

United Nations Development Programme

**Arab States Region
Initiation Plan**

Project Title:	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the Arab States Region
Expected RPD Outcome(s):	<u>Outcome 4</u> : Women and youth empowered for a more inclusive and sustainable future
Expected RPD Output(s):	<p>4.1 Women's leadership and participation advanced through strengthening institutions and civil society and addressing structural barriers, to advance gender equality, including in crisis contexts (Strategic Plan 6.2)</p> <p>4.2 Regional and national capacities and policies strengthened to advance women's economic empowerment (Regional specific output)</p>
Initiation Plan Start/End Dates:	15 July 2022 - 31 December 2023
Implementing Partner:	UNDP

Brief Description

This Project Initiation Plan (PIP) aims to contribute to developing a gender specific regional initiative for the RBAS Regional Programme delivering on the following outputs: 1) Capacities for legal reform for gender equality in the Arab region strengthened; 2) Regional capacities and policies for women's economic empowerment strengthened; 3) Regional gender action plan for RBAS developed and aligned with the Global Gender Equality Strategy.

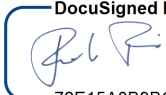
The PIP builds on its partnership with the UN-Women, UNFPA and UNESCWA, whereby UNDP will maintain its focus on advancing gender justice through promoting and enforcing women's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights (Goal 5). Women's economic empowerment will be promoted with opportunities for increasing access to economic assets, services, business opportunities, employment, and finance, while addressing unpaid care work (Goals 5, 8, and 10). Women's leadership will be cross cutting through engagement and capacity development of women's organizations on legal reforms and policies for gender equality. The PIP also aims to support the integration of gender in all outcome areas of the Regional Programme to meet regional and global commitments.

Programme Period: 15 July 2022 - 31 December 2023
Atlas Project Number: 00145652
Atlas Output ID: 132877
Gender Marker: GEN3

Total resources required: US\$ 955,934
Total allocated resources: US\$ 232, 398
• Regular US\$ 955,934
Unfunded budget: US\$ 723, 536

Agreed by UNDP:

Paola Pagliani
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I. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

The Arab region is among the lowest performing regions regarding gender equality generally. This is driven by the low political and economic participation of women. Based on recent estimates, 79.3% of women in the region are economically inactive, which means they are neither working nor actively seeking work. Among the 20.7% who are economically active, 20.1% are unemployed¹ and 62% of women workers are in the informal economy. Women in the region are also disproportionately engaged in unpaid care work, and the time they spend on it is estimated at 5 to 6 times that of men.

The reasons behind this low economic participation of women are complex, mutually reinforcing and interconnected and include: 1) Discriminatory rights in the law impacting access to economic rights, 2) an inadequate policy and institutional environment coupled with a generally low representation of women in decision-making positions; 3) unequal access to and control over resources such as land and finance and to services such as transport; 4) social norms and discriminatory practices perpetuated through formal and informal institutions prevalent in societal culture which result among other in disproportionate engagement in unpaid care work; 5) protracted conflicts, militarization, sexual and gender-based violence in various forms which hinder women's participation. These factors have historically rendered women, in general, disadvantaged compared to men in public participation in various forms and when seeking employed work or entrepreneurship activities. These challenges are greater in the case of rural, poor or disabled women and those in displacement, especially refugee women who face compounded vulnerabilities.

The PIP will therefore deliver the following outputs:

Output 1: Capacities for legal reform for gender equality in the Arab States region strengthened

This output will build on the regional joint initiative the gender justice in the law, which is implemented in collaboration with UNFPA, UN ESCWA and UNDP. In 2021/2022, 20 country reports are being updated and finalized on the status of gender equality in the law aligned with the SDG 5.1 and 5.6 methodology and include 79 indicators in 6 areas in the areas of overarching legal frameworks and public life, violence against women, employment and economic benefits, marriage and family life, sexual and reproductive health and rights. The reports are validated by national stakeholders and are expected to be updated in light process annually. The 4 agencies will launch the reports on 11 December 2022 and will discuss the next phase of the initiative.

Through this PIP, UNDP can propose its contribution to the next phase around regional dialogues around the 6 areas of the law, and a study on the socioeconomic implications of discrimination on women. The purpose is to continue the conversation and bring together non-traditional stakeholders including when possible religious leaders. The PIP output will also be building on the gender justice and behavioural insights initiative which tackles social norms and behaviours that prevent women from accessing their rights in the law. The initiative is implemented in 3 countries and through this PIP, testing and documentation of the experiences for possible upscaling and/or replication or lessons learn will be ensured.

Output 2: Regional capacities and policies for women's economic empowerment strengthened

The situation of women in the economy outlined above has been further exacerbated by COVID-19 with reports in some countries in the region showing higher loss of jobs among women than men, an expected increase in unpaid care work due to lockdowns and movement restrictions which have also negatively affected the livelihoods of informal economy workers and increased domestic violence. The Ukraine war, which started in February 2022, is also impacting food and fuel prices with expected socio-economic pressures on family dynamics that may lead to further exacerbate women's unpaid care work given women's role in ensuring food and nutrition for the family, worsen their food insecurity, increase further the incidences of domestic violence, and women dropping out from the labour market due to high transportation costs. This output will aim to

¹ 2020, UNDP, Compounding Crisis, will COVID-19 and low oil prices lead to a new development paradigm in the Arab region

develop a comprehensive regional project for women's economic empowerment that includes policy dialogues, development of guidance notes and tools/methodologies for women economic empowerment, regional exchange meetings and capacity development. Gender data and social norms would be considered as cross cutting issues.

The project is expected to have an integrated approach that addresses both obstacles to women's economic empowerment, as well as creating new opportunities in the form of inclusive green and digital jobs and providing access to skills and productive resources/finance and unpaid care work. It is expected to complement the gender justice initiative which tackles access to economic rights as well as the gender integration in other areas of the Regional Programme, specifically connected to women's leadership and social protection. The focus will be on approaches that serve women in poor areas, in rural areas and in displacement and more generally unpaid workers, informal workers, women running MSEs and HH businesses.

A global review of women's economic empowerment (WEE) conducted during the Strategic Planning cycle 2018-2021 found that while UNDP is well positioned to adopt a holistic approach to WEE it still lacks a common conceptual approach. UNDP focuses on a set of barriers to WEE such as lack of finance, access to land or markets, segregation with regard to employment, and legal restrictions, while paying less attention to critical dimensions of household dynamics, unpaid care work and social norms. Measurement of success is also limited to one dimension of economic empowerment which is access to resources and opportunities, while dimensions of agency and achievements are not included. The review proposes a conceptual approach that recognizes three distinct aspects of economic empowerment: resources, agency, and achievements², and identifies five critical entry points for linkages with other goals to help develop an enhanced portfolio in the area of women's economic empowerment. The entry points are: 1) gender-responsive policy dialogue; 2) unpaid care work to eliminate livelihoods barriers; 3) utilizing the digital economy for women MSMEs and entrepreneurship; 4) utilizing the green economy for women's employment and linking economic participation to political participation and 5) legislative change.

Earlier work by UNDP identified promising and innovative approaches from several organizations' practice that demonstrate how support for women's economic support can contribute to wider women's empowerment—both inside and outside the economic sphere. These include: 1) economic opportunity (e.g., expanding employment and entrepreneurship, promoting decent and productive work, improving access to finance); 2) legal status and rights (e.g., improving women's property, inheritance and land rights); and 3) voice, inclusion and participation in economic decision-making (e.g., developing mechanisms to enhance women's involvement in decision-making bodies)³.

Through this output UNDP can document existing approaches and best practices to women's economic empowerment through our CO work (up to 10-12 initiatives). The purpose will be to inform the regional project and help in mobilizing resources. UNDP can in the meantime, start the conversation in the region through producing papers, documentation of practices and holding regional stakeholders' meetings on key areas connected to women's economic empowerment and gender equality: methodologies for data and measurement of unpaid care work, and care policies based on the UNDP-UN Women Global COVID-19 Gender Response Tracker, the latter in collaboration with UN Women. This output will also build on the global Gender Equality Seal approach with the private sector (GES PS) and public institutions (GES PI) for gender-inclusive workplaces. It will invest in the planned pilots in Jordan and Lebanon on GES PI for capacity development and conduct dialogues to raise awareness about the GES, which will include developing and discussing a paper for the Future of Work for gender equality in the region and connecting elements of it to the GES work. UNDP will also organize a conference on financing for gender equality that would bring together stakeholders from government and private sector, including banks who have good practices and lessons to bring to the table on GRB, SDG bonds, financial inclusion strategies, and gender responsive (digital) financial products.

2 This framework is based on Kabeer, Naila. 2002. Resources, agency, achievements: reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*. 30(2).

3 UNDP (2008). *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment*

Output 3: Regional gender action plan for RBAS developed and aligned with the Global Gender Equality Strategy

This output will support the integration of gender in the three other outcome areas of the Regional Programme. It will achieve that by developing a Regional Gender Equality Action Plan 22-25 linked to the Regional Programme and aligned with the Global Gender Equality Strategy 22-25. This output will enable consultations with regional thematic teams to identify entry points and actions for integration of gender in their areas. This is based on the RP commitment to include gender analysis across the outcomes and focus targeted initiatives on women, given the significant gender gap in the region and in line with the GES 22-25 commitment to allocate 15% of all programmes to gender equality objectives. Furthermore, awareness and capacity development on gender using the thematic gender action plans will take place online with regional and CO teams. Finally, an online regional external consultation will be held on the Regional Action Plan for partnerships and donors' engagement.

The objectives of this PIP are therefore:

- 1) To develop specific projects on gender justice and women's economic empowerment
- 2) To identify and document through research and regional dialogues, the good practices and lessons learned in the region and beyond to inform policy development for gender equality.
- 3) To enable UNDP regional and country projects in the Arab States to adequately integrate gender and allocate sufficient resources to the achievement of gender-specific results.

The PIP is aligned with the priority areas that have been identified in the Regional Programme Document (2022-2025), the new UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025) and the Global Gender Equality Strategy 22-25.

II. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The initiation plan will follow management by UNDPs Regional Hub for Arab States, with overall programme oversight by the Regional Programme, advisory support by the Gender Team at the Hub, and operational and RBM-related support by the Management Support Unit (MSU). UNDPs Regional Acting Team Leader in the Gender Team will serve as Project Manager to lead coordination, technical and policy advisory support for achieving all outputs, as well as have a lead role in procurement of all project inputs in concert with the Programme Support Unit. The PIP will be implemented in coordination with other teams in the hub and in coordination with the Global Gender Team when and as relevant.

III. MONITORING

The Regional Bureau for Arab States will ensure that this PIP, part of the regional programme, has a sound monitoring system in place, according to the programming arrangements set out in the guidelines of the UNDP programme and operations policies and procedures. The MSU will provide technical guidance and support in monitoring and reporting, including tracking progress against output indicators.

Considering the gaps in official data sources from the region, a focus on research and data collection will be important for monitoring development trends, tracking Sustainable Development Goals progress, and identifying needs and priorities. Regular monitoring of indicators will enable UNDP to identify intervention-related successes and gaps and make corrective actions that are evidence-based. The initiation phase report will be prepared and submitted upon the closure of the PIP. A project document will be attached to the report or an explanation if initiation does not produce a full project.

IV. WORK PLAN

Period⁴: 15 July 2022- 31 December 2023

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Timeframe									PLANNED BUDGET	
		2022		2023								
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Budget Description	2022	2023
<p>Output 1: Capacities for legal reform for gender equality in the Arab region strengthened</p> <p>Indicator: 1.1. #of commitments made in support of GE reform (measured by # of statements made in support)</p>	1. Finalize and launch the Gender justice and the law reports for 20 countries (11 December 2022) and develop proposal for next phase		x					UNDP	TRAC	Contractual services	20,000	
	2. Organize a 2-day regional dialogue session with national stakeholders around the 6 topics of gender justice and the law including government, CSOs and religious leaders			x	x			UNDP	TRAC	Contractual services Travel		7,500 38,850

<p>of reforms enacted by national governments toward Gender Equality and # of CSO actions undertaken for Gender Equality)</p> <p>Baseline data: 1.1. 0</p> <p>Target 1.1. at least 8</p> <p><i>Collaboration is foreseen with UN Women, ILO, ESCWA, UNFPA, National machineries, Ministries of Justice, CSOs, religious leaders/ Musawah, Nordic donors/Foundations).</i></p> <p><i>Related RP outcome: 4</i></p>	<p>3. Develop an evidence-based analysis on the socio-economic implications of discrimination against women in several countries in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the concept note and TORs - Identify the list of participating countries (min.3 up to 5) - Hire a consultant in each country and a regional lead - Hold 2 expert group meetings to discuss the methodology and draft findings - Present the findings in a regional online event 									Consultants		128,250	
											Contractual services		10,000
	<p>4. Test and document approaches for BI and gender justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support 2 COs in testing their GJ and BI work - Documenting the lessons learnt 										Contractual services		15,000
Sub-total Output 1												20,000	199,600

<p>Output 2: Regional capacities and policies for women's economic empowerment strengthened</p> <p>Indicators: 2.1. # of knowledge products on policies that support women's economic empowerment 2.2. # of national and regional stakeholders engaged in the dialogues</p> <p>Baseline data: 2.1. 0 2.2. 0</p> <p>Targets: 2.1. at least 3 2.2. 100</p> <p>Collaboration is foreseen with national statistics offices, regional research centres, ministries of finance, private sector and banks, CSOs and UN Women</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize online dialogues on unpaid care work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In collaboration with a regional research institution, develop a technical paper on measurement of unpaid care work - Conduct 2 regional online round tables with stakeholders in government, academia and CSOs, the first to discuss the technical paper and the second care policies 2. Pilot and document a regional approach for gender-responsive workplaces in the public and private sectors building on the Global Gender Seal Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the GES for public institutions in Jordan and Lebanon in capacity development and exchange of experiences - Develop a paper on gender and the future of work in the Arab region connecting to gender-responsive policies - Organize an online dialogue with public and private institutions and CSOs on the paper - Disseminate the paper 3. Organize a regional conference on financing for gender equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation of experiences on financing for gender equality: GRB, SDG bonds, financial inclusion strategies, gender responsive (digital) financial products - Organize south-south exchange sessions on financing for GE with stakeholders in government (including Ministers of Finance and Central Banks), private sectors including banks, and CSOs - Develop and disseminate the outcome documents with policy recommendations 									<p>Contractual services</p> <p>Consultants</p> <p>Contractual services</p> <p>Contractual services (Travel)</p>	<p>40,000</p> <p>100,000</p> <p>125,000</p>	<p>70,000</p> <p>25,000</p> <p>100,000</p> <p>125,000</p>
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<i>Related RP outcome: 4</i>	<p>4. Develop a regional programme on women's economic empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation of approaches for WEE in COs to use for resource mobilization - Develop TORs - Hire an international consultant - Organize consultation meetings with COs and external stakeholders - Map initiatives and partners among regional organizations on gender inclusive economies and identify the focus of a regional project - Write up of the full-fledged project proposal 	x	x	x	x	x	x	UNDP	TRAC	Consultants Contractual services	99,450	20,000 3,000
Sub-total Output 2											139,450	343,000
<p>Output 3: Regional gender action plan for RBAS developed and aligned with the Global Gender Equality Strategy</p> <p>Indicator:</p>	<p>1. Develop the regional gender action plan draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire a consultant to facilitate - Organize consultation meetings with the regional thematic teams on their outcome area in the RPD to identify entry points and actions for integration of gender in their work. - Hold a consultation session with external stakeholders around the regional action plan and identify potential partners and donors 		x	x						Consultants	15,000	

<p>3.1 Availability of a regional gender action plan</p> <p>Baseline data: 3.1. Outcome PIPs have been developed to operationalize the RPD</p> <p>Target: 3.1. Gender action plan developed per each RPD outcome area</p> <p>Collaboration potentially with AWO, CAWTAR, donor community</p> <p><i>Related RP outcomes: 1,2,3 and 4</i></p>	<p>2. Support to the Regional Gender Team</p>	x	x	x	x	x	x		Staff (IPSA 10 12 months)	45,000	140, 626
Sub-total Output 3										60,000	140,626
										219, 450	683,226
Common and Shared Services (CSS) at 5.9%										12,948	40,310
Grand Total										232,398	723,536

- The plan is based on the assumption of having 3 people in place: Gender Team Leader, Gender Specialist and IPSA 10, as well as dedicated support by PSU and operations colleagues in contracting, travel and organizing events

Annex 1: Risk Analysis

#	Event	Cause	Impact(s)	Risk Category and Sub-category (including Risk Appetite)	Impact, Likelihood & Risk Level	Risk Valid From/To	Risk Owner (individual accountable for managing the risk)	Risk Treatment and Treatment Owner
1	There is a risk that regional priorities may change	As a result of the Ukraine war or other crises.	Which will impact the plan's relevance and allocations.	7. STRATEGIC (7.7. Alignment with national priorities) - UNDP Risk Appetite: OPEN TO SEEKING	Likelihood: 4 - Highly likely Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	From: 19-Jul-22 To: 31-Dec-23	Gender Team Leader	Risk Treatment 1.1: Revisiting the plan for relevance and reallocating new priorities Risk Treatment Owner: Gender Team Leader
2	There is a risk that UNDP will be unable to position itself in the economic empowerment field of women regionally	As a result of absence from regional programmatic work in this area for a number of years and existence of other players including UN agencies	Which will impact the initiation and implementation of the economic empowerment work	7. STRATEGIC (7.4. Competition) - UNDP Risk Appetite: OPEN TO SEEKING	Likelihood: 2 - Low likelihood Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	From: 19-Jun-22 To: 31-Dec-23	Gender Team Leader	Risk Treatment 2.1: Mapping initiatives, engaging with regional and national partners and defining collaborations ahead of starting the new programme Risk Treatment Owner: Gender Team Leader
3	There is a risk that the programme will lack COs engagement	As a result of competing priorities for the COs	Which will impact the programme's outreach and implementation	3. OPERATIONAL (3.5. Partners' engagement) - UNDP Risk Appetite:	Likelihood: 2 - Low likelihood Impact:	From: 19-Jul-22 To: 31-Dec-23	Gender Team Leader	Risk Treatment 3.1: Engagement of the CO gender staff and CO thematic staff in the planning of the regional

				EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	3 - Intermediate Risk level: LOW (equates to a risk appetite of CAUTIOUS)			programme during 2022 and 2023 Risk Treatment Owner: Gender Team Leader
4	There is a risk that recruitment of the Gender Team Leader and the IPSA10 contract will be delayed and/ or candidates won't be qualified	As a result of delayed recruitment, unavailability of candidates corresponding to ToRs	Which will impact in the Team's Capacity to deliver	4. ORGANIZATIONAL (4.2. Execution capacity) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely Impact: 4 - Extensive Risk level: SUBSTANTIAL (equates to a risk appetite of OPEN)	From: 19-Jul-22 To: 31-Dec-22	RBAS and BPPS gender management Gender Team Leader for the IPSA 10	Risk Treatment 4.1: Expedite the hiring process for the GTL and start identification of a qualified candidate with the required profile for the IPSA10 Risk Treatment Owner: RBAS and BPPS gender management for GTL Gender Team Leader for IPSA
5	There is a risk that COVID-19 restrictions apply again and hinder face to face meetings	As a result of the continuation of the Pandemic	Which will impact and the modality of implementation, and delivery of budget	4. ORGANIZATIONAL (4.3. Implementation arrangements) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	Likelihood: 2 - Low likelihood Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	From: 19-Jul-22 To: 31-Dec-23	Gender Team Leader	Risk Treatment 5.1: Switch online and reallocate the budget for the gender justice and the law and the financing for GE conference Risk Treatment Owner: Gender Team Leader
6	There is a risk that there will be delays in procurement	As a result of overlapping and	Which will impact in delivery of programme	4. ORGANIZATIONAL (4.9.	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely	From: 19-Jul-22	Gender Team Leader & Operations team	Risk Treatment 6.1: Procurement plan to be developed and

		competing priorities within organization		Procurement) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	To: 31-Dec- 23		consultants head-hunted, rosters used Risk Treatment Owner: Gender Team Leader
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