

Study and Workshop on the Associativity as a Strategy to Improve the Competitiveness of Women in Small- Scale Agriculture in APEC Economies

APEC Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group

January 2025



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**



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January 2025

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Acronyms:

APEC:	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ATCWG:	Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group
ICA:	International Cooperative Alliance
ILO:	International Labour Organization
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
MIDAGRI:	Ministerio de Desarrollo Agrario y Riego del Perú (Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation of Peru)
MSMEs:	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NGOs:	Non-governmental organizations
PPWE:	Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
Survey ASICWSS:	Survey for APEC's Ministry of Agriculture officials
UN:	United Nations
WB:	World Bank
WSSA:	Women in Small Scale Agriculture

1. Executive summary

The Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group (ATCWG)¹, in accordance with the mandate of La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019-2030) has carried out efforts to enhance women's capacities and pursue for a greater inclusion of women in the regional economy by empowering women through access to capital and markets as well as supporting women's education, training and skills development.

In this context, the Secretariat of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation of Peru (MIDAGRI) carried out a study and a Workshop on Associativity as a Strategy to Improve the Competitiveness of Women in Small-Scale Agriculture (WSSA) in APEC Economies. The aim of this project, that includes a desk research, a survey, and a workshop, is to demonstrate the importance of policies and programs for the productive inclusion of WSSA through associative models, to enhance their inclusion in the market and to influence the innovation and the consolidation of competitive advantages. Taking this as their main orientation, the desk research, survey, and workshop, explore government laws, policies, plans and interventions to strengthen the associativity as a strategy to improve the competitiveness of WSSA². The main findings of the desk research, the survey and the workshop are:

- ✓ The role of the member economies government and legislation is a critical issue in associative model development. Associativity in the agricultural sector requires efficient legislation that includes tax and labor specific treatments; as well as clear regulations for the organization, audit and control.
- ✓ Institutional framework specially designed to promote associative activity in WSSA has been successful, especially when meeting the specific needs of women farmers and when resources or financing are provided for the implementation of specific programs and actions.
- ✓ There is no evidence or statistics on the contribution and particularities of WSSA.
- ✓ Although governments have included several measures to establish equal opportunities in the agricultural sector, there is still a long way to go to include and make rural women visible in all its diversities: Access to means of production is a significant challenge for agricultural women, such as lack of access to agricultural land, water resources and forestry; financing services, training and technical assistance, among others.
- ✓ Associativity models are strategies that allow WSSA to join together in groups or associations to collaborate in various agricultural activities. These associativity models offer a number of benefits including sharing resources, knowledge and technologies, increasing bargaining power in the market, reducing costs and risks, improving product quality and strengthening resilience to challenges such as climate change.
- ✓ An important factor to take into consideration is that women suffered disproportionately domestic and care workload. It is important to highlight the need to implement policies and strategies to address these gender gaps.
- ✓ Heterogeneity of rural women's contexts and experiences in APEC economies.

The best practice examples identified in terms of policies, strategies and efforts for the productive inclusion of WSSA through different associative models in five economies are: Australia; Mexico; Peru; the Philippines and Chinese Taipei.

2. Introduction:

WSSA plays a primary role in sustainable agriculture and rural development in the APEC region. The objective of this report is to demonstrate the importance of policies and programs for the

¹ *The Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group (ATCWG) Work Plan 2024*

² *Policy: Strategic guiding guidelines. Plan and Program: Planning instruments that the Government uses to meet the needs and demands of the people who live in a certain territory, during a specific time. They have a "larger reach and provides significant benefits" than projects. Projects: have defined objectives and the scope "is developed gradually throughout the project life cycle.*

productive inclusion of WSSA through different associative models, to enhance their inclusion in the market and influence innovation and the consolidation of competitive advantages.

This includes the collection of information on policies, plans and interventions implemented by APEC economies to strengthen the associative production, trade and entrepreneurship capacities of WSSA and their impact. The methodology of this report includes a desktop report, a survey, interviews, a feedback workshop, and information exchange.

The final product will be an exchange and collection of good practices in the implementation of productive inclusion policies and programs, that will serve as an instrument that helps decision-making on policies and interventions implemented by APEC economies.

3. Background and overview of common challenges in the APEC Region

Evidence and data are not yet available in the APEC region on addressing gender-related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve competitiveness in WSSA. There is a tendency not to include data or statistics on women in agriculture since their roles are seen as mere extension of their domestic or household work. Thus, the notion that “agriculture is gender neutral” may be partly due to the inability to collect or insufficient data on women in the phases of the agricultural value chain.

In terms of female employment by industry, data show that the service sectors have been absorbing most of the female employment in most APEC economies. In contrast, the proportion of women in the agriculture sector decreased from 32% in 2000 to 16.4% in 2020. This is in line with the economic transformation from agriculture to services that APEC economies have been experiencing. While women’s participation in economic activities has been adjusting to the economic transformation occurring in the APEC region, their participation is underrepresented in some areas. In contrast, women are overrepresented in agriculture, which only represents 3.3% percent of the GDP, but 16.4% of the employed women work in agriculture in APEC³.

It can be concluded that the most used strategy by small-scale farmers associative model is the cooperative. The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines a cooperative as: an autonomous association of women and men, who unite voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. It is a business enterprise that seeks to strike a balance between pursuing profit and meeting the needs and interests of members and their communities. Cooperatives not only provide members with economic opportunities, but also offer them a wide range of services and opportunities⁴.

An important factor to take into consideration is that women suffered disproportionately domestic and care workload. It is important to highlight the need of policies and strategies to address these gender gaps. The lack of care services, gender violence and the lack of prevention and response instruments to disaster risks and climate change are additional problems affecting WSSA. Gender inequalities are evident in agriculture labor markets, where women are more likely than men to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal, and informal employment. Gender based discrimination also undermines women’s voice and decision-making power as they tend to lack access to information and networks and are systematically underrepresented in rural institutions and organizations⁵. More information of the Context, Findings and Limitations in Annex 1.

It can be said that the main challenges of WSSA in the APEC Region are:

- **The role of the member economies government and legislation.** These are critical issues in associative model development. Associativity in the agricultural sector requires efficient

³ APEC 2020. *Economic Policy Report 2020 Structural Reform and Women’s Empowerment*

⁴ *Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation. 2002. No. 193. Recommendation concerning the promotion of cooperatives. Geneva, 90th ILO Session, 20 June 2002.*

⁵ *FAO. Women-led cooperatives support programme FAO’s experiences in the field. (2024)*

legislation that includes tax and labor specific treatments; as well as clear regulations for the organization, audit and control. Better laws will allow building stronger organizations; as well as achieving objectives based on its principles and values.

- **Specific women context.** It is critical to consider or identify different needs of women with intersectional identity. Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing economies, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. Also, projects in the field of WSSA are often designed to be gender neutral, yet women might be excluded on account of systematic gender bias.
- **Need for statistics.** There are data gaps in the fields of WSSA. Evidence and data are not available in the APEC region on addressing gender-related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve agricultural competitiveness, even worse in WSSA. ⁶
- **Leadership positions.** Efforts to achieve gender equality in leadership positions are insufficient. Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions.
- **Comprehensive Care System.** Women's participation in the workforce and professional opportunities towards leadership positions could be limited by the greater number of hours that women spend doing unpaid care and domestic work in comparison to men.⁷ However, several economies in the region have implemented programs and policies to move towards the recognition, redistribution, and reduction of care work at member economies government and local levels, but the challenge is still outstanding in the vast majority of economies.
- **Access to land and natural resources.** Need for measures to improve women's access to land and natural resources if necessary. Structural gender inequality is still embedded in APEC Economies. Even if there is no direct discrimination in laws and regulations in agriculture, women may not have equal access to and control over resources and land because of existing gender stereotypes in their families and communities. For example, access to financial services is still highly unequal. Nevertheless, according to APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard, in 2015, all 21 economies reported that married women and men have equal rights to property. Without financial services, female farmers might not be able to start their own agribusiness.⁸

4. Analysis of the survey results of APEC's Ministry of Agriculture officials (Survey ASICWSS).

An attempt has been made to develop a simple tool that is neither difficult to fill out nor time-consuming for the officials in charge of answering it. But at the same time relevant questions have been included in the Survey ASICWSS that allow collecting the necessary and pertinent information to meet the objective of the research. The Survey ASICWSS was conducted during 11 - 28 June, 2024. More information and details of the Survey ASICWSS analysis in Annex 2.

4.1. Main aspects of the Survey ASICWSS:

Structure and Questions:

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Definitions and Concepts
- ✓ Introductory questions (five questions)
- ✓ General information about the Economy/Associative Models in your Economy (four questions)
- ✓ Institutional framework (thirteen questions)
- ✓ Specific questions about the institutional Framework (eight questions)

Features:

⁶ APEC (2023). *The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard 2023*. APEC Policy Support Unit.

⁷ APEC (2023). *The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard 2023*. APEC Policy Support Unit.

⁸ APEC GIFTS A+: *Policy Toolkit on Promoting Gender Inclusion in Smart Agriculture*. Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (2021)

- ✓ Survey is simple and short but relevant questions have been included that allow collecting the necessary and pertinent information to meet the objective of the research.
- ✓ Use yes/no questions; multiple choice questions and Likert Scales.
- ✓ Structured to facilitate tabulating responses
- ✓ Open questions are included for qualitative analysis

Population and sample

- ✓ Population: APEC's 21 Ministry of Agriculture officials. The Survey ASICWSS was sent to all 21 economies. Ten (10) economies responded by filling out the survey.
- ✓ Interviewed in depth for the purposes of “Deep Dives”/ identify 5 best practices.

4.2. Main preliminary findings from the analysis of the Survey ASICWSS

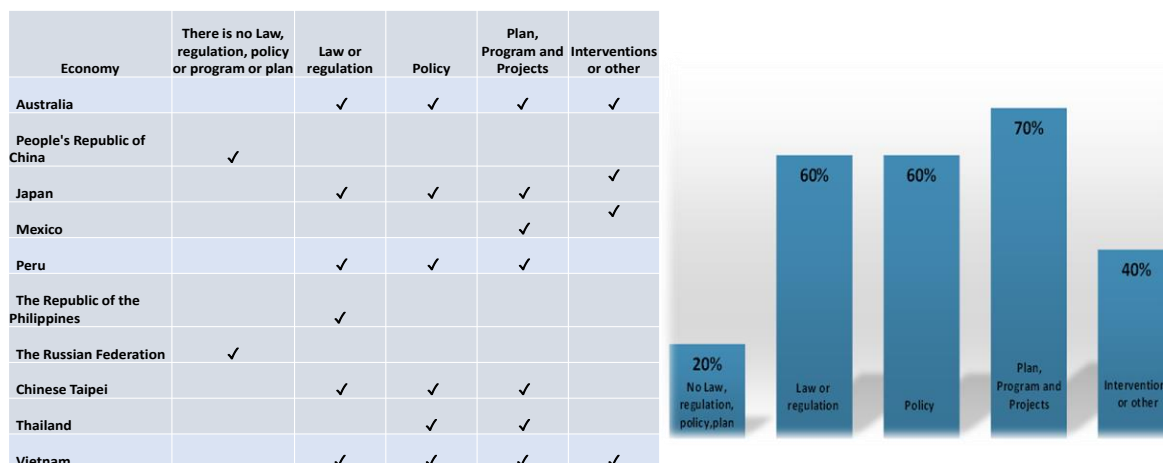
The expert consultant had reviewed and analyzed in depth the answers from the 10 economies that filled out the survey. It is necessary to indicate that not all economies filled out all the questions. However, the responses can be considered as a trend or tendency in order to draw conclusions and identify relevant cases for sharing.

4.2.1. Institutional framework

The aim of the project is to demonstrate the importance of policies and programs for the productive inclusion of WSSA through different associative models, to enhance their inclusion in the market and to influence innovation and the consolidation of competitive advantages. Taking this objective as the main orientation, the survey explores laws, policies, plans and interventions to strengthen associativity as an strategy to improve the competitiveness of WSSA⁹.

Of the 10 APEC economies that responded the survey, the vast majority eight (8) indicated that they had “Plans, Programs and Projects” where most of them have a policy or law. It should be noted that out of the ten (10) economies, only two (2) responded that it doesn’t have any of these instruments.

Figure 1: Main government laws, policies, plans and interventions to strengthen Associativity of WSSA



To the explanation of whether these law, police or programs have been successful in improving the competitiveness of WSSA and what is considered to be their characteristics and key factors, the answers include among others:

- ✓ Government leadership and institutional framework are both important to ensure the implementation and effectiveness of the gender equity policy in the economy.

⁹ Policy: Strategic guiding guidelines. Plan and Program: Planning instruments that the Government uses to meet the needs and demands of the people who live in a certain territory, during a specific time. They have a “larger reach and provides significant benefits” than projects. Projects: have defined objectives and the scope “is developed gradually throughout the project life cycle.

- ✓ Resources delivered after the institutional framework have been improved, promoted investment and increased productivity. Institutional framework ensures financial support in addressing gender inequality.
- ✓ The program has a technical support strategy to promote among small and medium-scale producers, the adoption of appropriate practices and technologies.
- ✓ Encourage women to create and engage in organizations, including cooperatives, where they could develop social skills without feeling threatened or inhibited by men's presence, and where they could push for common concerns like getting credit for entrepreneurial/ agricultural projects and assistance for projects on environmental protection.
- ✓ Ensure women's enjoyment of their equitable share of benefits from sustainable resource use in a quality environment.
- ✓ Promote the empowerment of women, making their productive activities visible in their communities and having direct effects on strengthening their socio-emotional environment.
- ✓ Financial empowerment: provide women with access to resources for investing in their farms, potentially leading to increased productivity and efficiency.
- ✓ Rate of women as core persons engaged in farming has improved. For example, in Japan, the rate of women in agricultural committees has risen from 4.6% (2008) to 14% (2023); in the same way, women elected/appointed as officials of agricultural cooperatives has risen from 2.5% to 9.6% in 2022.
- ✓ Contributes to female economic empowerment, which is key in order to confront violence and promote gender equity and social equality.

As a way to narrow down the question and be more specific, the question to what degree has this “institutional framework” contributed to WSSA?” was asked. The answers were revealing because, only 33% considered the contribution of “Access to technical assistance” as very important, followed by “Access to specialized information and technology and Access to technical assistance” and “Access to benefits: taxes, public purchases, others” (22% each). The majority of responses point out the different contributions as acceptable.

Figure 2: This “Framework” has contributed to WSSA specifically in

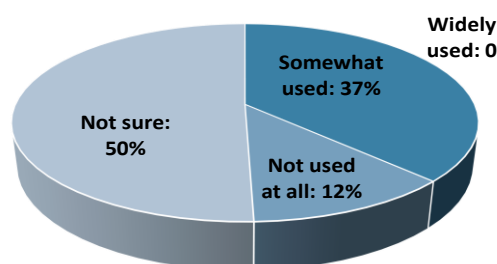
	Very Poor	Poor	Accept.	Good	Very Good
Women’s integration into the formal economy	0	0	44%	33%	22%
Increasing capacities for production and competitiveness.	0	11%	33%	33%	22%
Economies of scale and connection to value chains	0	11%	67%	11%	11%
Trade and market articulation and negotiation	0	11%	56%	22%	11%
Entrepreneurship (organizational and managerial skills)	0	11%	44%	22%	22%
Access to resources, water, etc.	0	33%	22%	22%	22%
Access to credit	0	22%	33%	33%	11%
Access to specialized information and technology	0	11%	56%	11%	22%
Access to technical assistance	0	11%	22%	33%	33%
Access to benefits: taxes, public purchases, others	0	11%	44%	22%	22%

To the question if small farmers are aware of these laws, regulations, policies or programs, almost all the economies answered yes. Some actions or strategies they have taken for this aim are:

- Community workshops, seminars, farmer field schools and training sessions; partnerships with local organizations, written, digital, and social media platforms and social networks.
- “Extension officers” play a crucial role in disseminating information to farmers in rural communities, including small scale women or individual consultations in order to spread awareness about the framework and its benefits for women farmers. Disseminating information can be achieved by distributing e-mail newsletter to farmers.
- Holding meetings with government officials to encourage the implementation of frameworks.
- For example, the Agricultural Workforce Forum brings employer groups, unions and the Australian Government together quarterly to identify opportunities to address workforce.

To develop and shape even more the analysis of the relevance of the “institutional framework”, we ask “to what extent do small-scale women in agriculture use these “framework” to strengthen the productive, commercial and entrepreneurial associative capacities of women in small-scale agriculture?”, concluding that an evaluation or monitoring have not been carried out of this institutional framework in 50% of the economies because the economies don’t know if this framework is actually used by small farmers, which point out a very relevant fact to be improved.

Figure 3: Use of the “Institutional Framework”



As for the specific public instruments in the “institutional framework” (benefits and services) to promote associative models in WSSA, the answers of the economies indicate that the economies do not consider the provision of tax benefits of great impact to promote associative models in WSSA (Special tax regime 90%, income tax exemption 100%, unaffected by general sales tax 90%, these answers obtained the lower scores).

On the other hand, services, in general, have obtained higher scores than benefits in terms of availability and impact, highlighting: Technical tours to learn about experiences, strengthen and improve capabilities and advances in productive and networking: 80%, Generation of local-regional governance and articulation of public services: 70% and Exchanges of domestic and international experiences of successful cases: 70%.

To the question how important is the development of this “institutional framework” to enhance WSSA inclusion in the market and influence innovation and the consolidation of competitive advantages, all the economies consider it important o very important:

Figure 4: Importance of the framework in the competitive advantages

Degree	Production	Trade	Entrepreneurship	Innovation
Very Important	80%	80%	70%(*)	80%
Important	20%	20%	20%	20%
Less Important	0	0	0	0

Not Sure	0	0	0	0
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(*) One economy didn't answer

A relevant aspect exposed by the survey is that the “institutional framework” promotes the involvement of women in terms of active participation as members, directors, or delegates of the organization in training and leadership development and governing bodies in associative models. In fact, 9 of the 10 economies responded positive to this question, and the specific aspects that they point out are almost all listed in the survey: Anti-discrimination provisions, active participation of women as members of the organization on equal terms with men, active participation of women as directors or delegates of the organization on equal terms with men, equal participation of women in training and leadership development programs, seeking to include in its governing bodies a minimum number of women, as well as preventing violence and harassment in spaces linked to the participation of women in associativity.

More information in Annex 2: Methodology and Survey ASICWSS results analysis

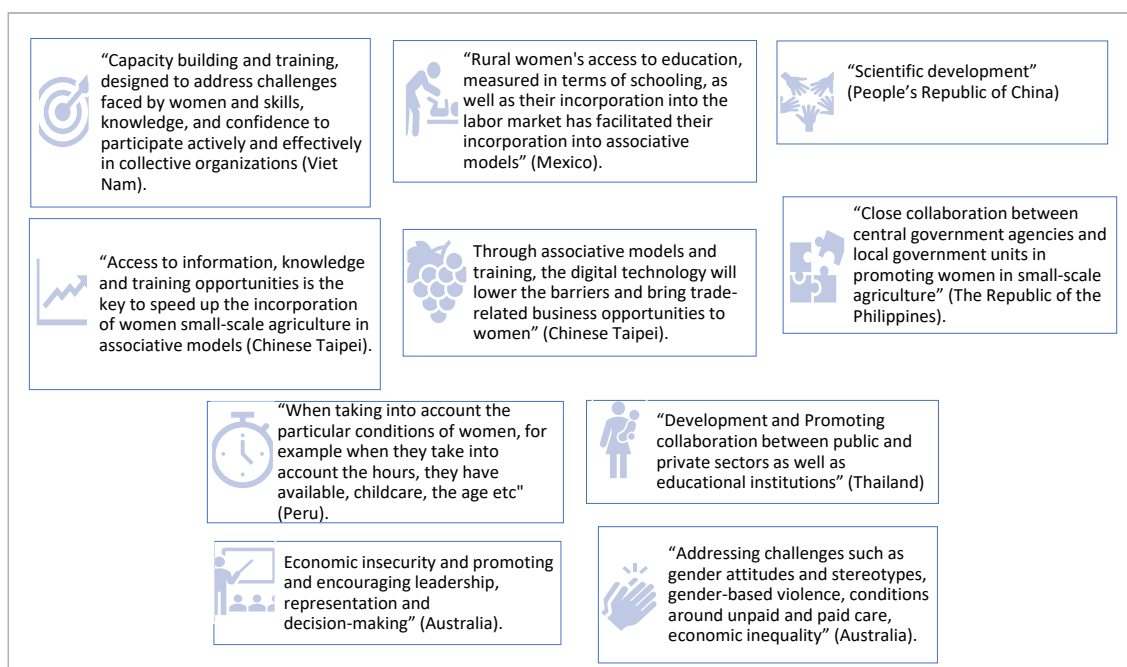
4.2.2.Challenges and key factors

The aim of this project includes the exchange and collection of good practices in the implementation of productive inclusive policies and programs, that serve as an instrument that helps decision-making on policies and interventions implemented by APEC economies. In this sense, the survey explores more qualitative questions in order to share what the economies consider to be the “challenges” that women face in implementing associative models and what are the “Key Factors” that speedup the incorporation of WSSA in associative models.

Figure 5: Challenges that WSSA Face



Figure 6: Key factors to accelerate the incorporation of WSSA into associative models



5. Overview of the Workshop: Associativity as a Strategy to Improve the Competitiveness of WSSA in APEC Economies

The workshop took place on 13 September 2024 in the city of Trujillo, Peru. The presentation of the contents was divided into two main blocks:

Session I: Associativity as a Strategy to Improve the Competitiveness of WSSA in APEC Economies. In this session the main aspects and findings of the Survey and Research were highlighted and disseminated. Complementing this subject, the following three additional themes were also covered: Associativity: A driving Force for Agrifood System by the Representative of the FAO, a Successful Experience of The Pangoa Agricultural Coffee Cooperative and Women: More Digital Empowerment and Better Opportunities. An open and enriching dialogue took place between the speakers and the participants.

Session II: Best practices - Policies, strategies and efforts for the productive inclusion of WSSA through different associative models. Four (4) economies presented in detail the best practices preselected:

- Mexican Women Farmers: Agroecological Transition and Biodiversity Conservation.
- Institutional Framework and Instruments to Enhance Women in Agriculture Associativity: The case of Chinese Taipei.
- Banking on Hope for the Future of Women in Agriculture: A Story of Resilience from Southern Philippines.
- Entrepreneurship Strategy for Rural and Indigenous Women in Peru.

This session emphasized how economies are encouraging associativity as a strategy to improve the competitiveness of WSSA and the main and common findings were:

- There is no evidence or statistics on the contribution and particularities of WSSA.
- Institutional framework or programs specially designed to promote associative activity in small-scale farmers have been successful, especially when they meet the specific needs of women farmers.

- Resources or financing are provided for the implementation of specific “institutional framework”, programs and actions.

6. Presentation of the best practices

As a result of the comprehensive review of the Desktop Research, the analysis of the Survey ASICWSS and deep interviews with experts in associativity, women and small agricultures, the expert consultant shortlisted five good practice/cases for analysis as deep dives.

To this end, the expert consultant held meetings with those responsible for the preselected economies, in order to confirm initial findings, narrow the information and systematize the most relevant aspects of these good practices. This preliminary study was enriched in the "Workshop on the Associativity as a Strategy to Improve the Competitiveness of WSSA in APEC Economies". See in Annex 3, the main aspects of the best selected practices:

Australia: The National Women's Alliances Model

- The National Women's Alliances (NWA) represent over 180 women's organizations from across Australia. They bring forward the views, voices and issues of Australian women and, in particular, women from marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- The NWA takes the lead the voices of women, especially those who in the past have found it difficult to engage in advocacy and decision making. It play a key role in understanding the experiences and issues affecting women in Australia. They ensure their voices are central in the policy development process. They are one of two streams in the Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP) that funds engagement with the women's sector and other activities to improve social and economic outcomes for women in Australia.
- Through the Alliance model, the Office for Women and policymakers are connected to women and women's sector organizations through a variety of pathways.

Mexico: Women producers and agroecology transition

- The Production for Wellbeing Program (PpB) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development supported in 2023 with a direct subsidy for production to 2,038,249 producers of the most important crops for agriculture and feeding the Mexican population. such as corn, beans, rice, wheat, amaranth, sugar cane, chia, cocoa, coffee, cactus and honey. Of this total, 35% were women.
- The Program has a Technical Support Strategy (EAT) through which the adoption of appropriate practices and technologies is promoted among small and medium-scale agricultural and livestock producers, by strengthening their capacities to transition to agroecological, productive and resilient agri-food systems.
- In 2023, the EAT had coverage in 28 entities and 920 municipalities in the economy. Preliminary data from the closure indicate that there was an impact on 153,222 producers (40% women), who, with the support of a territorial technical team made up of 1,169 technical advisors, carried out at least one agroecological practice on their farms. Producers are organized in 4,509 Field Schools where their technical and organizational capacities are strengthened with the aim of increasing food production and reducing production costs. In the Field Schools, the reduction of the use of agrochemicals is promoted through the implementation of agroecological practices such as the production and application of bioinputs.
- Production for Wellbeing is an instrument that substantially helps the economic, financial, patrimonial and productive autonomy of women, which are ways to achieve gender equality. This idea is reinforced if we consider that 60% of women Beneficiaries are located in municipalities with an indigenous population and 63% percent in the south-southeast region.

Peru: Institution framework: Entrepreneurship Strategy for Rural and Indigenous Women (EEMRI)

- Promoted by MIDAGRI, has the objective of encouraging, through subsidy, entrepreneurial plans in agriculture, livestock, forestry and crafts, linked to agriculture. This subsidy contributes to the autonomy and economic empowerment of rural and indigenous entrepreneurial women producers. The beneficiary population is the agricultural organizations (agricultural, livestock, forestry, artisanal) of rural and indigenous women producers and entrepreneurs.
- The strategy proposes two specific objectives that are implemented in two services:
 - Financing business plans and ventures through the granting of subsidies. Subsidy support to formalized rural and indigenous women's organizations and/or in the process of formalization with the implementation of business plans
 - Provide technical assistance and training in productive and business management issues, for insertion into the market.
- In 2024, the EEMRI grants a maximum amount of up US\$ 41,000.00 approx., for Women's Agrarian Organizations, as a non-refundable economic subsidy. Women's Agricultural Organizations must be made up of at least 70% women and at least 50% of their directors must be women who hold positions of president and treasurer, or another equivalent position and must be made up of a minimum of 8 agricultural producers.
- According to the Final Systematization Document of the implementation of the Strategy for the Empowerment of Rural and Indigenous Women 2022 carried out by the FAO, it is concluded, among other aspects, that the EEMRI is effective in promoting the empowerment of women, through financing of plans that allow the development and make visible their productive activities in their communities and that the positive results exceed the dimension of autonomy and economic independence, also denoting strengthening the socio-emotional sphere of the beneficiaries.
- Likewise, it is established that the strategy supports access to inputs and technology by providing the opportunity to acquire them through the entrepreneurship plans of each association.

The Philippines: Banking on Hope for the Future of Women in Agriculture: A Story of Resilience

- The Philippines has a very comprehensive institutional framework when it comes to women's rights. It has implemented the gender response budget. Their main institutional instruments are:
- The Magna Carta of Women: a landmark that made enormous progress in the economy's pursuit for gender equality since its enactment in 2009. It pivots on promoting a more gender-responsive governance through increasing women's active participation in program development and policy-making. It also mandates all government agencies to allot at least 5% of the total budget for gender and development.
- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law: promotes the rights of women to control land and its harvest.
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019-2025: guide and key reference in formulating plans and budgets. By prioritizing key actions in the Plan, government agencies and instruments assure that collective efforts result in meaningful and strategic outcomes. This has been very important in production competitiveness, innovation competitiveness, entrepreneurship competitiveness, and trade competitiveness since the aforementioned frameworks provide opportunities for women to contribute in the economy which helps its advancement.

Chinese Taipei: Institutional framework and instruments to enhance women in agriculture associativity

- "Gender Equality Policy Guidelines: It is a general guideline for mainstreaming implementation plans for policymaking by the central government authority and applies to all ministries, but its implementation requires six primary promotion tools, cooperation from the local governments and partnerships with the civic and private sectors (e.g., the farmers' associations, local cooperatives, NGO's and academic communities) address to women in disadvantaged areas, and those living in the rural or remote areas who are mostly working in the farming or fishery related sectors.
- The joint effort of central government, local governments, civic and private sectors (e.g., the farmers' cooperatives) was the key to enhance the performance of gender mainstreaming implementation plans and laid a good foundation for the development of gender equality in the agri-food sector and in rural communities.
- The programs implemented with the association of the Agricultural Cooperatives may have larger and greater impacts in Chinese Taipei, to enhance the competitiveness of small-scale women farmers, joining a local cooperative/team/association is the key.
- They work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and regional/local experimental stations on new technology deployment and/or employing new managerial skills to improve their products' quality and performance.
- Farmers' Academy was set to carry out technical and managerial training courses for the beginners, young farmers, and women farmers/fishermen in the remote areas or disadvantaged groups. There are also women-priority courses specially designed to meeting the local needs of women, and for upgrading their skills in processing of agri/aqua-cultural products, horticultural plant propagation, seed processing, and joining leisure farming.

7. Summary of the conclusions and recommendations

7.1. Conclusions

- Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing economies, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting their further inclusion in agriculture.
- Agricultural associativity in small-scale farmers emerges as an element of contribution to rural development and the generation of policies and projects for small and medium producers contribute to productivity and improve conditions of these farmers.
- The role of the member economies government and legislation are critical issues in associative model development. Associativity in the agricultural sector requires efficient legislation that includes tax and labor specific treatments; as well as clear regulations for the organization, audit and control. Better laws will allow to build stronger organizations; as well as achieving objectives based on its principles and values.
- Laws and institutional framework that regulate the associative models are not uniform and some are very old with various updates.
- The associative model in small-scale agriculture most used in APEC economies is the cooperative.
- Findings shows that "Women not only manage cooperatives but also become community leaders".¹⁰
- Almost non-existent specific and direct information on associative models or regulatory frameworks, specifically referring to WSSA.
- Access to financial services is still highly unequal.

¹⁰ FAO, 2024. *Women-led cooperatives support programme FAO's experiences in the field.*

- There are data gaps in the fields of WSSA. Evidence and data are not available in the APEC region on addressing gender-related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve agricultural competitiveness, even worse in WSSA.¹¹
- Efforts to achieve gender equality in leadership positions are insufficient. Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, both in the public and private sectors.
- According to the GGGR, more women were promoted into leadership positions in industries where women were already highly represented.
- Projects in the field of WSSA are often designed to be gender neutral, yet women might be excluded on account of systematic gender bias.
- Need for measures to improve women's access to land and natural resources if necessary. Structural gender inequalities are still embedded in APEC economies. Even if there is no direct discrimination in laws and regulations in agriculture, women may not have equal access to and control over resources and land because of existing gender stereotypes in their families or communities.
- Based on APEC's pillar "Leadership, Voice, and Agency" to promote women's economic empowerment and inclusion, together with four key priorities of APEC Chile 2019, barriers to promoting women's economic empowerment and inclusion in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors could be found in the low level of formal associativity in agriculture women. ¹²
- Associative model in small scale agriculture is well-suited to advancing women's economic participation in three key ways: i) increasing access to employment and work, ii) enabling economic democracy and agency and iii) boosting leadership and management experience.
- Associative model are spaces where women can create their own work opportunities and overcome economic exclusion. It can be stated that the improvement of the competitiveness of WSSA through an associativity model strategy can be implemented by, at least, two types of approaches or strategies:
 - o Promoting associative models in agriculture in general, including provisions or specifications to strengthen WSSA.
 - o Promoting associative models of WSSA organizations, exclusively made up of women agriculture associates and led by women in agriculture.¹³
- Although no specific APEC regulation has been found on women's associations in small-scale agriculture, many economies have implemented policies and programs to promote women's participation in this sector through agricultural associations and cooperatives. There is no single associative model of WSSA, but rather various experiences. The Survey ASICWSS provides more precise, detailed and updated information about the policies and programs that have being implemented in APEC economies. See Types and grades in Annex 2¹⁴.

7.2. Recommendations for future interventions concerning the associative capacities of WSSA in APEC economies

- Economies should make the best efforts to address the lack of universal, standardized data. Evidence and data are not yet available in the APEC region on addressing gender-

¹¹ APEC (2023). *The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard 2023*. APEC Policy Support Unit.

¹² APEC *Compendium of Best Practices Women in Agriculture and Fisheries*. (2020)

¹³ *Cooperatives that are created for and by women may help overcome social and cultural constraints which might otherwise limit women's participation in the workforce and can be particularly relevant in gender-segregated contexts. Women-only cooperatives also emerge in sectors where women are traditionally the main producers in terms of the gender division of labor. (FAO 2024. Women-led cooperatives support programme FAO's experiences in the field)*

¹⁴ ICA *International Cooperative Alliance in Mejora de la competitividad de las PYME a través del modelo cooperativo innovador (Empresa cooperativa) Estudio de investigación, simposio internacional y taller - Informe Final Grupo de Trabajo de las Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas - APEC PYME (2014)*

related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve agricultural competitiveness, even worse in WSSA. There is a tendency for women to not be counted in agricultural statistics when their roles are seen as a mere extension of their domestic or household work.

- Enhance the inclusion of provisions to identifying and consider needs of women with intersectional identity in all laws, plans, programs, projects or activities.
- Strengthen the importance of a Care System. Women are traditionally seen as the main person in charge of house chores. While family members fail to support female farmers on their work-related activities, burdens of unpaid care or domestic work may fall on them and restrict their opportunities on self-development.
- Support the promotion and better representation of WSSA in the associative models. This will help to build an improved socioeconomic structure regarding gender equality. Furthermore, promoting and supporting gender equality also boosts innovation capabilities and mindset. This is in line with recommendation 35 of the Status Commission UN Legal and Social Committee on Women, which highlights the importance of expanding the intervention, the capacity to act, the participation and the leadership of rural women and girls, as well as effective and standing full participation equality at all levels of decision-making; also recognizing the fundamental role played by civil society organizations, unions, businesses and rural women's cooperatives to gather, unite and support rural women in all areas¹⁵.
- Encourage the incorporation of gender into the design of rural development policies from the very outset. Higher levels of women participation in the economy are key to raising living standards and boosting economic growth in the region. APEC recognizes the significant contribution and impact that women have in rural and coastal communities.¹⁶

¹⁵ ONU (Organización de las Naciones Unidas). 2018. Consejo Económico y Social. Comisión de la Condición Jurídica y Social de la Mujer, 62º período de sesiones. 26 de marzo de 2018. 24 p. Disponible en <http://undocs.org/es/E/CN.6/2018/L.8>

¹⁶ The Fifth APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security, in Puerto Varas, (2019)

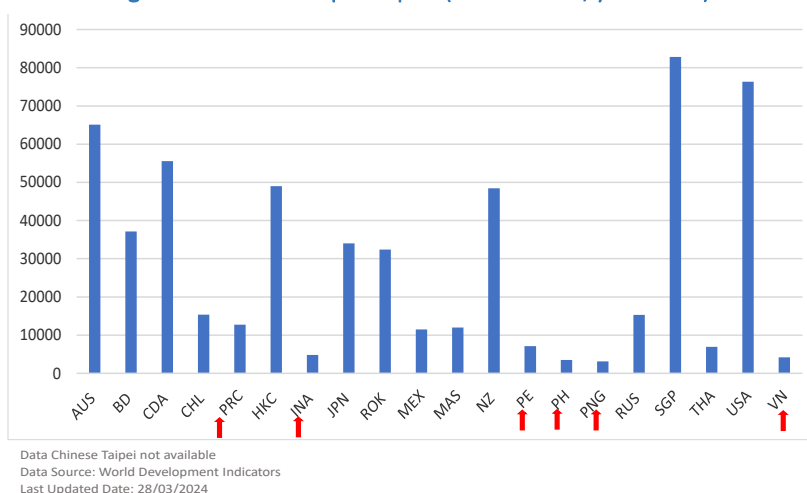
Annex 1: Context, Findings and Limitations

The expert consultant reviewed the literature in depth, focusing on APEC economies, with the aim of identifying existing studies on women in rural areas, to better understand the roles and experiences in the sector. Review of documents, literature and available information, focusing on compiling policies, plans or programs and interventions implemented by APEC economies to strengthen associational capacities for production, trade and entrepreneurship of WSSA and existing strategies, policies and programs for the productive inclusion of WSSA through different associative models, to enhance their inclusion in the market and influence innovation and the consolidation of competitive advantages.

APEC Women in agriculture State of Art at a Glance

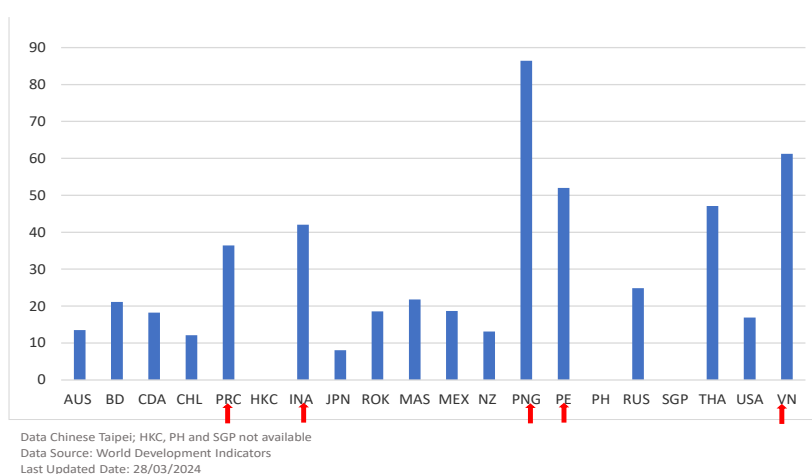
Evidence and data are not yet available in the APEC region on addressing gender-related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve agricultural competitiveness, even worse in WSSA. There is a tendency for women to not be counted in agricultural statistics when their roles are seen as mere extension of their domestic or household work. Thus, the notion that “agriculture is gender neutral” may be partly due to the inability to collect or insufficiency of data on women in the various phases of the agricultural value chain.

Figure 7: APEC: GDP per capita (current USD, year 2022)



From a simple observation of Figures 1 and 2, it can be stated that the percentage of the rural population could be directly related to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capital of the APEC economies. Economies with higher GDP per capital show a lower percentage of rural population.

Figure 8: APEC: Rural population (% of total population, year 2022)

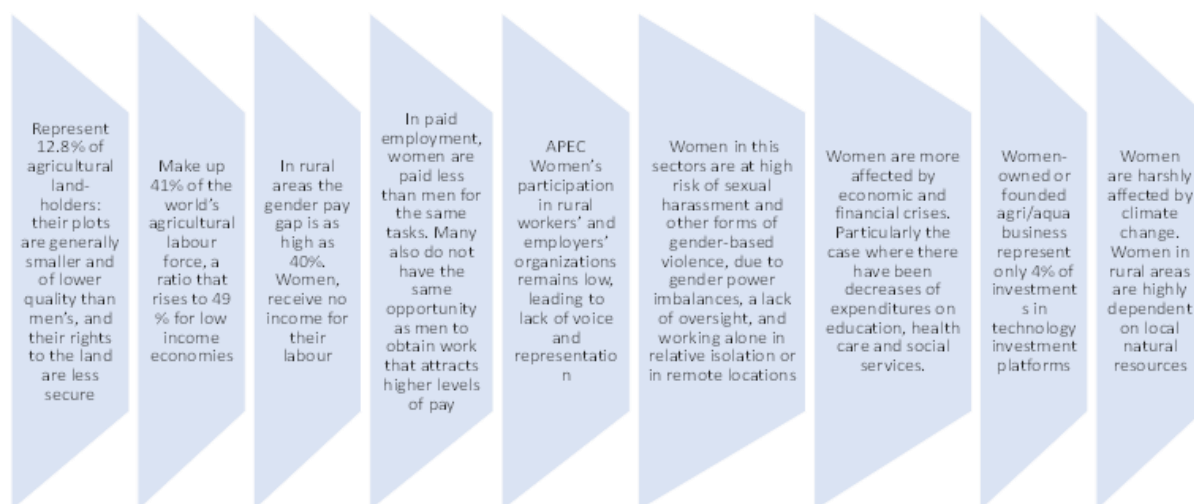


Although governments have included various measures to establish equal opportunities in the agricultural sector, there is still a long way to go to include and make rural women visible in all its diversities. For example, access to means of production is a significant challenge for agricultural women, such as lack of access to agricultural land, resources water and forestry; as well as the financing services, training and technical assistance, that perpetuate inequality in the sector. An important factor to take into consideration, is that women suffered disproportionately domestic and care workload.

Gender inequalities are evident in agriculture labor markets, where women are more likely than men to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal, and informal employment. Gender based discrimination also undermines women’s voice and decision-making power as they tend to lack access to information and networks and are systematically underrepresented in rural institutions and organizations. Persisting inequalities between women and men are a major obstacle to agriculture and rural development, and eliminating these disparities is essential to building sustainable and inclusive food systems, and resilient and peaceful societies¹⁷.

The lack of care services, gender violence solutions and the lack of prevention and response instruments to disaster risks and climate change are additional problems affecting WSSA.

Figure 9: Women Agriculture in APEC Snapshot



Source: APEC Compendium of Best Practices Women in Agriculture and Fisheries

In terms of female employment by industry, data show that the service sectors have been absorbing most of the female employment in most APEC economies (see Figure 10). In contrast, the proportion of women in the agriculture sector decreased from 32% in 2000 to 16.4% in 2020. This is in line with the economic transformation from agriculture to services that APEC economies have been experiencing. While women’s participation in economic activities has been adjusting to the economic transformation occurring in the APEC region, their participation is underrepresented in some areas (...). In contrast, women are overrepresented in agriculture, which represents 3.3% of APEC GDP, but 16.4% of the employed women work in agriculture¹⁸.

¹⁷ FAO. *Women-led cooperatives support programme FAO's experiences in the field. (2024)*

¹⁸ APEC 2020. *Economic Policy Report 2020 Structural Reform and Women's Empowerment*

Figure 10: APEC: Female employment Population, female (% of total)

Economy	2000	2010	2020
APEC Aggregate	32.0	24.1	16.4
Australia	3.4	2.3	1.6
Brunei Darussalam	1.0	0.6	0.5
Canada	1.7	1.1	0.9
Chile	4.7	5.1	4.8
China	45.7	33.5	22.1
Hong Kong, China	0.2	0.2	0.1
Indonesia	46.7	38.4	25.5
Japan	5.6	3.9	2.9
Korea	12.3	6.9	4.5
Malaysia	14.1	8.9	6.1
Mexico	6.6	3.9	3.4
New Zealand	5.8	4.3	3.6
Papua New Guinea	77.5	69.6	59.8
Peru	31.4	26.6	25.7
The Philippines	24.0	21.5	13.2
Russia	11.7	5.6	3.8
Singapore	0.5	0.4	0.3
Chinese Taipei	5.4	3.7	2.8
Thailand	47.6	36.1	28.2
United States	0.9	0.7	0.7
Viet Nam	66.3	51.2	37.5

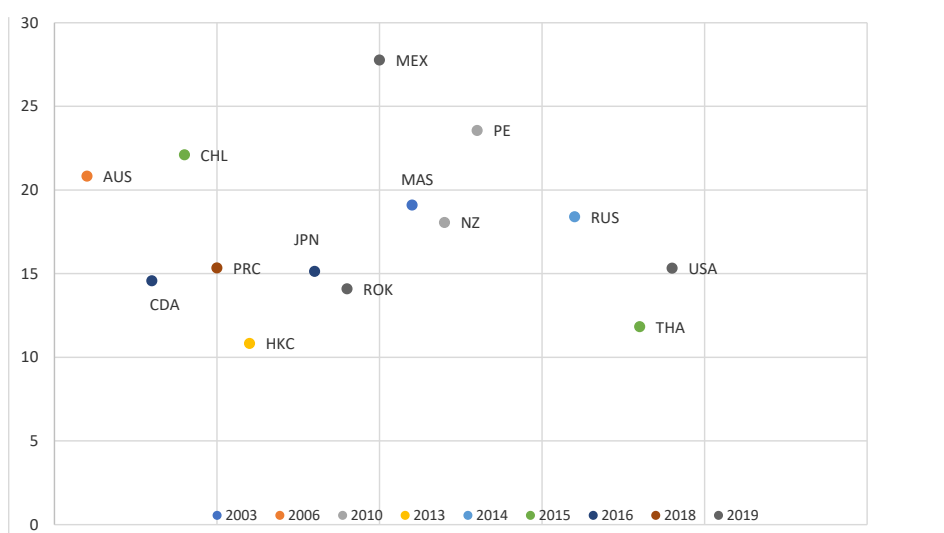
Note: The data used are based on ILO modelled estimates. Elaboration: 2020 APEC Economic Report Policy. Structural Reform and Women's Empowerment. Adaptation: M.R.Moran.

“The issue of equality and economic inclusion is even more pressing for women and others with untapped economic potential, (...). The numbers are readily available for women: they only occupy 27% of APEC parliamentary seats but are contributing more than double the time spent on unpaid labour, including domestic chores and care work, as men”.
Research Outcomes 2023 Summary of Research Projects (2023)

The lack of care services, gender violence solutions and the lack of prevention and response instruments to disaster risks and climate change are additional problems affecting WSSA. Persisting inequalities between women and men are a major obstacle to agriculture and rural development, and eliminating these disparities is essential to build sustainable and inclusive food systems, and resilient and peaceful societies¹⁹.

¹⁹ FAO. Women-led cooperatives support programme FAO's experiences in the field. (2024)

Figure 11: APEC time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, female (% of 24-hour day)



Note: only economies available
 Data Source: World Development Indicators
 Last Updated Date: 28/03/2024

Specific Main findings

- The industries where women’s representation has been trending markedly upward since 2016 (albeit dipping at the beginning of 2023) are: (...) Agriculture (+1.24%), Nevertheless, the drop in women’s workforce representation between 2022 and 2023 is observed across industries, but especially in (...) Agriculture (-0.65%).²⁰
- Access to financial services is still highly unequal due to geographical or gender issues. Need for financial services According to APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard, in 2015, all 21 economies reported that married women and men had equal rights to property. Without financial services, female farmers might not be able to start their agri-business.²¹
- There are data gaps in the fields of WSSA. Evidence and data are not available in the APEC region on addressing gender-related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve agricultural competitiveness, even worse in WSSA.²²
- Efforts to achieve gender equality in leadership positions are insufficient. Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, both in the public and private sectors. This has negative implications on advancing gender equality policies within companies and economies as a whole. Women’s participation in the workforce and professional opportunities towards leadership positions could be limited by the greater number of hours that women spend doing unpaid care and domestic work in comparison to men.²³
- Women face more headwinds in the pursuit of leadership roles (...) According to the GGGR, more women were promoted into leadership positions in industries where women were already highly represented. This implies that, in sectors or industries that have low representation of women in the workforce, the probability of women advancing into leadership roles is low. Indeed, in sectors such as technology, agriculture, energy, supply chain and transportation, manufacturing and infrastructure that have low representation of women in the entire workforce, men make up the majority of leadership positions.²⁴

²⁰ Global Gender Gap Report 2023

²¹ APEC GIFTS A+ : Policy Toolkit on Promoting Gender Inclusion in Smart Agriculture. Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (2021)

²² APEC (2023). The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard 2023. APEC Policy Support Unit.

²³ APEC (2023). The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard 2023. APEC Policy Support Unit.

²⁴ Global Gender Gap Report 2023.

Data indicates that the share of women in senior leadership positions is at 32.2% in 2023, nearly 10 percentage points lower than women's overall 2023 workforce representation of 41.9%. Women continue to be outnumbered by men in senior leadership positions across all industries, especially so in fields like Agriculture (23.3%).

- Projects in the field of WSSA are often designed to be gender neutral, yet women might be excluded on account of systematic gender bias.
- Need for measures to improve women's access to land and natural resources if necessary. Structural gender inequalities are still embedded in APEC economies. Even if there is no direct discrimination in laws and regulations in agriculture, women may not have equal access to and control over resources and land because of existing gender stereotypes in their families or communities.

Limitations of the Desktop research

- Lack of universal, standardized data. Evidence and data are not yet available in the APEC region on addressing gender-related issues in agriculture or associativity to increase or improve agricultural competitiveness, even worse in WSSA. There is a tendency for women to not be counted in agricultural statistics when their roles are seen as mere extension of their domestic or household work. Thus, the notion that "agriculture is gender neutral" may be partly due to the inability to collect or insufficiency of data on women and men in the various phases of the agricultural value chain.²⁵
- Women are traditionally seen as the main person in charge of house chores. While family members fail to support female farmers on their work-related activities, burdens of unpaid care or domestic work may fall on them and restrict their opportunities on self-development, and this work is not visible or registered.
- Heterogeneity of rural women's contexts and experiences between and within APEC economies.
- No official definitions linked to the research topic have been found in APEC, for example, no common official definition of small-scale agriculture has been found among APEC economies.

²⁵ APEC (2023). *The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard 2023*. APEC Policy Support Unit.

Annex 2: Methodology and Survey ASICWSS results analysis

Methodology

The methodology for the research study included quantitative and qualitative analysis, from primary and secondary sources. Main stages:

- ✓ **Desk review.** Collection of information and statistics from secondary sources on the current situation and associativity as a strategy to improve the competitiveness of WSSA in APEC Economies.
- ✓ **Survey for APEC’s Ministry of Agriculture officials (Survey ASICWSS).** Develop a tool with relevant questions for collecting the necessary and pertinent information to meet the objective of the research, focusing in Institutional framework. The ASICWSS was designed to obtain quantitative information and qualitative data from direct sources. The survey was conducted during 11 and 20 of June; and the answers were received until 21 June 2024.
- ✓ Based on the findings, **identify 5 best practices** (deep dives)
- ✓ **Interviews with experts** to collect more and deep information regarding associativity as a strategy to improve the competitiveness of WSSA and gathering deep dives information.
- ✓ **Workshop in Trujillo – Perú** (Thursday, August 14, 2024). Five best practices identified (deep dives) will be presented and discussed.

General Information about the Economies:

Figure 12: Total of agricultural area cultivated in your territory (% total territory/agricultural area cultivated)

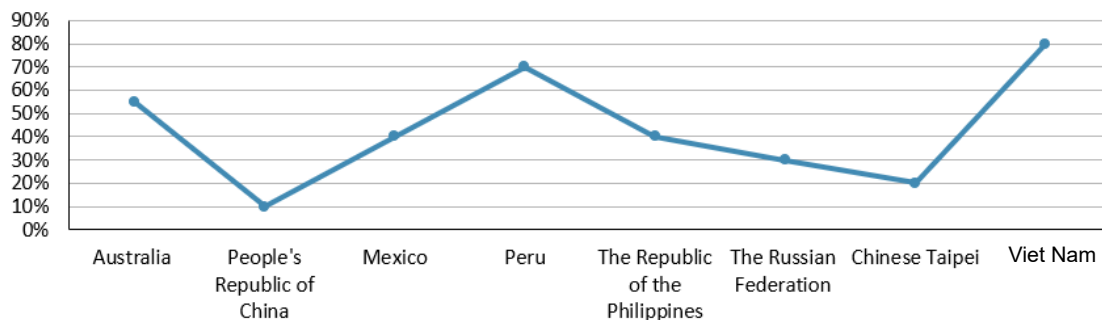


Figure 13: Percentage of agricultural area cultivated in ha

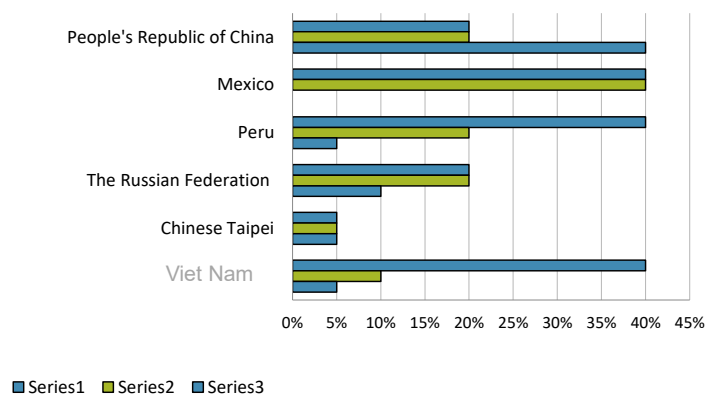


Figure 14: Associative Models in WSSA

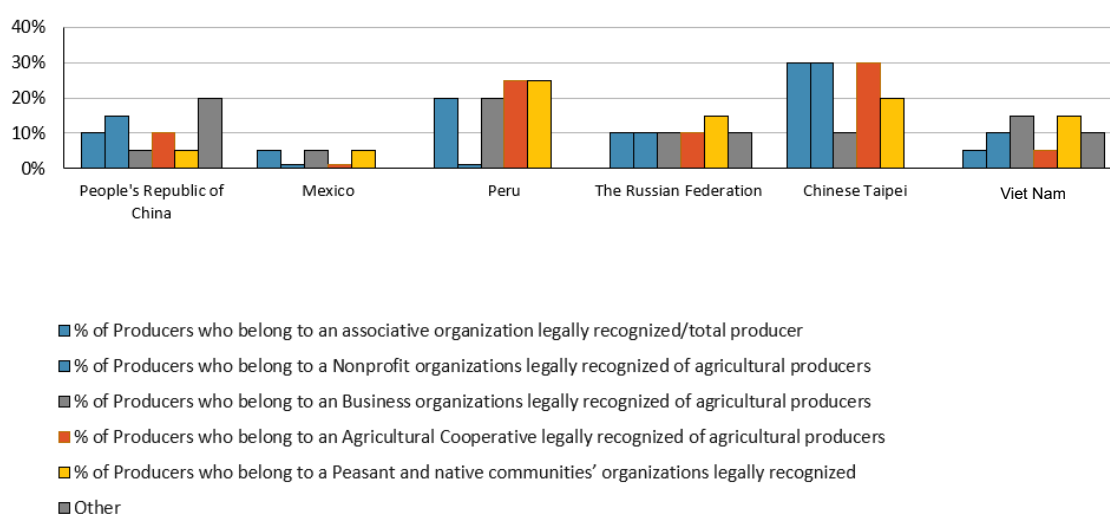


Figure 15: Public instruments in terms of benefits to promote associative models in WSSA

Benefit	Available		Impact
	YES	NO	
Special tax regime	10%	90%	Less important
Income tax exemption		100%	Less important
Unaffected by general sales tax (IVA)	10%	90%	Less important
Public procurement	30%	70%	A little important
Access to guarantees or financial services, access to financing, funds, programs, among others,	60%	40%	Important
Preferential credits lines and with the option of grace years, given the biological characteristics of the production processes.	50%	50%	Important or very important
Elimination or reduction the legal costs of formalization.	40%	60%	A little important
Subsidies or aid for working mothers or single-parent families.	40%	60%	A little important
Other benefits to strengthen associative capacities for production, trade, and entrepreneurialism of WSSA.	90%	10%	Very important

Figure 16: Public instruments in terms of services to promote associative models in WSSA

Services	Available		Impact
	YES	NO	
Specialized training in business management, financial, among others.	40%	60%	Important
Specialized technical information and training.	60%	40%	Important
Training of leaders in different areas, like skills training and competencies of managers.	50%	50%	Important
Access to commercial promotion events, and its access to domestic and international markets.	60%	40%	Important
Technical tours to learn about experiences, strengthen and improve capabilities, and advances in productive and networking.	80%	20%	Important
Generation of local-regional governance and articulation of public services.	70%	30%	Important
Exchanges of domestic and international experiences of successful cases.	70%	30%	Important
Implementation of "Care Systems" so WSSA can participate in organizations.	40%	60%	Less important
Other services to strengthen associative capacities for production, trade, and entrepreneurialism of WSSA.	20%	80%	Less important

Annex 3: Identification of best practices

As a result of the comprehensive review of the desktop, the analysis of the survey and some interviews with experts in associativity, WSSA, the expert/consultant shortlisted some good practices/cases for analysis as deep dives.

To this end, it held meetings with those responsible for the preselected economies, in order to confirm the first findings, narrow the information and systematize the most relevant aspects of these good practices. This study will be enriched, improved, feedback and presented in the workshop "Workshop on the Associativity as a Strategy to Improve the Competitiveness of WSSA in APEC Economies" in August Trujillo – Perú. The best practices will be detailed in depth in the final report. Below, we summarize the main aspects of the best selected practices:

Australia: The National Women's Alliances Model²⁶

The National Women's Alliances (NWA) represent over 180 women's organizations from across Australia. They bring forward the views, voices and issues of Australian women and, in particular, women from marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

The Alliances take the lead in ensuring that the voices of as many women as possible are heard, especially those who in the past have found it difficult to engage in advocacy and decision making.

The NWA play a key role in understanding the experiences and issues affecting women in Australia. They make sure that their voices are central in the policy development process. Six Women's Alliances collaborated with the Office for Women and Government to inform policy and decision making on the following priority areas:

- Women's safety
- Women's economic security and leadership
- Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Women living in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia
- Women with disability

The six NWA are funded by the Office for Women under the former Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP), now known as the Working for Women Program. They are one of two streams in the Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP) that funds engagement with the women's sector and other activities to improve social and economic outcomes for women in Australia.

The NWA were established in 2010 to create a better, more informed and representative dialogue between women and the Australian Government. There are currently two issue-based NWAs, the Equality Rights Alliance and the National Women's Safety Alliance, and four cohort-based NWAs, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance, Harmony Alliance, National Rural Women's Coalition, and Women with Disability Australia.

Through the Alliance model, the Office for Women and policymakers are connected to women and women's sector organizations through a variety of pathways, with some closer to individual women than others, due to the structure and format of the membership models within the different Alliances. Discussion and networking can add value but can also result in the loss or marginalization of minoritized or underrepresented voices.

For example, the National Rural Women's Coalition consists primarily of organizational members, with five peak-bodies forming the Alliance's membership. It can perform the synthesis of the views

²⁶ Source, *Evaluation of the National Women's Alliances Model* Global Institute for Women's Leadership and the Office for Women. Office for Women and Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

their five-member organization prior to delivering the voice of the women’s sector to the Office for Women and policymakers. From a network perspective, this pathway may be advantageous as the additional discourse and discussion in each phase can synthesize the advice provided to the Office for Women. However, from an individual voice perspective, this model may be less advantageous, as the multi-leveled pathway may result in the loss of information from minoritized perspectives.

Mexico: Women producers and agroecology transition

The Production for Wellbeing Program (PpB) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development supported in 2023 with a direct subsidy for production to 2,038,249 producers of the most important crops for agriculture and feeding the Mexican population with corn, beans, rice, wheat, amaranth, sugar cane, chia, cocoa, coffee, cactus and honey. Of this total, 35% were women.

For a long time, a good part of the producers of corn, beans and other grains, usufructuary and small-scale owners, as well as producers from indigenous communities located in the south-southeast of Mexico, were on the margins of productive development support. Currenting, special emphasis has been placed on incorporating the indigenous population and women as productive subjects. As seen in the following table, the proportion of women supported by the program increased from 416,875 in 1998 to 713,387 in 2023:

Name of the Program	Year	Number of Supported Women	% Respect to all Beneficiaries
Procampo	1998	461,875	16%
ProAgro	2018	440,742	19%
Producción para el Bienestar	2019	630,330	32%
	2020	701,762	33%
	2021	712,695	33%
	2022	639,844	34%
	2023	713,387	35%

Source: Nota Informativa sobre el Programa Producción para el Bienestar Secretaría de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural de México

The economic support from Production for Wellbeing is delivered directly to the producer, usufructuary or small owner through the Wellbeing Card.

Beneficiary producers invest the support received in inputs or in concepts such as purchase of seed, payment of labor, purchase or rental of machinery to carry out cultivation tasks, training, post-harvest activities, among others.

The Program has a Technical Support Strategy (EAT) through which the adoption of appropriate practices and technologies is promoted among small and medium-scale agricultural and livestock producers, by strengthening their capacities to transition to agroecological, productive and resilient agri-food systems.

In 2023, the EAT had coverage in 28 entities and 920 municipalities in Mexico. Preliminary data from the closure indicate that there was an impact on 153,222 producers (40% women), who, with the support of a territorial technical team made up of 1,169 technical advisors, carried out at least one agroecological practice on their farms. Producers are organized in 4,509 Field Schools where their technical and organizational capacities are strengthened with the aim of increasing food production and reducing production costs. In the Field Schools, the reduction of the use of agrochemicals is promoted through the implementation of agroecological practices such as the

production and application of bioinputs. In 2023, in the 4,509 spaces designated for the production of bioinputs, 198,663 tons of solid bioinputs and 22,825,506 liters of liquid bioinputs were produced.

With the support of National Institute of Forestry, Agricultural and Livestock Research the PpB promotes good practices in food production, as well as the transfer and application of appropriate technology to increase agricultural productivity and sustainability. Also, researchers, in 2023, determined that 9,057 training events were held in the Field Schools. In addition, more than 60 thousand producers were certified in their peasant knowledge and an increase in bean production was achieved from 0.4 to 0.71 t/ha and corn production from 2.6 to 3.3 t/ha. Likewise, 26 thousand family gardens were established in family production units where there was a significant participation of women.

The PpB recognizes the role of women as food producers and pillars of economic development in rural areas and therefore has sought to increase their participation in the Program. In this way, PpB is the productive focus program in Mexico that has the largest number of women beneficiaries and its percentage of attention exceeds the proportion of women who have ownership of land ownership, which is 26.5%.

Production for Wellbeing is an instrument that substantially helps the economic, financial, patrimonial and productive autonomy of women, which are ways to achieve gender equality. This idea is reinforced if we consider that 60% of women Beneficiaries are located in municipalities with an indigenous population and 63% percent in the south-southeast region.

The female economic empowerment that PpB supports is a way to promote family and local food self-sufficiency, since women are responsible for supporting households and in many cases, they are heads of the family. Progress towards gender equality and respect for women's rights that allows the construction of an egalitarian Mexico free of violence involves the economic, patrimonial and financial autonomy of women.

Peru: Institution framework: Entrepreneurship Strategy for Rural and Indigenous Women (EEMRI)

The EEMRI promoted by MIDAGRI, through the Directorate for the Promotion of Women Agricultural Producers and executed by Agroideas, has the objective of promoting, through subsidy, entrepreneurial plans in agriculture, livestock, forestry and crafts, linked to agriculture. This subsidy contributes to the autonomy and economic empowerment of rural and indigenous entrepreneurial women producers. The beneficiary population is the agricultural organizations (agricultural, livestock, forestry, artisanal) of rural and indigenous women producers and entrepreneurs.

The strategy proposes two specific objectives that are implemented in two services:

- a. Financing business plans and ventures through the granting of subsidies, with subsidy support to formalize rural and indigenous women's organizations and/or in the process of formalization with the implementation of business plans
- b. Provide technical assistance and training in productive and business management issues, for insertion into the market. And then globally, regarding the general objective of "Promoting ventures and businesses in favor of organizations of rural and indigenous women producers, which contribute to their autonomy and economic empowerment." Support with subsidies for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment plans of formalized rural and indigenous women's organizations.

This 2024, the EEMRI grants a maximum amount of up to PEN154,500.00 (USD41,000.00 approx.), for Women's Agrarian Organizations, as a non-refundable economic subsidy. Women's Agricultural Organizations must be made up of at least 70% women and at least 50% of their

directors must be women who hold positions of president and treasurer, or another equivalent position and must be made up of a minimum of 8 agricultural producers. participants.

According to the Final Systematization Document of the implementation of the Strategy for the Empowerment of Rural and Indigenous Women 2022 carried out by the FAO, it is concluded, among other aspects, that the EEMRI is effective in promoting the empowerment of women, through the financing of plans that allow for development and make visible their productive activities in their communities and that the positive results exceed the dimension of autonomy and economic independence, also denoting strengthening the socio-emotional sphere of the beneficiaries.

Likewise, it is established that the strategy supports access to inputs and technology by providing the opportunity to acquire them through the entrepreneurship plans of each association. This step allows the reduction of production times and transforms activities that were previously artisanal into more systematized ventures. Also, access to information and technical knowledge in the management of inputs and technology that the EEMRI has facilitated makes it possible to overcome the structural barriers that women face in this area. Similarly, for the preparation of business and entrepreneurship plans, since some associations lacked knowledge about the types of inputs or technologies necessary to improve their productivity.

The Republic of the Philippines: Banking on Hope for the Future of Women in Agriculture: A Story of Resilience from Southern Philippines

The Philippines has a very comprehensive institutional framework when it comes to women's rights. It is even one of the few economies that has implemented the gender response budget.

Their main institutional instruments are:

- The Magna Carta of Women is also known as Republic Act 9710 which is a landmark law that made enormous progress in the Philippines' pursuit for gender equality since its enactment in 2009. It pivots on promoting a more gender-responsive governance through increasing women's active participation in program development and policy-making. The Magna Carta also mandates all government agencies to allot at least 5% of the total budget for gender and development.
- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law is also known as Republic Act 6657 which promotes the rights of women independent of their male relatives to control land and its harvest.
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019-2025 is the Philippines' guide and key reference in formulating GAD plans and budgets. By prioritizing key actions in the Plan, government agencies and instruments assure that collective efforts result in meaningful and strategic outcomes. This has been very important in production competitiveness, innovation competitiveness, entrepreneurship competitiveness, and trade competitiveness since the aforementioned frameworks provide opportunities for women to contribute in the economy which helps its advancement.

Additionally, a series of success factors can be highlighted in the implementation, that is, the institutional framework not only remains at the level of a theoretical or legal instrument, but is put into practice where the evidence confirms its relevance. This is the case of, for example of "MANGAN's Story of Impact in Rural Agri-Economies", it focuses on seaweed farming for rural women in southern Philippines that develop an alternative livelihood for coastal communities, strengthening of rural economies and an apparatus for climate change mitigation. This case shows the ability of social enterprises to transform community's significance of a cultivating a culture of innovation through rediscovering forgotten food heritage.

This is a real-life account of the partner communities (Farmers, rural women, and indigenous students) that have great impact on Coastal and Rural Communities of the Philippines.

More information in:

- Philippine Policies on the Protection of Women (Magna Carta of Women, Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, GEWE Framework). <https://ap.fttc.org.tw/article/1872>
https://www.bfar.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ME_of_GEWEVol1.pdf
- Department of Agriculture Interventions
<https://www.da.gov.ph/da-hails-outstanding-women-in-agriculture-for-2022/>
<https://www.da.gov.ph/da-celebrates-women-empowerment-social-inclusivity-at-nwmc-2023/>
- Banking on Hope for the Future of Women in Agriculture: What's Next?
Encouraging Grassroots Movement for Transformative Impact
Support the Rise of Social Enterprises

Chinese Taipei: Institutional framework and instruments to enhance women in agriculture associativity: The case of Chinese Taipei

"Gender Equality Policy Guidelines", established in 2011, the gender mainstreaming implementation plans have been used for the purpose of guiding central government bodies to learn with the aid of six primary promotion tools (Gender Statistics, Gender Budget, Gender Impact Assessment, Gender Analysis, Gender Awareness Training, and Gender Equality Task Force). The new amendment in 2021 addresses the issue related to women in disadvantaged areas, and those living in the rural or remote areas who are mostly working in the farming or fishery related sectors.

The joint effort of central government, local governments, civic and private sectors (e.g., the farmers' cooperatives) was the key to enhance the performance of gender mainstreaming implementation plans and laid a good foundation for the development of gender equality in the agri-food sector and in rural communities. In addition, the Gender Equality Committee invited academic experts and scholars in gender equality to join the discussion and examine the progress of the administrative policies. The programs implemented with the association of the Agricultural Cooperatives may have larger and greater impacts in Chinese Taipei, to enhance the competitiveness of small-scale women farmers, joining a local cooperative/team/association is the key. There are more than 300 farmers/fishermen associations in Chinese Taipei with one in every county and township and more than 6,500 village-level production teams and marketing cooperatives in Chinese Taipei. They work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and regional/local experimental stations on new technology deployment and/or employing new managerial skills to improve their products' quality and performance.

It is a general guideline for policymaking by the central government authority and applies to all ministries, but its implementation requires six primary promotion tools, cooperation from the local governments and partnerships with the civic and private sectors (e.g., the farmers' associations, local cooperatives, NGO's and academic communities)

Since 2011, the Department of Gender Equality (DGE) assembled government agencies to identify the priority tasks of their Individual Action Plan (IAP) in promoting women's economic participation. Meanwhile, the DGE also reviewed progress and goals of the IAP which are categorized in the four pillars: Access to Capital, Access to Markets, Capacity and Skills Building, and Women's Leadership.

The framework implemented by the DGE serves as a nexus that consolidates the expert knowledge of the government and the private sectors, offering policy planning, counseling, supervision and resource integration that assist in acclimatizing the central and local governments to prevail world trends. It brings implementation of women's rights and gender equality into all levels of government (from central to local) and the private sectors into accord. In the rural

communities, it works closely with the farmers'/fishmen's cooperatives and brings gender perspectives into the government's policies and planning by enhancing the role of women in the competitiveness of small-scale farms through its three-tiered mechanism of operation, regulation, and integration.

Farmers' Academy was set up in 2011 to carry out a series of technical and managerial training courses for the beginners, young farmers, and women farmers/fishermen in remote areas and disadvantaged groups. There are also women-priority courses specially designed to meet the local needs of women, and for upgrading their skills in processing agri/aqua-cultural products, horticultural plant propagation, seed processing, and joining leisure farming. Marketing promotion programs of their innovations or innovative products will also be carried out during the annual food exhibition show or at the social media platforms.

Annex 4: Bibliography and References

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