producers/processors/cooperative members trained, sex-disaggregated. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700 (Local experts), BL 2100 (Subcontracts), BL 3000 (Local trainings).
1	Gender-responsive training	Develop and validate contextualized food-safety/SPS training package	Package completed and validated	1 package; adapted as needed after baseline	Project Team / Technical Experts	Y1	Training/materials budget	Validated package	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activity 2.1 (visual IEC materials), 2.7 (GAP/quality manuals and training materials).

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
									Indicator: at least 100 trained, sex-disaggregated. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700/2100/3000.
1	Gender-responsive training	Deliver flexible and accessible training	Women participants and completion by sex; barriers addressed	Baseline established in Y1; annual target set from baseline and project needs	Project Team	Y1–Y3	Training delivery budget	Attendance/completion records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activities 2.1, 2.6 and 2.7. Indicator: at least 100 trained, disaggregated by gender. Budget: Output 2 BL 3000 (Local trainings), with BL 1700/2100 as applicable.
1	Gender-responsive training	Post-training coaching and follow-up	Women applying recommended practices	Starting value established through the first follow-up cycle; annual target set through work planning	Project / FSQA	Y1–Y3	Technical assistance budget	Coaching and post-training follow-up records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activity 2.2 (HACCP/HACCP-based plans). Indicator: at least 5 value-chain actors with validated HACCP-based systems; 3 cashew producers certified in HACCP at outcome level. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700/2100/3000.
1	Women-owned/led enterprise support	Use the approved Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic to profile participating enterprises and apply the bottlenecks identified in this GAP to enterprise-support planning	Cluster diagnostic completed; women-owned and women-led enterprises profiled; priority support needs classified	1 approved cluster diagnostic in Y1; enterprise coverage defined through the Activity 2.3 workplan	Existing project personnel designated by project management, with support from approved enterprise and technical experts	Y1	Output 2 BL 1700 and BL 2100 under approved Activity 2.3; no additional enterprise-assessment budget	Approved cluster diagnostic report, enterprise profiles and support-prioritization records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activity 2.3. Indicator: 1 cluster diagnostic report; diagnostic to profile women-owned/led enterprises. Budget: Output 2 BL 2100 (Subcontracts) / BL 1700 (Local experts).

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
1	Women-owned/led enterprise support	Develop enterprise improvement plans	Women-led enterprises with agreed plans	Annual target set after baseline and available support capacity	Project Team	Y1–Y3	Technical assistance budget	Enterprise plans	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activities 2.2, 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7. Indicator: validated HACCP-based systems and trained actors. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700/2100/3000.
1	Women-owned/led enterprise support	Provide technical assistance and compliance support	Enterprises demonstrating agreed compliance improvements	Starting values established through the approved Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic and enterprise-support records; annual targets set through work planning	Project / FSQA	Y1–Y3	Technical assistance budget	Enterprise-support and compliance-progress records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activity 2.2; Output 3 Activities 3.1–3.3. Indicators: validated HACCP-based systems; accredited/pre-assessment conformity-assessment services. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700/2100; Output 3 BL 1100/1700/3000.
1	Women-owned/led enterprise support	Facilitate testing/certification pathways	Women-led enterprises using relevant services	Increase from baseline where services are available and relevant	Project / Quality Institutions	Y2–Y3	Quality infrastructure/linkage activity	Service records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 3 Activities 3.1–3.3 and Output 1 Activities 1.5–1.6. Indicators: certification/testing capacity and trained inspectors; access to services to be tracked by sex. Budget: Output 3 BL 1100/1700/3000; Output 1 BL 1700/3000.
1	Gender-responsive implementation	Apply gender screening to relevant project activities	Relevant activities screened before	100% of relevant activities	Existing project personnel designated by project management	Quarterly	Project management / M&E budget	Screening forms	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Cross-cutting management/M&E. Output 1–3. Relevant indicators include sex-disaggregated participation and training.

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
			implementation						Budget: Project Management/M&E costs; Output-level implementation budgets as applicable.
1	Gender-responsive implementation	Review beneficiary criteria and barriers	Criteria reviewed and corrective actions documented	At least annually and when new activities are designed	PMU	Annual	Project management budget	Review records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 1 and Output 2. Relevant beneficiary indicators are sex-disaggregated. Budget: Project Management plus relevant Output 2 BL 3000 and Output 1 BL 3000.
2	Women as trainers/resource persons	Create women experts/resource-person roster	Roster established and maintained	1 roster; updated annually	Existing project personnel designated by project management, with support from approved technical experts	Y1–Y3	Training/technical assistance budget	Roster	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activities 2.3 and 2.6. Indicator: at least 100 trained; trainer capacity can be monitored by sex. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700/3000.
2	Women as trainers/resource persons	Engage qualified female trainers/resource persons	Share of female trainers/experts	Availability and technical qualifications verified during recruitment; target set annually without compromising technical quality	Project Team	Y1–Y3	Training/consultancy budget	Trainer/consultant records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 2. Activities 2.3 and 2.6. Indicator: training and participation data disaggregated by sex; support women as qualified trainers. Budget: Output 2 BL 1700/3000.
1	Leadership and decision-making	Leadership/governance development	Women in leadership; participation and influence	Baseline established; annual	Cooperatives / Project	Y1–Y3	Capacity-building budget	Leadership records / feedback	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 1 consultations and Output 2 cooperative capacity building. Indicators: 5 public-private

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
				improvement target					consultations; at least 100 value-chain actors trained, both tracked by sex. Budget: Output 1 BL 3000; Output 2 BL 3000.
2	Finance linkages	Provide information on available financial products and facilitate financial-literacy, loan-readiness and referral support through approved activities and partners	Women entrepreneurs receiving information, loan-readiness support or referrals; available referral outcomes tracked	Annual target set through work planning based on identified demand, approved scope and partner capacity	Existing project personnel designated by project management, with participating financial institutions and partner programmes	Y1	No dedicated finance or assessment line; information and referrals through Output 2 Activity 2.5 and existing partner resources	Information-session records, loan-readiness support records, referrals and available partner follow-up data	Facilitation/linkage only unless approved elsewhere. Relevant project link: Output 2 Activity 2.5 (cooperative business models for food-safety services). No dedicated direct-finance budget line is identified in the approved project budget.
2	Finance linkages	Provide financial literacy/loan-readiness support where approved	Women entrepreneurs supported	Annual target based on baseline and approved scope	Project / partners	Y1–Y3	Capacity-building budget	Training records	Facilitation/linkage only unless approved elsewhere. Relevant project link: Output 2 Activity 2.5. No dedicated direct-finance budget line is identified; any support should remain financial-literacy/loan-readiness and referral-based.
2	Finance linkages	Facilitate referrals/linkages to financial institutions	Women referred/linked	Annual target based on identified demand and partner capacity	Project / Finance partners	Y1–Y3	Partnership/linkage activity	Referral records	Facilitation/linkage only unless approved elsewhere. Relevant project link: Output 2 Activity 2.5. No direct loan/guarantee provision is included in the approved project budget.

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
2	Communication	Develop gender-responsive communication products	Products available in appropriate formats/channels	At least 3 formats or channels, selected according to intended audience needs	Project Team	Y1–Y3	Communication budget	Communication products	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 1 Activity 1.1 and Output 2 Activity 2.1/2.7. Communication is also addressed in project communications. Budget: Output 1/2 BL 3000 and project communications/management resources as applicable.
1	M&E	Integrate sex-disaggregated and gender-specific indicators	Relevant indicators reported by sex	100% of relevant indicators	Existing project personnel designated by project management for M&E and reporting	Quarterly	M&E budget	Project reports/databases	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Output 1–3 indicators explicitly include gender-disaggregated measures for relevant training/beneficiary indicators. Budget: Project M&E/management costs; Output-level implementation budgets.
1	M&E	Apply routine gender screening and implementation-review tools	Relevant activities and implementation arrangements screened and reviewed	Annual target defined in workplan	Existing project personnel designated by project management for implementation monitoring	Annual	M&E/technical assistance budget	Screening forms, implementation reviews and follow-up records	Outcome: Strengthened national food safety system. Project baseline measurement, regular monitoring and end-of-project reporting. Budget: Project M&E costs (indicative M&E cost US\$10,000) plus relevant output budgets.
2	Learning	Document gender results and lessons	Case studies/learning products	At least 1–2 annually where evidence supports documentation	Project Team	Annual	Knowledge management budget	Case studies/learning products	Outcome/Goal learning: improve cashew exports through a strengthened national food safety system. Relevant indicators include export access, export volume, income and approved food-safety frameworks. Budget: project management/communication

Priority	Strategic area	Action	Indicator	Baseline / target approach	Responsibility	Timing	Resource / budget source	Means of verification	Approved project cross-reference
									resources and relevant output budgets.

The indicative gender shares below are cost-allocation estimates, not targets for women's participation and not separately earmarked funds. They represent the estimated proportion of each approved budget line expected to support explicit gender-responsive delivery measures. The shares use a tiered planning methodology: 10% for indirect mainstreaming embedded in broader technical or management activities; 15–20% where a material portion of the line supports accessible delivery, communication, equipment access or monitoring measures; 25% where substantial direct support responds to identified gender barriers; and 50% only where gender-responsive content is expected to be a principal purpose of the relevant subcontract or training expenditure. Output 2 carries the largest attribution because it contains most direct beneficiary engagement, enterprise support, training, coaching and technology-dissemination activities. In particular, the 50% shares assigned to Output 2 subcontracts and local training reflect the expectation that these lines will directly deliver GAP-responsive enterprise support and accessible capacity building while remaining part of the project's broader food-safety and SPS interventions. All percentages are provisional planning assumptions and should be validated through annual workplans, procurement plans, contracts and actual expenditure records; any unsupported share should be adjusted during annual work planning.

Table 6. Indicative Gender-Responsive Attribution of Existing Approved Budget Lines — [Estimated portions supporting](#) gender-responsive delivery within the existing project budget: [amounts are planning attributions rather than](#) a separate gender budget.

Project component	Approved budget line	Approved line amount	Indicative gender share	Indicative gender-responsive attribution	Major gender-responsive expenditure area	Basis for indicative gender share
Output 1	BL 1100 – International Experts/Staff	\$30,000	10%	\$3,000	Gender-responsive legal/policy expertise and inclusive consultation support	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 1	BL 1500 – Project Travel	\$9,000	10%	\$900	Participation/access for gender-responsive consultations and field engagement	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 1	BL 1700 – Local Experts	\$144,000	10%	\$14,400	Gender-responsive technical/legal consultation and implementation support	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 1	BL 4500 – Equipment	\$10,000	0%	\$0	Inspection and food-safety-control equipment under Output	Included for full reconciliation with the approved project budget; no gender-responsive attribution assigned

					1; not enterprise equipment support	
Output 1	BL 3000 – Local Trainings	\$6,316	20%	\$1,263	Inclusive consultation/training delivery and gender-responsive capacity building	Material gender-responsive integration: a defined portion of the line supports accessible training, communication, equipment access or M&E measures addressing identified gender barriers.
Output 1	BL 5100 – Miscellaneous	\$13,000	10%	\$1,300	Gender-responsive communication/participation and implementation incidentals	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 1 total		\$212,316		US\$20,863	Aggregated gender-responsive allocation across Output 1	Subtotal of indicative gender-responsive allocations
Output 2	BL 1100 – International Experts	\$30,000	25%	\$7,500	Gender-responsive food-safety/HACCP technical assistance	Substantial gender-responsive contribution: the line directly supports enterprise diagnostics, coaching, technical assistance or field support where gender barriers are a specific implementation consideration.
Output 2	BL 1500 – Project Travel	\$12,000	25%	\$3,000	Accessible participation and field support for women beneficiaries	Substantial gender-responsive contribution: the line directly supports enterprise diagnostics, coaching, technical assistance or field support where gender barriers are a specific implementation consideration.
Output 2	BL 1700 – Local Experts	\$72,000	25%	\$18,000	Enterprise diagnostics, coaching, mentoring and gender-responsive technical support	Substantial gender-responsive contribution: the line directly supports enterprise diagnostics, coaching, technical assistance or field support where gender barriers are a specific implementation consideration.
Output 2	BL 2100 – Subcontracts	\$15,000	50%	\$7,500	Gender-responsive IEC, diagnostics, manuals/coaching and specialist support	High gender-responsive share: gender-responsive IEC, training, diagnostics or specialist support is a principal purpose of the line, while the line may still serve the wider project.
Output 2	BL 3000 – Local Trainings	\$15,000	50%	\$7,500	Accessible training, women's participation, trainers/resource persons	High gender-responsive share: gender-responsive IEC, training, diagnostics or specialist support is a principal purpose of the line, while the line may still serve the wider project.
Output 2	BL 4500 – Equipment	\$25,000	20%	\$5,000	Technology/equipment measures addressing documented access constraints	Material gender-responsive integration: a defined portion of the line supports accessible training, communication, equipment access or M&E measures addressing identified gender barriers.
Output 2	BL 5100 – Miscellaneous	\$6,000	20%	\$1,200	Inclusive implementation and communication costs	Material gender-responsive integration: a defined portion of the line supports accessible training, communication, equipment access or M&E measures addressing identified gender barriers.

Output 2 total		\$175,000		US\$49,700	Aggregated gender-responsive allocation across Output 2	Subtotal of indicative gender-responsive allocations
Output 3	BL 1100 – International Experts	\$15,000	10%	\$1,500	Gender-responsive technical capacity development	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 3	BL 1500 – Project Travel	\$12,000	10%	\$1,200	Inclusive participation in institutional capacity building	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 3	BL 1700 – Local Experts	\$24,000	10%	\$2,400	Gender-responsive institutional/technical assistance	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 3	BL 3000 – Local Trainings	\$15,000	20%	\$3,000	Women’s participation in laboratory/certification/metrology training	Material gender-responsive integration: a defined portion of the line supports accessible training, communication, equipment access or M&E measures addressing identified gender barriers.
Output 3	BL 4500 – Equipment	\$40,000	10%	\$4,000	Gender-responsive access considerations within quality infrastructure support	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 3	BL 5100 – Miscellaneous	\$10,000	10%	\$1,000	Inclusive implementation and participation costs	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Output 3 total		\$116,000		US\$13,100	Aggregated gender-responsive allocation across Output 3	Subtotal of indicative gender-responsive allocations
Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 1101 – Technical Services	\$26,244	10%	\$2,624	Gender technical support, M&E/tools and implementation oversight	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 1500 – Project Travel	\$12,000	15%	\$1,800	Gender-responsive monitoring/field engagement	Moderate mainstreaming share: the line includes identifiable gender-responsive monitoring, participation or field-engagement costs alongside broader project functions.
Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 1600 – Staff Travel	\$10,230	15%	\$1,535	Gender-responsive supervision/monitoring and stakeholder engagement	Moderate mainstreaming share: the line includes identifiable gender-responsive monitoring, participation or field-engagement costs alongside broader project functions.

Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 1700 – Local Experts	\$115,000	10%	\$11,500	Gender/M&E/communication and project implementation expertise	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 2100 – Subcontracts	\$6,000	20%	\$1,200	Gender-responsive communication/M&E or specialist support	Material gender-responsive integration: a defined portion of the line supports accessible training, communication, equipment access or M&E measures addressing identified gender barriers.
Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 3000 – Local Trainings	\$28,500	20%	\$5,700	Gender mainstreaming, M&E, learning and capacity building	Material gender-responsive integration: a defined portion of the line supports accessible training, communication, equipment access or M&E measures addressing identified gender barriers.
Project Management, Communication & Reporting	BL 5100 – Miscellaneous	\$11,210	10%	\$1,121	Gender-responsive communication, M&E and adaptive management	Indirect mainstreaming share: gender-responsive inputs are embedded in a broader line, such as inclusive consultations, technical advice, supervision or communication.
Project Management total		\$209,184		US\$25,480	Aggregated gender-responsive allocation across project management, communication and reporting	Subtotal of indicative gender-responsive allocations
GRAND TOTAL		\$712,500		US\$109,143		Subtotal/total of the indicative gender-responsive shares applied to component budget lines.

Annex II: Implementation Framework

Implementation of the Gender Action Plan should be integrated into the project's existing management, implementation and monitoring structures. UNIDO and the Project Management Unit should provide overall coordination and accountability, supported by the Gender Specialist/Gender Focal Point and M&E function. National institutions, quality infrastructure bodies, producer organizations, cooperatives, women-led enterprises and financial institutions will contribute to translating gender commitments into concrete action

This Annex operationalizes the Gender Action Plan (GAP) through existing project governance, approved resources and partner coordination. Overall accountability rests with UNIDO project management working with FSQA and relevant implementing partners under the approved project governance arrangements.

Table 7: Institutional Responsibilities

Actor	Proposed gender responsibilities
UNIDO / Project Manager	Strategic oversight; ensure GAP integration into project planning, implementation and reporting.
Project Team / PMU	Coordinate implementation; maintain gender action tracker; collect and report gender indicators.
Gender Specialist / Gender Focal Point	Provide technical advice; review activities; support gender screening, tools and capacity development.
M&E function	Maintain sex-disaggregated data; monitor gender indicators; support baseline, outcome and end-line assessment.
FSQA / quality institutions	Provide gender-responsive food-safety, testing, inspection and certification services.
Producer organizations/cooperatives	Mobilize women; strengthen leadership and participation; report sex-disaggregated membership and leadership data.
Women-led enterprises	Participate in assessments, training, improvement planning and compliance activities.
Financial institutions	Assess and improve accessibility of finance for women-owned businesses.
National gender institutions	Provide policy guidance, technical support and institutional linkages.

Governance and accountability

The Project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for coordinating and overseeing implementation of the GAP. Project management shall designate one PMU staff member to serve as the gender focal point, with responsibility for coordinating GAP follow-up, maintaining implementation records, supporting gender-responsive planning and reporting, and liaising with approved technical experts and relevant partners. FSQA supports food-safety implementation; TGSB and other quality institutions support standards, testing and certification pathways; cooperatives and producer organizations support outreach, participation and follow-up; and approved partner institutions support services and referrals as applicable.

Annual work planning

GAP actions shall be incorporated into annual workplans, procurement plans, training plans, communication plans and M&E arrangements. Annual planning shall confirm the target, responsible person and approved activity and budget line supporting each action.

Coordination mechanisms

- Gender implementation is a standing item in relevant project coordination and technical meetings.
- Review GAP implementation quarterly through project monitoring, identify corrective actions and report through regular progress reports.
- Conduct an annual GAP review consolidating results, barriers, expenditures and agreed adjustments.
- Coordinate with FSQA, TGSB, cooperatives and producer organizations, women's organizations, financial institutions and other partners for implementation and referrals.
- Maintain and update the GAP action tracker as part of routine project monitoring linked to the annual workplan, including targets, responsible persons, approved activity and budget lines, status and evidence.

Capacity Development

Capacity development shall use approved training and technical-assistance resources and focus on practical application by existing project personnel and partners, including inclusive facilitation, sex-disaggregated data, gender-responsive indicators, budgeting, prevention of unintended harm and use of the gender equity self-assessment tool.

Monitoring, reporting and learning

Implementation is reviewed quarterly through project monitoring and reported through regular progress reports. The annual GAP review consolidates results, barriers, expenditures and agreed adjustments.

Budget control, prioritization and escalation

Priority 1 actions must fit within the approved US\$798,000 STDF budget and its approved output or management lines. Priority 2 actions rely on facilitation, referrals or partner resources. Priority 3 actions require separate approval, partnerships or resource mobilization. Any support beyond the approved project scope and budget remains subject to the applicable approval and resource-mobilization processes. Any proposed action without an identified approved activity and budget source is not a project commitment and must be referred to UNIDO project management for scope and budget review and, where relevant, separate approval or resource mobilization.

Table 8. Annex II Implementation Risk Management and Safeguards

Risk	Potential effect	Mitigation
Gender treated as a stand-alone activity	Limited integration and weak sustainability	Integrate gender requirements into workplans, budgets, TORs and reporting.
Low participation of women	Unequal access to project benefits	Use targeted outreach, flexible scheduling and appropriate participation measures.
Participation without influence	Limited empowerment	Track leadership, decision-making and benefit outcomes.

Compliance costs exceed enterprise capacity	Women remain informal or excluded	Link technical support with finance and enterprise improvement planning.
Weak sex-disaggregated data	Gender gaps remain invisible	Standardize data collection tools and reporting requirements.
Social norms and care responsibilities	Training and service exclusion	Use decentralized, flexible and practical delivery arrangements.
Institutional capacity constraints	Poor implementation quality	Assign responsibilities to existing project personnel designated by project management, supported by approved technical experts and capacity building; no new post or separate team is created.

Guiding Principles

The implementation of the Gender Action Plan should follow the following principles in line with UNIDO/STDF gender principles

- 1. Do no harm:** Project activities should not increase women's workload or expose them to additional risks.
- 2. Meaningful participation:** Women's participation should involve influence and decision-making, not simply attendance.
- 3. Practicality:** Gender measures should respond to actual constraints identified in this GAP and through routine implementation monitoring.
- 4. Inclusion:** Attention should be given to women with different socio-economic circumstances, including women entrepreneurs, smallholder producers and women working in processing.
- 5. Evidence-based action:** Gender interventions should be guided by the findings of this GAP, baseline values and routine project monitoring.

Annex III: Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Accountability

This framework operationalizes monitoring of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) during project implementation and complements the approved project logframe. Approved project/logframe indicators and exact approved targets remain controlling. Additional sex-disaggregated and gender-specific measures are supplementary GAP indicators and management measures that support implementation, adaptive management and learning; they do not amend the approved results framework. The benchmark of at least 40% women's participation follows the recommendation of UNIDO's gender mainstreaming division

for this project. It applies where relevant to project activities and beneficiary groups, subject to technical eligibility, the available beneficiary pool, baseline values and the approved project scope, and does not override approved logframe targets or technical-quality requirements.

Table 9. Gender-Responsive Results Monitoring Framework — Alignment of approved project indicators and targets with GAP findings, implementation measures and supplementary gender indicators.

Results level	Approved project indicator	Approved target	GAP finding relevant to the indicator	Gender-responsive implementation measure	Sex-disaggregated GAP target / indicator
Outcome	Cashew producers certified in international good practices	3 firms	Women-owned and women-led enterprises may face greater practical constraints in meeting compliance and certification requirements because of limited finance, facilities, equipment, technical information and service access.	Use Activity 2.3 and approved enterprise-support activities to identify eligible women-owned or women-led firms, provide certification-readiness support and facilitate access to relevant services.	At least 1 of the 3 certified firms is women-owned or women-led; track all supported and certified firms by sex of owner or leader, where applicable.
Outcome	Regulators/inspectors gaining skills or capacity	50 people	Women are underrepresented in some technical and decision-making roles, although qualified women are present in relevant institutions.	Use inclusive outreach and selection, remove avoidable participation barriers and retain technical eligibility requirements.	At least 25 of the 50 project-supported regulators and inspectors gaining skills or capacity are women
Outcome	Laboratory staff gaining skills or capacity	10 people	Women's visibility in technical SPS and quality-infrastructure roles is limited, and opportunities to strengthen their technical participation should be pursued where qualified candidates are available.	Use inclusive outreach and selection for project-supported laboratory capacity building while retaining qualification and technical-role requirements.	At least 2 of the 10 project-supported laboratory staff gaining skills or capacity are women
Outcome	Number of cashew farmers with increased income	At least 50	Women's participation in processing and trading does not necessarily translate into equal control over income, bargaining power or access to higher-value markets.	Track income changes for project-supported cashew farmers by sex and ensure women have equitable access to relevant training, market information, collective marketing and enterprise-support measures within the approved project scope.	Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic will provide improved information on cooperative and association membership and women's participation in the eligible farmer pool
Output 1	Number of public-private consultation meetings organized to update the Food	5 meetings	Women's attendance does not automatically ensure meaningful participation, and women's organizations and women-led firms need	Use inclusive invitations, accessible scheduling and facilitation that enables women participants to	Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic will provide improved information on cooperative and association membership,

	Safety and Quality Act		adequate representation in legal and regulatory consultations.	contribute to consultation discussions.	including women's participation
Output 1	Number of regulators and inspectors trained to implement the updated legal framework	At least 50	Women may be underrepresented among technically eligible regulators and inspectors.	Use inclusive outreach and selection and adapt delivery arrangements where participation barriers are identified, without compromising technical requirements.	At least 25 women only if this is the same participant cohort as the 50 regulators/inspectors
Output 2	Number of producers, processors and cooperative members trained on good agriculture, processing, manufacturing, storage and hygiene practices	At least 100	Women have limited exposure to SPS-specific information and face distance, literacy, information, timing and social barriers that can affect participation and application.	Deliver accessible, practical and decentralized training using appropriate languages, visual materials, demonstrations and follow-up coaching.	Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic will establish better information on the composition of cooperatives, associations and the eligible beneficiary pool, including women members
Output 2	Number of value-chain actors supported to implement validated HACCP or HACCP-based food-safety systems	At least 5 actors	Smaller women-owned and women-led enterprises may face greater financial, infrastructure, documentation and technical barriers to implementing food-safety systems.	Use the approved cluster diagnostic and enterprise-support processes to identify eligible women-owned or women-led enterprises and provide stepwise technical support within approved activities and resources.	At least 1 of the supported actors is women-owned or women-led
Output 3	Number of laboratory, certification and metrology staff trained and inspectors trained; field inspections or audits conducted using cashew checklists	50 people	Women are less visible in technical quality-infrastructure roles and may face barriers to participation in specialist training and technical assignments.	Use inclusive outreach and selection and engage qualified women in project-supported technical training and assignments where available.	At least 25 women regulators/inspectors and at least 2 women laboratory staff where these categories correspond to the same participant cohorts

Integration with Project Monitoring and Reporting

Gender-related starting values will be established through the baseline assessment (value chain assessment), the approved Activity 2.3 cluster diagnostic and routine project records. These sources will provide sex-disaggregated information on project beneficiaries, cooperative and association membership, enterprise ownership and leadership, participation in training and services, and other Table 9 indicators where relevant. Missing information should be recorded as a data gap rather than assumed to be zero.

Progress against the Table 9 sex-disaggregated GAP targets and indicators will be reviewed through existing project monitoring and reporting processes. This does not create separate gender baseline, annual or endline deliverables.

Table 10. Integration of GAP Monitoring into Existing Project Processes — Review points, minimum reporting information and use of findings within existing monitoring processes.

<u>Existing project process</u>	<u>Minimum integrated gender content</u>	<u>Responsibility and management use</u>
<u>Quarterly project monitoring and progress reporting</u>	<u>Review Table 9 indicators and sex-disaggregated targets; document participation, implementation barriers, risks and corrective actions.</u>	<u>PMU, coordinated by the designated PMU gender focal point; used for implementation follow-up.</u>
<u>Annual review and work planning</u>	<u>Consolidate annual results, implementation barriers, relevant expenditure, lessons and any target adjustments informed by Activity 2.3 and routine monitoring.</u>	<u>PMU and implementing partners; informs the next annual workplan and budget.</u>
<u>Mid-term review</u>	<u>Assess progress toward approved indicators and sex-disaggregated GAP targets and determine whether implementation measures are addressing the identified barriers.</u>	<u>Integrated into the project mid-term review and used to agree corrective actions.</u>
<u>Final project report and end-of-project assessment</u>	<u>Report achievement of Table 9 sex-disaggregated targets and indicators, explain external dependencies or data limitations, and summarize practical lessons.</u>	<u>Integrated into the STDF end-of-project assessment and final reporting process.</u>

Follow-up Arrangements: The Project Management Unit (PMU) has overall M&E accountability. The PMU staff member designated as gender focal point coordinates GAP monitoring, data consolidation and follow-up. FSQA, TGSB and other quality institutions, cooperatives, approved technical experts and partner institutions provide relevant implementation data within their mandates. The PMU maintains the GAP action tracker and reviews data quarterly through routine project monitoring, with results incorporated into regular progress reports. End-of-project reporting compares results with baseline values and approved targets.

Accountability and Feedback: Existing PMU/project feedback and complaints channels should be accessible to women and men participating in training, technical assistance, certification-related support and other project services. Feedback should be recorded, reviewed through routine monitoring and used for adaptive management; no separate accountability structure is created. Where feasible, consultations should provide safe opportunities for women to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

Learning: The project should document what works, for whom and under what conditions. Learning should examine contribution to SPS compliance and market outcomes while recognizing dependencies on external services, partner data and market conditions, rather than assuming guaranteed outcomes. Results should inform annual work planning and future SPS capacity-development interventions.

Annex IV: Gender Analysis Methodology

Primary consultation evidence comprised seven KII engagements and one FGD conducted by Adama Njie from 12–20 August 2026, constituting eight engagements involving 14 participants (10 women and 4 men). One KII jointly involved two Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce representatives and was recorded as one institutional response; the single FGD involved six women members of the Cashew Farmers Federation and was recorded as one group response. The common eight-question guide covered participation and roles; training and capacity; information and awareness; infrastructure and technology; testing, certification and compliance; finance and enterprise development; leadership and decision-making; and recommended project actions. Responses were consolidated at engagement level and thematically coded; figures and frequencies are coded mentions, not counts of individual participants, and are not statistically representative.

The methodology comprises desk review, policy and institutional analysis, stakeholder consultation, gender-responsive value-chain analysis and triangulation. The gender analysis questions and analytical dimensions were adapted from UNIDO's Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming the Project Cycle and its guidance on gender mainstreaming in agribusiness development projects, and contextualized for the Gambian cashew value chain.

No.	Area	Key Question
1	Participation & Roles	What are the main roles of women and men in the cashew value chain, and where are women most/least represented?
2	Training & Capacity	Do women and men have equal access to food-safety/SPS training? If not, what are the main barriers?
3	Information & Awareness	Do women-owned/led businesses have adequate access to SPS, food-safety, certification and market information?
4	Infrastructure & Technology	Do women have equal access to appropriate processing equipment, facilities, technology and quality infrastructure?

5	Testing, Certification & Compliance	What challenges do women-owned/led enterprises face in accessing registration, testing, inspection, certification and compliance services?
6	Finance & Enterprise Development	What are the main financial or business-development barriers affecting women-owned/led cashew enterprises?
7	Leadership & Decision-Making	To what extent are women represented in cooperatives, producer organizations, technical structures and sector decision-making?
8	Institutional Support & Recommendations	What are the two most important actions the project should take to improve women's participation and benefits in the cashew value chain?

Source/Adaptation: Developed for this assignment based on UNIDO and STDF gender-analysis guidance and adapted to the Gambian cashew value chain.

Annex V: Gender Data Collection and Self-assessment Tools

Table 11. Data and Self-Assessment Matrix

Dimension	Illustrative indicator	Score 1–5
Ownership/control	Women have ownership or meaningful control over enterprise assets	1–5
Leadership	Women participate in management and strategic decisions	1–5
Employment	Women have fair access to jobs, skills and advancement	1–5
Training	Women access relevant food-safety/SPS training	1–5
Technology	Women have access to appropriate processing and digital technologies	1–5
Finance	Women can access suitable finance for compliance and growth	1–5
SPS services	Women can access testing, inspection and certification	1–5
Markets	Women have access to formal and higher-value markets	1–5
OHS	Workplaces address risks affecting women and men	1–5
M&E	Enterprise collects relevant sex-disaggregated information	1–5

Suggested interpretation: 1 = very weak; 2 = weak; 3 = moderate; 4 = good; 5 = strong. The score should be used diagnostically and should not be interpreted as an impact measure by itself.

***Note:** This self-assessment tool is developed for the STDF Cashew Food Safety Project by adapting relevant gender-mainstreaming principles from UNIDO and STDF guidance to the Gambian cashew enterprise context. It is a project-specific diagnostic tool and is not presented as an official UNIDO or STDF standardized instrument.*

B. Institutional Gender Mainstreaming Checklist

- Does the institution have a gender policy or operational commitment?
- Is there a gender focal point or designated responsibility?
- Are sex-disaggregated data routinely collected?
- Are gender considerations included in annual planning and budgeting?
- Are women adequately represented in committees and decision-making structures?
- Are services accessible to women-owned and women-led businesses?
- Are training schedules and delivery arrangements inclusive?
- Are procurement and technical assistance processes gender-responsive?
- Are gender results included in monitoring and reporting?
- Is there a mechanism for feedback and accountability?

Annex VI: Baseline and M&E Data Template

Table 12. Monitoring and Evaluation Template

Data field	Required disaggregation	Frequency	Source
Beneficiary ID	Sex; role/value-chain segment	Each activity	Registration form
Training participation	Sex; role; location	Each training	Attendance register
Training completion	Sex; completion status	Each training	Training records
Trainer/facilitator	Sex; technical area	Each event	Trainer register
Enterprise ownership	Sex of owner/manager	Baseline/annual	Enterprise assessment
Finance application	Sex; product; status	Quarterly	Finance partner
Testing/certification	Sex of enterprise owner; service	Quarterly	QI institution records
Compliance status	Sex of enterprise owner; compliance level	Baseline/annual	Enterprise assessment
Leadership	Sex; position	Annual	Cooperative/project records
Market access	Sex of enterprise owner; market type	Annual	Enterprise survey
Business performance	Sex of owner; agreed indicator	Baseline/Endline	Enterprise survey
Enterprise ownership/leadership classification	Women-owned = $\geq 51\%$ women ownership/control; women-led = woman has primary day-to-day management/strategic decision-making responsibility	Baseline/annual	Enterprise registration/assessment and documented owner/manager declaration

Source/Adaptation: This screening checklist was developed for the project based on UNIDO gender-mainstreaming principles and STDF gender-analysis requirements and adapted to the activities and implementation arrangements of the STDF Cashew Food Safety Project.

Annex VIII: UNIDO Gender Marker and STDF Alignment Matrix

Table 14. UNIDO Gender Marker and STDF Alignment Matrix

Output/activity category	Indicative project-level assessment	Rationale / evidence required
Project-wide implementation	GM1 – mainstream gender within approved project scope	Integrate gender-responsive beneficiary selection, delivery, communication, M&E and reporting into existing activities; do not imply reclassification.
Legal/regulatory and policy-related activities	GM1 – gender mainstreaming entry point	Where consultations, reviews or policy processes are already planned, ensure women's participation and use sex-disaggregated evidence where relevant.
Producer/processor/cooperative capacity development	GM1 – gender mainstreaming entry point	Apply gender-responsive training, enterprise diagnostics, HACCP-related coaching, technology dissemination and cooperative support within approved activities.
Quality infrastructure/testing/certification	GM1 – gender mainstreaming entry point	Improve practical access and information for women-owned/led enterprises through existing quality-infrastructure and service-linkage activities.
Enterprise and market development	GM1 – gender mainstreaming entry point	Address documented barriers to registration, finance, facilities, equipment, certification and higher-value markets through existing support and partner linkages.
M&E and accountability	GM1 – gender mainstreaming entry point	Integrate sex-disaggregated indicators, definitions, reporting frequencies and follow-up into the project M&E system.
Additional-resource measures	Outside existing budget unless confirmed	Direct grants, major equipment/infrastructure, certification subsidies, credit guarantees or new financial products require explicit budget confirmation or partner/resource mobilization.

UNIDO Gender Marker – current clearance: GM1. This annex does not recommend or imply a change in the approved project-level Gender Marker. It shows how gender considerations can be operationalized within the approved project scope and results architecture. Any activity requiring resources beyond an existing approved budget line should be clearly identified for budget confirmation or partner/resource mobilization.

Annex IX: Gender Screening Checklist for Project Activities

Table 15. Gender Screening Checklist for Project Activities

Screening question	Yes/No/Partial	Required follow-up
Does the activity explicitly address a gender issue identified in the analysis?		
Does the activity consider different needs and constraints of women and men?		
Will sex-disaggregated data be collected?		
Are outputs/activities designed to meet different needs and priorities?		
Does the activity have a gender-responsive indicator and target where relevant?		
Are adequate resources allocated for gender measures?		
Were women/gender-focused groups consulted?		
Can both women and men participate meaningfully?		
Is gender expertise available to support implementation?		
Could the activity unintentionally increase women's workload or risk?		
Will M&E assess gender outcomes and behavioral/organizational change?		

Source/Adaptation: Developed for this GAP based on UNIDO gender-mainstreaming guidance and adapted to the STDF Cashew Food Safety Project

Annex X: Proposed Context-Specific Gender Sensitivity Training Areas, Content and Delivery Mode

Table 16. Proposed Gender-Sensitivity Training Areas, Content and Delivery Modes

Training Area	Indicative Content	How It Should Be Delivered
Gender and the cashew value chain	Gender roles, division of labour, norms and women's economic participation	Local examples and participatory exercises
Women's access to resources	Land, equipment, technology, finance and productive assets	Practical case studies
Gender and food safety	Hygiene, sanitation, food-safety responsibilities and compliance	Demonstrations and visual materials
OHS	PPE, heat, sharp tools, dust, smoke, chemicals and ergonomics	Practical demonstrations
Enterprise compliance	Registration, documentation, traceability, testing and certification	Enterprise-level checklists
Leadership and decision-making	Women's participation in cooperatives and project structures	Group exercises and mentoring
Financial literacy	Loan readiness, financial products, business planning and repayment	Practical business exercises
Inclusive communication	Gender-sensitive facilitation and communication	Local-language and accessible materials
Training delivery	Timing, location, transport, care responsibilities and digital access	Short, decentralized and flexible sessions
Follow-up support	Coaching and enterprise improvement planning	Post-training mentoring and technical assistance

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