



VIETNAM WOMEN'S UNION



PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE
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Photo: UN Women/ Nguyen Thanh Cuong

PROMOTING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

IN THE NATIONAL TARGET PROGRAM ON NEW RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AND THE NATIONAL TARGET PROGRAM ON
SUSTAINABLE POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE 2021-2025 PERIOD

Hanoi, July 2021

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Promoting gender mainstreaming in the National Target Program on New Rural DEVELOPMENT and the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction in the 2021-2025 period

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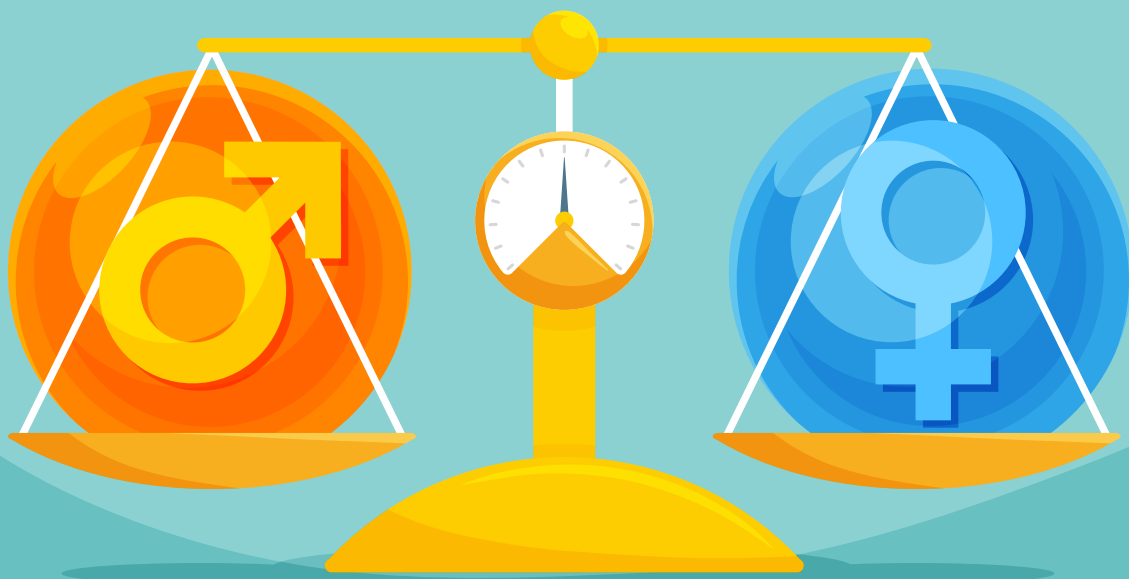
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Completing the system of policies and laws to ensure the principles of gender equality in relevant fields. Implement the mainstreaming of gender equality contents in the formulation of policies, laws, and socio-economic development programs, strategies, and plans.

National Strategy on Gender Equality, period 2021-2030



Abbreviation

GE	: Gender equality
GDP	: Gross domestic product
LURCs	: Land use rights certificates
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOLISA	: National Poverty Reduction Office
NRD	: New rural development
NTPs	: National target programs
OCOP	: One Commune One Product
SDG	: Sustainable Development Goal
SPR	: Sustainable poverty reduction
UNW	: United Nations Women
VWU	: Vietnam Women's Union

1. Introduction

The National Target Program (NTP) for New Rural Development (NRD) and the National Target Program for Sustainable Rural Development (SPR) have achieved important achievements in the 2016-2020 period; promoting socio-economic development, poverty reduction, and improvement of people's living standards in rural areas, poor districts and poor communes has been especially difficult. The poverty rate has decreased from 9.88% in 2015 to 2.75% in 2020, an average annual decrease of 1.43%; the rate of poor households in 64 poor districts by the end of 2020 was 23.42%, an average annual decrease of 5.4%. In the period of 2016-2020, the number of poor households reduced by more than 60% compared to the total number of poor households at the beginning of the period with more than 6 million people escaping poverty and more than 2 million people escaping near poverty. The goals and targets on poverty reduction have all either met or exceeded the resolutions of the National Assembly. As of December 2020, 62.4% of communes in the whole country met the new rural standards, 12.4% higher than the set target;¹ 12 provinces and cities had 100% of communes meet the new rural standards;² the national average reached 16.38 criteria/commune (surpassing the national average target of 15 criteria/commune).

In spite of these great results, gender inequality is still persistent in rural areas, especially in poor districts and poor communes. The gender gaps in rural areas, poor districts, and poor communes are still significant in terms of labor, employment, property ownership, and access to essential services.^{3 4} The burden of household chores and unpaid care work⁵ hinders women's equal access to opportunities brought about by socio-economic development in rural areas, poor districts, and poor communes. In particular, gender-based violence remains a widespread and worrisome issue.

With the desire of comprehensively integrating GE throughout the two NTPs on NRD and SPR for the period 2021-2025, contributing to narrowing the gender inequality gap in rural areas, poor districts, and poor communes, the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) and the National Assembly's Social Affairs Committee co-edited this document, pointing out the existing gender gaps in rural areas, poor districts, and poor communes, and restrictions in gender mainstreaming for the period 2016-2020. On that basis, this paper proposes specific views, principles and measures to strengthen gender mainstreaming in both Programs for the period of 2021 - 2025.

1 As of May 2021, the whole country has 64.1% of communes meeting new rural standards, of which 305 communes meet advanced rural standards and 24 communes meet model rural standards as prescribed by the Prime Minister.

2 Hai Phong, Hung Yen, Vinh Phuc, Bac Ninh, Ha Nam, Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, Da Nang, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Can Tho, Bac Lieu

3 International Food and Agriculture Organization (2019), *Gender assessment in agriculture and rural areas in Vietnam. Assessment report of the International Food and Agriculture Organization.*

4 United Nations Agency for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment - UNW (2019), *Mapping on women's economic empowerment initiatives in Vietnam. UNW report.*

5 Report 362/BC-CP of the Government dated August 10, 2020 on the implementation of the national target on GE in 2019 and the period 2011-2020

2. The basis for proposing gender mainstreaming in the NTP on NRD and the NTP on SPR for the period of 2021-2025



Photo: UN Women/ Nguyen Huu Tuan

2.1 The Legal foundation

Gender equality is an issue enshrined in the Constitution and Laws. The 2013 Constitution stipulates that *“male and female citizens are equal in all respects. The State has policies to ensure equal rights and opportunities for gender.”* (Clause 1, Article 26). The Law on Gender Equality 2006 stipulates that *“Gender equality means that men and women have equal positions and roles. They are given equal conditions and opportunities to promote their capacity for the development of the community, family, and community. They can equally enjoy the fruits of that development”* (Clause 3, Article 5) and *“Integrating gender equality in the development of legal documents is a measure to realize the gender equality goal by identifying gender issues, forecast gender impacts of documents, responsibilities, and resources to address gender issues”* (Clause 7, Article 5).

Gender equality is identified in important events of the Party. Resolution 26-NQ/TW dated August 5, 2008, of the 10th Party Central Committee on agriculture, farmers, and rural areas defined the aim, *“Implement gender equality, improve material and spiritual life, capacity and position of women in rural areas”*. Directive 21 / CT-TW dated January 20, 2018, of the Secretariat, mandates, *“pay attention to integrating gender equality issues in the development of the legal system”* and *“The Party Management Board ensures integrates the gender issue in the formulation of mechanisms, policies, programs, and projects for socio-economic development”*. The document of the 13th National Party Congress clearly states *“Improve the quality of women human resources to meet the development requirements of the country. Implement programs to develop, support, and strengthen knowledge and skills for women in difficult circumstances, ethnic minority women, and mountainous women. Completing and enforcing laws and policies related to women, children, and gender equality. Enhancing the potential, capacity, strength, and spirit of mastery and aspiration to rise of women. Resolutely deal with social evils, violence, trafficking, abuse to women and children”*.

“Implement gender equality to improve women’s capacity and status; children’s right to education and care; take care of social policy beneficiaries in rural areas”

Conclusion No. 97-KL/TW dated May 15, 2014, of the Politburo on several guidelines and solutions to continue the implementation of the 7th Central Committee of the Communist Party’s Resolution on agriculture, farmers, and rural areas.

Gender equality is determined in the decisions of the Government and the decisions of the Prime Minister. Resolution 28/NQ-CP dated 3/3/2021 announcing the National Strategy on GE for the period 2021-2030, which clearly specifies, *“integration of GE contents in policy, legislation, strategy and the socio-economic plan development”* Decision No. 622/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda affirms the cross-cutting view that everyone and every community in society should have equal development opportunities. Decision No. 681/QD-TTg on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda stipulates the targets and roadmap for the implementation of the SPR Goals (SDGs), including SDG Goal No. 5 and component targets on GE, empowering and creating equal opportunities for women and girls.

Participating in the promotion of gender equality is the mission of the Vietnam Women’s Union as stipulated by the Law on Gender Equality: *“Participating in policy development, legislation and state management on gender equality; participate in monitoring the implementation of the law on GE”⁶; “Implement social criticism for policies and laws on GE”⁷.*

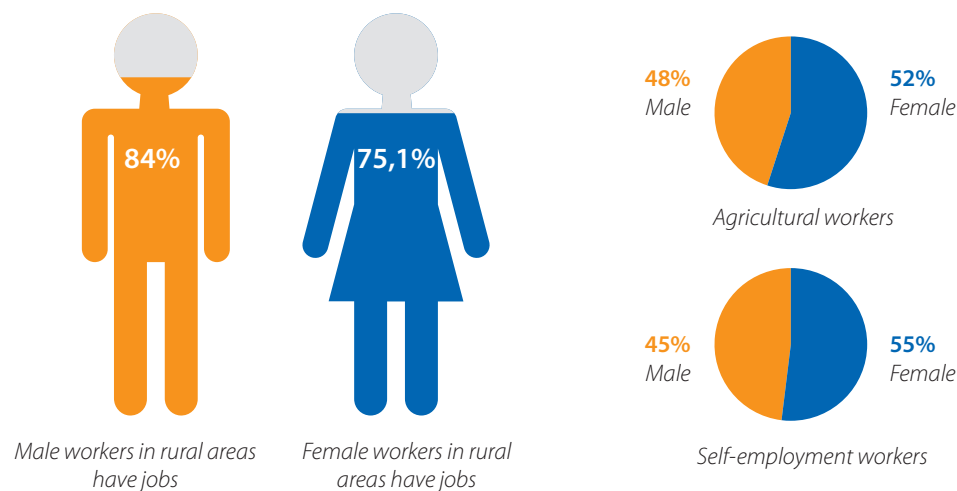
6 Clause 1, Article 29 of the Law on Gender Equality

7 Clause 5, Article 30 of the Law on Gender Equality

2.2. The Factual Basis

2.2.1 Gender gap in labor and employment

Women are still mainly working in agriculture and face many barriers in non-agricultural job transition. According to the results of the 2019 Labor and Employment Survey, 75.1% of female workers in rural areas have jobs, compared to nearly 84% of male workers.⁸ On the national average, 52% of agricultural workers are women, compared with about 48% of men; about 55% of off-farm self-employment workers are female, compared with about 45% male. These two types of jobs have low productivity, and average earnings are lower than the minimum wage.⁹ According to the results of the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the proportion of male workers in jobs such as sales and simple labor is 13.8% and 31% respectively, while the corresponding rates for female employees is 23.2% and 35.6%.¹⁰ Women face more barriers than male workers in participating in the non-agricultural labor market due to barriers stemming from stereotypes about gender roles in the family and community¹¹.



8 General Statistics Office (2019), *Labor and Employment Survey Report 2019*. Statistical Publishing House: Hanoi.

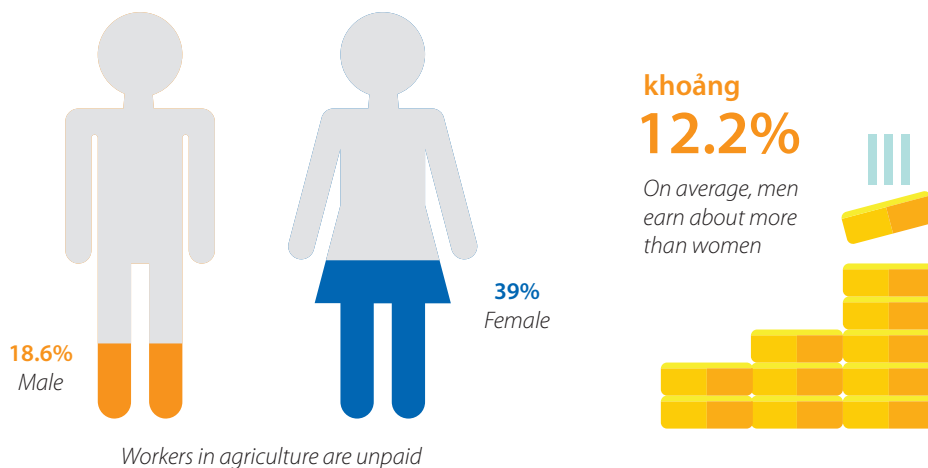
9 World Bank (2018), *Vietnam Future Jobs: Gender Dimension*. Assessment report of the World Bank in Vietnam.

10 General Statistics Office (2020), *Population and Housing Census Results 2019*. Statistical Publishing House: Hanoi.

11 The Vietnam Women's Union, the National Social Affairs Committee, the National Assembly's Ethnic Council, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (2020), *Gender mainstreaming in the National Target Program for socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas*.

Even in the agricultural sector, female workers are more disadvantaged than men.

According to FAO (2019), 39% of female workers in agriculture are unpaid while the rate for male workers is 18.6%. The average salary of women is also significantly lower than that of men; on average, men earn about 12.2%¹² more than women. In agriculture, women's wages are, on average, only 69% of men's; their share in industry and services is 83% and 85%, respectively (FAO, 2019). In addition, some gender discrimination practices are detrimental to female workers in the recruitment process, 65% of job advertisements for management positions clearly state that they need to hire men.¹³



2.2.2. Gender gaps in access to public assets, information, and services

Women in rural areas, poor districts, and poor communes face many disadvantages in land ownership, leading to disadvantages for women in accessing credit.

According to the World Bank (2020), thanks to the implementation of the 2003 Land Law, the proportion of land use right certificates (LURC) with both the husband's and wife's names has increased significantly. For arable land, the proportion of both husband and wife jointly holding the LURC has increased from 11.6% to 38.3% from 2004 to 2014. However, more men than women are still the holder of the LURC as an individual or head of household. Among residential land certificates issued to couples (households), 39% were issued to male heads of households, compared with 6.2% issued to female heads of households.

Women's access to agricultural extension services is more limited than that of men.

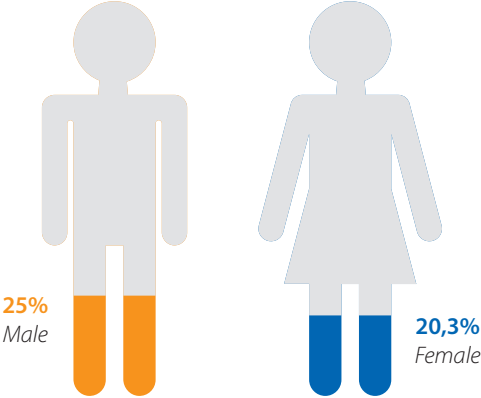
A 2021 report United Nations Women (UNW) emphasizes that current agricultural extension policies and programs are not gender-sensitive. A 2019 FAO report indicates that men are the main beneficiaries of agricultural extension services. Agricultural extension staff at the locality level are mainly male, the method of imparting knowledge is purely technical, and lacks gender sensitivity.

Women have less access to vocational training opportunities than men. The results of the 2019 Labor and Employment Survey show a large gender disparity in the proportion of trained workers. On the national average, trained male workers is 25% compared to the rate of female workers which is 20.3%. In rural areas alone, the

¹² General Statistics Office (2019), cited.

¹³ World Bank (2019) citing the International Labor Organization (ILO)

proportion of trained male workers is 17.1%, compared to only 12.5%5 of women.¹⁴ The process of developing training content often does not ensure the participation of the community or beneficiaries, so it does not come from needs (from the point of view of beneficiaries) and lacks gender sensitivity.¹⁵ In a survey conducted by Oxfam in 2017, it was found that women have less opportunity to participate in off-farm vocational training courses in eight provinces.¹⁶



The national average, trained workers

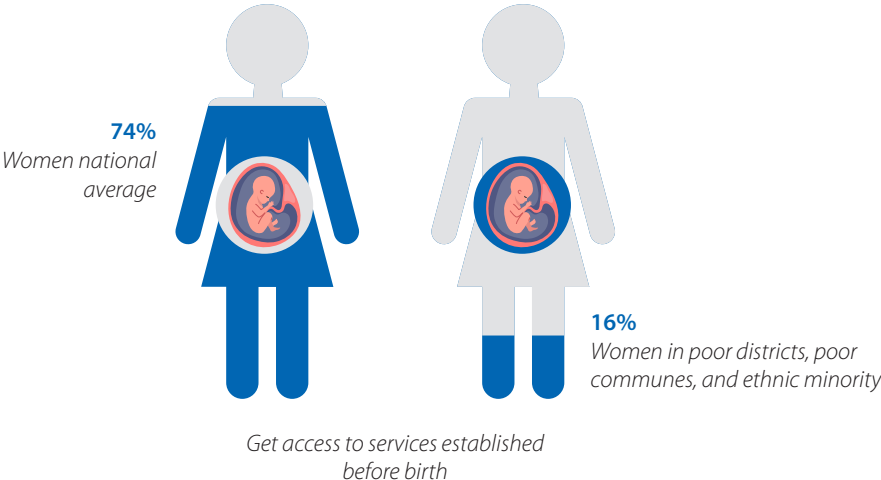
14 General Statistics Office (2019), cited.
 15 CARE, Oxfam, and SNV (2018), *Independent Gender Assessment in the NRD, 2016-2020*.
 16 Oxfam (2017), *Improving the effectiveness of vocational training for rural workers towards poverty reduction in ethnic minority areas*. Oxfam's report is based on survey results in Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Dak Nong, Ninh Thuan, Tra Vinh.



Photo: UN Women/ Nhat Xuan

The gender gap in access to educational services. The gender gap in access to education in rural areas has been narrowed but still exists to a certain extent, especially in poor districts and poor communes. According to the General Statistics Office (2020), the rate of girls attending high school at the right age in rural areas is generally 68.8% compared to 79.5% in urban areas¹⁷. The gender gap in accessing education services in poor districts, poor communes, and areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions is larger than the rural average.¹⁸ The disparity in access to training opportunities is one of the barriers women face when attempting to access the formal labor market and paid jobs.

The gender gap in health care. According to the results of the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the total fertility rate in rural areas is 2.26 compared to 1.83 in urban areas.¹⁹ The high fertility rate in rural areas is partly due to low rates of contraceptive use in rural areas.²⁰ Also according to the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the under-1 child mortality rate in rural areas is double that of urban areas, at 16.7% and 8.2% respectively. This disparity partly reflects the gap in reproductive health care services for women in rural areas. According to data from the National Institute of Nutrition, the rate of stunted children is 23.7% in rural areas, compared with an average of 6.2% in urban areas in 2019. In poor districts and communes, the gender gap in health care is higher than average. The percentage of women in poor districts, poor communes, and ethnic minority women accessing antenatal care services (at least four antenatal checkups) was only 16% compared to the national average of 74%.²¹



17 General Statistics Office (2020), cited

18 The Vietnam Women's Union, the CPSU, the National Assembly's Ethnic Council, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (2020), cited

19 General Statistics Office (2020), cited

20 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Ministry of Health (2017a), Evaluation of the quality of family planning services in Vietnam.

21 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Ministry of Health (2017b), Barriers to accessing maternal health care and family planning.

Achievement 5: Achieve gender equality, increase rights and create opportunities for women and girls

The 2030 Agenda for SPR and Decision 622/QĐ-TTg dated 10/05/2017 of TTg promulgating the National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda

2.2.3 The burden of unpaid care work and gender-based violence

The burden of unpaid care work is a huge barrier to women's full and equal access to opportunities. On average, women still spend 4.5 hours/day doing unpaid care work, equivalent to 32 hours a week, and almost 70 working days a year. Women's housework time is 1.62 times higher than that of men.²² The burden of unpaid care work associated with gender role stereotypes and norms limits women's time and opportunities to participate in activities outside the home.²³

Violence against women is a serious issue. The National Survey on Violence against Women in Vietnam in 2019 found that more than 6 out of 10 women (62.9 percent) experience at least one or more forms of violence at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetime, and 03 people experienced violence in the past 12 months (31.6%)²⁴. Of these, more than half of women who experience violence never tell anyone, and 90% of women who experience violence do not seek any support from government agencies. In rural areas, violence against women tends to be more severe. Up to 66% of women experienced violence in the past 12 months, much higher than the national average of 31.6%.²⁵ It is estimated that the cost loss due to domestic violence can account for about 1.4% of GDP and the loss of labor productivity is approximately 1.78% of GDP.²⁶

Achievement 5: Achieve gender equality, increase rights and create opportunities for women and girls

The 2030 Agenda for SPR and Decision 622/QĐ-TTg dated 10/05/2017 of TTg promulgating the National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda

22 The Government's report 362/BC-CP dated August 10, 2020 on the implementation of the national target on GE in 2019 and the period 2011-2020 cited the results of an independent survey.

23 For example, the report of the United Nations Agency on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2016); International Food and Agriculture Organization (2019); Committee on Ethnic Minorities and World Bank (2019)

24 Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs; General Statistics Office; and UN Population Fund (2020), National Survey on Violence against Women in Viet Nam 2019: A Journey to Change. Hanoi.

25 CARE (2018), Report of the beginning of the survey and gender analysis Project Raising awareness and voices of ethnic communities and northern areas in promoting gender equality.

26 CARE, Oxfam, SNV (2019), cited.

3. The implementation of gender equality in the NTP on NRD and the NTP on SPR for the 2016-2020 period.



Photo: UN Women/ Dzung Nguyen

The two NTPs have not clearly mentioned the content of implementing gender equality in the target system. Resolution 26-NQ/TW of the Communist Party of Vietnam on agriculture, farmers, and rural areas identifies eight main tasks and solutions, in which promoting GE is a content in the solution to improve material living standards, quality, and spirit of the rural population. However, Decision 800/2010/QD-TTg approving the National Target Program 2010-2020 and Decision 1600/2016/QD-TTg approving the National Target Program 2016-2020 do not mention gender equality. Gender equality is also not mentioned in the goals and targets of the NTP 2016-2020 under Decision 1722/2016/QD-TTg which approved the Program.

Limited approach to gender issues. Decision 1980/2016/QD-TTg promulgating a set of national criteria for NRD communes, setting out target 18.6 on “Ensuring GE and preventing domestic violence; protect and support vulnerable people in the fields of family and social life” (one of 49 targets of 19 criteria for rural areas at commune level). Other commune-level rural development targets and criteria have not yet incorporated gender issues²⁷. However, compared with the Law on GE (which regulates GE including political, economic, labor, education and training, health, science and technology, culture, information, and sports aspects, and in the family), criterion 18.6 only reflects some aspects of gender equality²⁸. The NTP on SPR for the 2016-2020 period sets out the principle of “priority for women” to participate in and benefit from the Program’s activities, but does not concretize this principle.

The contents of GE have not been reflected in the implementation mechanism of either Program. (1) Decision 69/2017 provides detailed guidance on the assessment of criteria and targets for NRD without mentioning the gender aspect (except for the guidance on criterion 18.6). The guidelines for the assessment of NRD targets and criteria developed by other ministries and sectors have not been mentioned. Gender equality has not been mentioned in Circular 05/2017 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development guiding the implementation of the NTP on NRD Program in period 2016-2020. (2) The documents guiding the implementation of the NTP on SPR also do not fully mention gender issues²⁹, only the general principles, and there are no specific implementation guidelines

The implementation of regulations on mainstreaming gender equality issues in the development of legal documents... has not achieved high results and has not been implemented with high quality. In the drafting stage, the editing agencies and the governing bodies have not paid attention to the implementation of regulations on mainstreaming GE.

Report summarizing 10 years of implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (2019)

27 UNW and Vietnam Women's Union (2020). *Gender Independent Assessment in the NTP on NRD Program 2010-2020*

28 *Communes are recognized for fulfilling their GE targets when they meet the requirements for female cadres; women from poor households and ethnic minorities to have access to preferential credit; no child marriage and forced marriage; there is a radio program about GE; have a reliable address for temporary shelter model,*

29 *Circular 39/2016/TT-LDTB&XH guiding inspection, monitoring, and evaluation stipulate several criteria to collect information disaggregated by sex. Circular 01/2017/TT-UBDT guiding the implementation of Program 135 (which is the No. 2 component project of the NTP on NRD) stipulates that the percentage of women participating in village meetings for planning is at least 30%. In addition, the National Poverty Reduction Office (MOLISA) organized the compilation of the Program Implementation Manual, which contains some content on gender mainstreaming. However, this Handbook is for reference only and is recommended for use.*



Photo: UN Women/ Nguyen Luong Sang

meaning they cannot be made a reality.³⁰

Lack of budget for gender mainstreaming activities in both NTPs. Vietnam is one of the first countries in the world to include GE issues in the State Budget Law promulgated in 2015 and to require GE issues be taken into account in state budget estimates. However, due to the lack of implementation guidelines, ensuring gender equality in the state budget estimates has not yet been realized. The NTP on NRD does not have a budget line for the implementation of criterion 18.6, except for funds for temporary shelters and reliable addresses (but the allocation of funding is uneven)³¹. With the campaign “Building a 5 No, 3 Clean families” being included in the Criteria 17.6, the budget can only partially meet it.³² The NTP on SPR does not have a budget line for gender “priorities.”

Awareness and capacity to mainstream gender in the implementation of both NTPs is not adequate. The results of an independent gender assessment of the NTP on NRD

³⁰ CARE, Oxfam, SNV (2019), cited.

³¹ Decision 12/2017/QĐ-TTg dated April 22, 2017, promulgating principles, criteria, norms for allocation of central budget capital, and proportion of reciprocal capital of local budgets to implement the NTP NRD for the 2016-2020 period does not mention gender responsive budgeting.

³² For provincial state budget estimates, there is only one gender budget line that is allocated to the Provincial Committee for the Advancement of Women (with the actual allocated budget ranging between VND 50 and 150 million/year) mainly for some conferences).

for the period 2010-2020³³ and the NTP on SPR for the 2016-2020³⁴ period show that staff at all levels have a basic level of understanding about GE but are not yet fully aware of it. Although there are many activities to improve the capacity of grassroots staff, gender is not a topic of interest.^{35,36} There are still many one-sided views and misconceptions about GE and the capacity to implement gender mainstreaming activities remains limited.

The potential and the role of women and the Vietnam Women's Union in NTP programs has not been fully brought into play. In the NTP on NRD, the active participation of women in cleaning activities in houses, alleys, and flower streets is often understood because "auxiliary" jobs are "suitable" for women. These prejudices can become barriers for women in general, and the Vietnam Women's Union, to promote their role in contributing to the implementation of new rural development goals as well as other development initiatives³⁷. In the NTP on SPR, the funding allocated to the VWU has not met the needs of capacity building trainings, monitoring activities, building and replicating livelihood models for women, especially in developing and replication of effective and sustainable poverty reduction models along the value chain.

The lack of a gender-responsive monitoring mechanism in both the NTPs on NRD, and SPR for the period 2016-2020. The lack of gender data and gender analysis is a limitation for the monitoring of gender mainstreaming in socio-economic development programs and policies in Vietnam. There is no sex disaggregation in the system of monitoring the performance and collecting information to evaluate the targets of both Programs.

Continue to narrow the gender gap, create conditions and opportunities for women and men to participate and enjoy equal benefits in all aspects of social activities, contributing to the country's sustainable development.

National Strategy on Gender Equality,
2021-2030 period

33 UNW and Vietnam Women's Union (2020), cited

34 CARE, Oxfam and SNV (2019), cited.

35 In the NTP on NRD, Document 5842/BNN-VPDP dated July 18, 2017, provides thematic training and refresh training of new rural development staff at all levels, period 2016-2020, without content requirements about gender equality and gender mainstreaming in training programs

36 Committee on Ethnic Minorities and World Bank (2019), cited.

37 UNW and Vietnam Women's Union (2020), cited.

4. Proposing gender mainstreaming in the NTP on NRD and the NTP on SPR for the 2021-2025 period



Photo: UN Women/ Vu Ngoc Dung

This section provides 4 general proposals for both Programs (proposals 1, 2, 3, and 4), and 02 separate proposals for each Program (proposals 5, 6).

Proposal 1: Supplement the gender impact assessments for both programs

Proposed content:

For the NTP on NRD Program for the 2021-2025 period: Supplement the assessment on gender issues in Part II, Section I, subsection 1.1 which evaluates the results of the Program's implementation in the 2016-2020 period. Although great achievements have been made in the development of new rural areas and 85.5% of communes have been assessed as meeting criterion 18.6 on gender equality, gender inequality is still a challenge in the agricultural sector and rural areas (as indicated in this document).³⁸ At the same time it is proposed to add the gender impact assessment to the Section VII, the evaluation of the socio-economic effectiveness of the Program.

For the NTP on SPR for the period 2021-2025: Add a gender assessment in the evaluation of the performance of the NTP on SPR for the 2016-2020 period (currently Part II, Section I, subsection 1) to clarify the gender gap in poor districts and poor communes as a limitation in the implementation of the Program for the period 2016-2020. At the same time, the Section VI, Analysis of the socio-economic performance of the Program, needs to be supplemented with a gender impact assessment - instead of just making a joint statement of "Create measures to ensure gender equality" or "Ensure gender equality in accessing and benefiting from the Program's...".

The reason for Proposal: A full and objective assessment of the actual shortcomings in narrowing the gender gap will be the basis for explaining the needs to promote the implementation of GE in the NTP on NRD and the NTP for SPR in the period of 2021-2025.

Proposal 2: Make gender equality part of the overall goal and cross-cutting principle of the implementation of the two Programs

Proposed contents: Adding the phrase "ensure Gender Equality" to the overall goal of the two Programs, specifically:

*The NTP on NRD in the 2021-2025 period: "... develop the agricultural and rural economy in association with building new rural areas towards ecological agriculture, revolving economy, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development; ensure a bright, green, clean, beautiful and safe environment and rural landscape; rural life rich in traditional cultural identity; **ensure gender equality**; make the countryside a place worth living"³⁹.*

*The National Target Program on Sustainable Development for the period 2021-2025: "... Develop a high-quality vocational education system and an adequate, advanced labor market to generate employment, decent jobs for everyone; develop a professional social assistance system, reduce social inequality, contribute to the achievement of poverty reduction goals, ensure harmony between economic Poverty Reduction and sustainable social security, and **ensure gender equality...** "*

38 *The 10-year evaluation report of the implementation of the National Target Program on NRD for the period 2010-2020 by the National Steering Committee for Target Programs also does not mention gender.*

39 *The part in italics is from pages 26 and 27 of Report 149/BC-CP, the part in bold is the additional proposal.*

Reason for Proposal: Adding the implementation of GE to the Program's viewpoints shows the absorption and legitimization of the spirit of Resolution 26-NQ/TW, Directive 21/CT-TW dated January 20, 2018, and documents of the Party, documents of the Government (as mentioned in section 2.1 of this document). This is a concrete solution to implement Vietnam's strong commitments to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁴⁰; implement the provisions of Article 19 of the Law on Gender Equality on Measures to promote GE (clause 1 and 2); is an important basis for the Program lead agency and relevant ministries and sectors to base themselves on the principles to develop management mechanisms and organize the implementation of the Program.

Proposal 3: Addition of specific indicators measuring GE output; ensure the role of women in monitoring program implementation and promote the supervisory role of socio-political organizations.

Proposed content:

Include **specific indicators to measure the GE outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the two Programs on GE** into the GE M&E framework of the programs.

Promote the role of socio-political organizations under the representative mechanism in inspection and supervision activities. The Vietnam Women's Union is the body for monitoring and social criticism of gender and GE content in the Program⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Of the 17 SDGs, goal Number 5, which requires achieving gender equality, empowering, and creating opportunities for women and girls, is a cross-cutting goal that is directly or indirectly related to the remaining SDGs.

⁴¹ Decision 217-QD/TU dated 12/12/2013 of the Politburo promulgating the Regulation on supervision of social criticism of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations.



Photo: UN Women/ Vu Minh Duc

Ensuring gender equality in all aspects of politics, economy, culture, society, and family; support and create conditions for men and women to promote their abilities and have equal opportunities to participate in the development process and enjoy the fruits of development

Law on Gender Equality, Article 7,
Clause 1

The reason for Proposal: Having measurement indicators on GE at all three levels (outputs, outcomes, and impact) will be the basis for monitoring and evaluating progress and results in implementing the GE objectives in the two Programs.

This is a solution to overcome the limitation that has not yet been carried out in gender-responsible M&E work in both the NTP on NRD and the NTP on SPR for the 2016-2020 period. Women in particular, and people in general, have rights and responsibilities in monitoring the implementation of the Program.

Proposal 4. Implement gender-responsive budgeting, ensuring that activities related to promoting GE are appropriately budgeted.

Proposed content:

There should be a budget line allocated for gender-related activities in the budget for the implementation of both programs for the period 2021-2025, with funding from both central and local budgets.⁴²

The reason for Proposal:

The 2015 Budget Law identifies gender equality as one of the principles of state budget management and, at the same time, one of the priorities of budget estimation and expenditure. Clause 5, Article 8 of the Law stipulates that “Priority is to be given to allocating budget to implement the guidelines and policies of the Party and State in each period on economic development; poverty reduction; ethnic policy; **realize gender equality goals**; agricultural, rural development, education, training, health, science and technology, and other important policies”.

Proposal 5. Supplement some specific content and solutions to implement GE in the NTP on NRD for the period 2021-2025

Proposal 5.1. Promote GE through guiding the assessment of criteria to be met in the development of new rural areas

Proposed content:

After the decision of the Prime Minister approving the set of national criteria for NRD in the 2021-2025 period, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and relevant ministries and sectors need to integrate gender into the guidelines for implementation and assessment of criteria for NRD targets for the period 2021-2025 (*detailed proposals are presented in the Appendix*).

- *With the criteria in the group of socio-economic infrastructure:* guiding the implementation of criteria, additional measures should be taken to ensure that women and girls fully benefit from infrastructure works through specific provisions on the participation of women in prioritizing work, organizing implementation, and monitoring.

⁴² UNW and Committee for Ethnic Minorities (2019). *Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender-responsive budgeting - Applied to the Socio-economic Development Program for Extremely Difficult Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas (Program 135) for the 2016-2020 period is an example of the method and implementation of gender-responsive budget allocation in the NTP.*

- *For the criteria in economic groups and production organizations:* the guideline for implementing the criteria should supplement the content of promoting economic empowerment for women by offering “positive actions” to ensure minimum participation rates of women in activities to support product development, vocational training, and job creation.
- *For the criteria in the cultural - social - environmental group:* guiding the implementation of the criteria, it is necessary to amend the criteria to ensure equal access between men and women, between boys and girls to targets on health and education (through the regulation that the percentage of achievement of the target for women is not lower than that of men, for boys it is not lower than for girls).
- *For other criteria related to households or individuals:* guidance on criteria implementation should consider revising the indicator to ensure that both women and men have equal opportunities to access and benefit from the fulfillment of those criteria and targets.
- In addition, gender mainstreaming is needed in other guidelines on the organization and implementation of the Program (such as information and decisions of MARD, ministries, sectors and private agencies; Guidance service of the NTP Coordination Office; Resolution of the Provincial People’s Council, Decision of the Provincial People’s Committee regarding the implementation of the Program).

The reason for Proposal: Prescribing certain criteria to be met for both men and women is one of the measures to promote GE as defined in Article 19 of the Law on Gender Equality.



Photo: UN Women/TTXVN

Proposal 5.2: Promoting gender equality in labor, employment, rural economic development

Proposed content:

In the content of component 1.3: supplementing and assigning tasks to the Vietnam Women's Union to lead the implementation of content on **"Women starting-up a business with the One Commune One Produce (OCOP) Program."** In which, the VWU will participate as an implementing actor of the OCOP Program, focusing on developing OCOP products, community tourism development models, and promoting indigenous resources of organizations and groups founded by women, cooperatives, and businesses owned or co-managed by women.

The reason for Proposal:

The VWU has been assigned by the Government to implement the Project to support women in start-up for the period 2017-2025. The beneficiaries are women, women cooperative groups, women managed cooperatives, and newly established enterprises run and/or owned by women. At the same time, the Government is assigning the VWU to develop a scheme to support women-managed cooperatives and create jobs for female workers in the period 2022-2030. With the scheme, "Women with the OCOP Program," the Vietnam Women's Union links the implementation of the "Support women in start-up a business for the period 2017-2025" and the "Support women led cooperatives and generate employment for female workers in the period 2022-2030" projects targeting OCOP product development.

Proposal 5.3: Promote GE within the family, foster the role of women and people in cultivating Vietnamese family values.

Proposed content:

Adding to the content of component 1.6 the task of **"Propaganda, advocacy, and support for people to cultivate family values, contributing to the development of a new rural area"** assigned the Vietnam Women's Union to assume the prime responsibility and coordinate with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

The reason for Proposal:

Directive No. 06-CT/TW dated June 24, 2021, on strengthening the Party's leadership in family building work in the new situation⁴³ has set out four major tasks, in which *"Associating the implementation of family building work with... NTP NRD"*... Component contents of the NTP on NRD and the draft NTP NRD criteria for the 2021-2025 period, not to mention the content of building and cultivating Vietnamese family values, raising awareness, orienting actions, supporting people in preserving and promoting family values so that each rural family can make practical contributions to the goal of new rural development and national development.

⁴³ 4 major tasks: (1) Building and developing the Vietnamese family value system in the new period; (2) Promoting the role of family, community, and society in building a cultural environment where Vietnamese people are rich in kindness, tolerance, sincerity, trust, respect for morality, industriousness, hardworking, thrifty, creative, aspirational, modern; (3) Propagate and educate on policies and laws on marriage and family; family cultural standards and values; knowledge and skills to build a family; (4) Develop a system of providing basic social services for families, supporting families to develop sustainably and happily and realize gender equality



Proposal 6. Supplementing some contents and solutions for implementing GE in the National Target Program on SPR for the period 2021-2025

Proposal 6.1. Make several targets in component projects and sub-projects to ensure achievement for both men and women official.

Proposed content: With targets expected to be achieved at the individual level, the proposal clearly states that the target must be achieved for both women and men. Specifically: (i) Indicators of % of trained workers with degrees and certificates (**specific objective**); (ii) in Project 2 and in Project 3(sub-project 1) need to ensure at least 50% poor households having women participate in diversified livelihood, poverty reduction model, production development model.

The reason for Proposal: This provision is necessary to concretize the implementation of Section VII on the mechanism and solutions to implement the program (subsection 8 on promoting GE) in the Report on Proposal Policy of the NTP on SPR Goals 2021-2025 stated, “Develop a mechanism and guide for gender mainstreaming in program activities through specific regulations on the percentage of subproject budgets that are devoted to projects, models and activities aimed at implementing gender equality, helping to solve the problems of gender limitation and the gap in the locality.” At the same time, it is also necessary to overcome the inadequacies in the previous period when the NTP on SPR included the principle of “priority for women” in the Program document, but it was not concretized, so it could not be implemented.

Proposal 6.2. Promoting GE in diversifying livelihoods, development poverty reduction, and nutrition improvement models

Proposed content:

Adding the phrase “**socio-political organizations**” in the **implementation mechanism and assignment of implementation in Projects 2 and 3, while** at the same time supplementing

women-led, women-managed models that generate women-extensive laborers(?) who are encouraged to support the **Sub-project 1 of Project 3**.

The reason for Proposal:

In the period 2016-2020, the Vietnam Women's Union at all levels has supported the establishment of 656 cooperatives managed by women and more than 10,000 models of cooperative groups/associated groups in disadvantaged areas in the NTP on SPR in the 2016-2020 period, implementing the Scheme to support women in entrepreneurship and the program to accompany women in the frontier. Cooperative groups/associated groups are the foundation for consolidating and supporting the establishment of cooperatives in the coming cycle. In the National Target Program on SPR period of 2021-2025, socio-political organizations, including the Vietnam Women's Union, can continue to promoting its strengths and experiences to make practical and sustainable contributions to the NTP's goal of poverty reduction.

Proposal 6.3. Promoting GE in Communication Information on Poverty Reducing

Proposed content:

Supplement the content of: **conduct comprehensive financial training** in Task 05, sub-project 1, Project. At the same time, add the target groups needed to be built capacity of **marginalized groups, including women** in the extremely difficult social economic, ethnic areas.

Adding the organization to collaborate with the Ministry of Information and Communication to be "**socio-political organization**" in the **assignment of implementation in Sub-project 1, Projects 5**.

The reason for Proposal:

Decision 149/QD-TTg dated January 22, 2020, of the Prime Minister on Approval of the National Comprehensive Financial Strategy to 2025, with orientation to 2030 sets a specific goal of, "Improving financial literacy for people and businesses, ensuring that all people and businesses have appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors in choosing and using financial products and services..."⁴⁴ The target audience of the Strategy is all people and businesses, with special focus on the target group who have limited or no access to financial products and services such as people living in rural and remote areas. This includes low-income people, women, and other disadvantaged groups.⁴⁵

Lack of knowledge and skills in household financial management creates major barriers for the poor to access formal financial services, increasing dependence on high-risk financial services for the poor such as the "black credit" market. This can limit the efforts of the poor in starting up or doing business in general, and has overarching impacts on their ability to escape poverty in a sustainable manner.

The VWU is a pioneer in the field of microfinancing activities, and has a lot of experience in developing training programs, organizing activities to improve capacity in comprehensive finance, and managing savings for women, especially poor women.

44 Clause e, Section 3, Part II, Decision 149/QD-TTg dated 22/01/2020

45 Clause e, Section 1, Part II, Decision 149/QD-TTg dated 22/01/2020



Photo: UN Women/ Ho Anh Tien

APPENDIX

Specific proposals on Gender Mainstreaming in the Guidelines on Implementation and Evaluation of “Standard” and “Advanced” New Rural Development Commune Criteria, period 2021-2025

A. CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL NEW RURAL STANDARDS, 2021-2025

I. ZONING

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
1	Planning	1.1. Having a communal construction master plan approved and publicly announced on time	<p><u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Construction</p> <p><u>Proposed content:</u> Regulations to ensure consultation with the people in the formulation, approval, adjustment, and implementation supervision, including provisions on the percentage of women's participation in the consultation meetings mentioned above</p>
		1.2. Promulgating the process of managing the commune's general construction planning and organization, the implementation according to said plans	

II. ECONOMIC - SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
2	Transport system	2.1. Communal roads are asphalted or concreted, ensuring convenient transportation all year round	<p><u>Proposal to:</u> People's Committees of provinces</p> <p><u>Proposed content:</u> Take measures to ensure safe transportation, especially for women and children. Examples include, but are not limited to: lighting at night, notice boards, signposts, speed bumps at crowded intersections, and zebra crossings near schools.</p>
		2.2. Village trunk roads and inter-village roads are at least solidified, ensuring convenient travel by car all year round	
		2.3. The streets and alleys are clean and convenient to travel all year round	
		2.4. The inter-field main road ensures convenient transportation of goods/ commodities all year round	
5	Schools	Percentage of schools at all levels (kindergarten, primary, secondary school or high school with multiple levels, with the highest level of education being lower secondary school) meeting the prescribed standards of infrastructure	<p><u>Recommended to:</u> Ministry of Education and Training</p> <p><u>Proposed content:</u> Make educational institutions friendly to all children and people, including disabled people, ensuring gender equality, and providing a safe, violence-free learning environment.</p>

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
6	Cultural facilities	6.1. The commune has a cultural house or multi-purpose hall and sports ground to serve cultural and sports activities of the whole commune	<u>Recommended to:</u> Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
		6.2. The commune has amusement, sports, and entertainment spots for children and the elderly according to regulations	<u>Proposed content:</u> (i) Regulations on communal cultural houses, village cultural houses or hamlet cultural activities: need to have measures that are friendly to women and girls (for example, having separate toilets for men and women, toilets with doors, etc.)
		6.3. Percentage of villages, hamlets with cultural houses or places of cultural and sports activities serving the community	

III. ECONOMY AND ORGANIZATION OF PRODUCTION

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
10	Income	Per capita income (million VND/person)	
11	Poor households	Rate of multi-dimensional poor households in the period of 2021-2025	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs <u>Proposed content:</u> (i) Proposal to include sex-disaggregation in data on poor households
12	Labor	The proportion of trained workers with degrees and certificates (applicable to both men and women)	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs <u>Proposed content:</u> Guiding localities in ensuring that the proportion of female workers with a degree is not lower than that of male workers.
13	Organization of production	13.1. Communes with cooperatives operating following the provisions of the Law on Cooperatives 2012	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development <u>Proposed content:</u> For new rural districts, it is necessary to have at least 30% of the cooperatives and/or production linkage models associated with agricultural product consumption in which women are involved in the management and/or have a large number of female members.
		13.2. The commune has a model linking production with consumption of key products to ensure sustainability	

IV. CULTURE - SOCIAL - ENVIRONMENT

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
14	Education and training	14.1. Make preschool, primary, and secondary education compulsory; eliminate illiteracy	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Education and Training
		14.2. Percentage of students graduating from lower secondary school who continue to pursue a secondary school education (high school, continuing education, or intermediate education, etc.)	<u>Proposed content:</u> (i) the percentages in this criterion need to be met for both boys and girls (to avoid the situation where only the average % is achieved but the % achieved for girls is lower than that of boys); (ii) stipulate the % of illiteracy eradication for both women and men.
15	Medical	15.1. Percentage of people participating in health insurance	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Health
		15.2. Commune meets national standards for health	<u>Proposed content:</u> (i) % of health insurance participation for both women and men;
17	Environment and food safety	17.7. Percentage of households with latrines, bathrooms, and hygienic domestic water storage facilities which meets "3 clean" target	The Vietnam Women's Union develops guidelines for the "3 clean" target in line with current context

V. POLITICAL SYSTEM

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
18	Political and legal access system	18.6. Ensuring gender equality and preventing gender-based violence, child abuse, accident and injury prevention, and protect and support vulnerable people in the areas of family and social life	The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, and the Vietnam Women's Union Association Central Committee collaborated to develop guidelines for criterion 18.6 to ensure basic aspects of "gender equality"

B. ADVANCED NEW RURAL COMMUNITY CRITERIA, 2021-2025

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
1	Planning	1.1. Having a communal construction master plan which is still valid or has been reviewed and adjusted following the law on planning	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Construction and People's Committees of provinces (with target 1.2)
		1.2. Organize the implementation of construction planning and manage construction according to the planning	<u>Proposed content:</u> Regulations to ensure consultation with the people in the formulation, approval, adjustment, and implementation supervision; including provisions on the percentage of women's participation in the consultation meetings mentioned above
		1.3. Having detailed planning on construction of commune centers or detailed planning on construction of new residential quarters adjusted to suit the local socio-economic situation	
5	Educational	5.1. Percentage of schools at all levels (kindergarten, primary, secondary, and/ or high school with multiple levels, the highest level being lower secondary school) meeting level 1 facility standards and having at least 1 school meeting the level 2 of facility standards	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Education and Training <u>Proposed content:</u> (i) the percentages in this criterion need to be met for both boys and girls (to avoid the situation where only the average % is achieved but the % achieved for girls is lower than that of boys); (ii) stipulate % of illiteracy eradication for both women and men; (iii) make educational institutions child-friendly, disability-friendly, and ensure gender equality providing a safe, violence-free learning environment for all; (iv) schools in the commune have basic education programs on gender, prevention of violence and abuse; (v) instruction of the learning community at the commune level including content and learning materials on gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence
		5.2. Maintain and improve the quality of meeting standards for compulsory preschool education for 5-year-old children	
		5.3. Meet and maintain standards for compulsory primary and secondary education	
		5.4. Meet the literacy standards	
		5.5. Communal learning communities are assessed and graded	
		5.6. Supplementing a model of physical education for students to practice physical strength, skills, and endurance	
6	Cultural	6.1. Cultural and sports institutions in communes and villages meet standards as prescribed; various types of cultural, artistic, physical training and sports activities are organized regularly	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism <u>Proposed content:</u> Mainstreaming gender into several cultural institutions according to specific local conditions to ensure gender equality in the activities of cultural institutions.
8	Information and communication	8.2. Percentage of subscribers using smartphones in the total number of phone subscribers	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Information and Communications <u>Recommended Content:</u> Guide to % of smartphone useage for both men and women

No.	Criteria name	Criteria contents	Proposal
10	Income	Per capita income (<i>million VND/person</i>)	
11	Poor households	11.1. Rate of multidimensional poor households in the period of 2021-2025	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
		11.2. Rate of multi-dimensional near-poor households in the period of 2021-2025	<u>Proposed content:</u> It is recommended to have sex disaggregation in the data on poor households.
12	Labor	The proportion of trained workers with degrees and certificates (applicable to both men and women)	<p><u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs</p> <p><u>Proposed content:</u> Guiding localities in ensuring that the proportion of female workers with a degree is not lower than that of male workers.</p>
13	Organization of production	13.1. Cooperatives operate effectively and have stable production association contracts	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and People's Committees of Provinces
		13.2. Have OCOP products rated as standard or equivalent	<u>Proposed content:</u> The new rural district requires at least 30% female leadership of cooperatives and/or production linkage models, OCOP product production facilities, high-tech production models participating in management, and/or having a large number of female members
		13.3. Having a production model applying high technology, or a model applying mechanization of stages in production associated with food safety production	
14	Medical	14.1. Percentage of people participating in health insurance program (applicable to both men and women)	<u>Proposal to:</u> Ministry of Health
		14.2. Percentage of people participating in and using telemedicine applications	<u>Proposed content:</u> (i) % of children under 5 malnourished with stunting for both boys and girls; (ii) % of the population receiving health management for both men and women
		14.3. Percentage of population with health management	
16	Legal access	16.3. Percentage of people eligible for legal aid who know and receive legal aid when required by law	<p>Recommended to: Ministry of Justice</p> <p><u>Proposed content:</u> (i) % of legal aid qualified-individuals who know about, and receive, legal aid, for both women and men</p>
18	Quality of the living environment	18.3. Percentage of households with toilets, latrines, and domestic water containing facilities clean and hygienic water meeting the "3 clean" target	The Vietnam Women's Union has developed guidelines for the "3 clean" target in line with current context



Photo: UN Women/ Phan Thanh Cuong



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