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Advancing official statistics for the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development:
initiatives by global, regional and subregional
organizations in support of the collective
vision and framework for action

Work of the secretariat and partners on mainstreaming gender in environment statistics**

Summary

Just as women and men have unequal access to rights, resources and opportunities, they relate to and interact with the natural environment in different ways, face differing vulnerabilities and impacts, and have unique knowledge and adaptive capacity related to climate change, disasters and use of natural resources. The nexus between environment and gender has been of interest for decades, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development providing renewed impetus to the discussion.

The present document provides an overview of a recent initiative by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to consolidate a set of indicators capturing issues at the nexus of environment and gender in the Asia-Pacific region. The proposed set of indicators is drawn mostly from existing global and regional indicator frameworks, including the global Sustainable Development Goals framework.

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I. Introduction

1. With its densely populated cities, expansive low-lying lands and frequent natural disasters, Asia-Pacific is extremely vulnerable to climate change. Many of the world's deadliest natural disasters in recent years have taken place in the region, and more than 80 per cent of all new disaster displacements over the past 20 years – around 187 million – occurred in Asia-Pacific.[1] Climate change is depleting the region's natural resources substantially – from air quality (in 2019, the world's top 50 most polluted cities were all in Asia[2]) to biodiversity loss (60 per cent of Asia-Pacific grasslands are now degraded, eight of the top 10 most polluted rivers are in Asia, and 25 per cent of the region's endemic species are threatened[3]). This is particularly concerning from a gender-equality perspective, as women are less likely to own productive assets and thus disproportionately depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. They are also less likely to hold decision-making power, including for natural resource management and conservation.[4] As such, the differential ways in which women and men interact with and rely upon the natural environment may be left out of natural resource management and conservation policies and initiatives, limiting women's ability to affect change and leaving them ill-equipped to cope with environmental degradation and natural disasters.

2. The effects of climate change have undoubtedly slowed development efforts in Asia-Pacific and are affecting the wellbeing of women and men, who interact with the natural environment in different ways and face differing vulnerabilities and impacts. On its current trajectory, Asia-Pacific will be unable to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.[5] At the same time, of the 231 unique Sustainable Development Goal indicators, only seven measure the connections between gender and the environment explicitly.[6]

3. In response to this challenge, and to better understand the environment-gender nexus, UN-Women and ESCAP partnered with UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to put forward a proposal for an Environment-Gender Indicator Set that could capture issues of relevance for Asia-Pacific countries.[7] This set of indicators is not meant to be prescriptive nor for compulsory reporting. Rather, it has been envisaged as a guidance tool for countries interested in measuring this nexus in their own national contexts.

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[1] See Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Global Report on Internal Displacement' 2018.

[2] See IQAir: https://www.iqair.com/th-en/world-most-polluted-cities?page=1&perPage=50&cities=.

[3] See UNEP: https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/scientists-warn-dangerous-decline-asia-pacifics-biodiversity.

[4] Only 16.9% of parliament seats were held by women in Central and Southern Asia in 2019, 20.8% in Eastern and South Eastern Asia, and 16.3% in Oceania. See: E/2019/68, https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2019/secretary-general-sdg-report-2019--Statistical-Annex.pdf.

[5] See United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR): https://www.undrr.org/news/disasters-displace-more-people-conflict-and-violence and https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP_Asia_and_the_Pacific_SDG_Progress_Report_2019.pdf.

[6] Sustainable Development Goal Indicators 1.4.2, 5.a.1, 5.a.2, 5.4.1, 2.3.2, 4.7.1, 12.8.1.

[7] See Working Paper Series SD/WP/10/October 2019 , https://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp10october-2019-mainstreaming-gender-environment-statistics-sdgs.

II. The environment-gender indicator set for Asia and the Pacific

4. Mainstreaming gender in environment statistics is not just about producing sex-disaggregated data, it also requires measuring environment-related issues affecting or affected disproportionately by women or men. To measure the environment-gender nexus comprehensively, indicators must, in addition, capture socially constructed vulnerabilities and the specific needs, challenges and priorities of women, men, girls and boys in relation to the environment.[8]

5. In early 2019, UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recommended a set of 19 indicators to measure the environment-gender nexus in the global context.[9] These were identified through expert consultations, case studies and desk research. In developing this set, while the Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework was a clear starting point, criteria such as feasibility of data collection, availability of internationally agreed methodologies as well as priorities of case study countries were considered.[10]

6. The set of 19 indicators proposed by UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provided a critical entry point for mainstreaming gender in environment statistics in the Asia-Pacific region. However, during a meeting on the Importance of Producing and Using Gender Statistics in Disaster-prone Countries, which took place in Bangkok in October 2018, countries highlighted the importance of identifying additional indicators to better capture regional needs. This set was thus adapted and expanded by UN-Women and ESCAP in consultation with UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) later that year, to propose a set of indicators for the Asia-Pacific region. The set includes a combination of indicators taken from the Sustainable Development Goals framework and from other existing frameworks, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) (Refer to annex I for an updated list of the Asia-Pacific indicators proposed)[11].

7. The list of indicators proposed for Asia and the Pacific were grouped across six key thematic areas, namely:

    (a)   Land and biodiversity;

    (b)   Natural resources, including food, energy and water;

    (c)   Climate change and disasters;

    (d)   Sustainable consumption, production and waste;

    (e)   Health, wellbeing and sanitation;

    (f)   Environmental decision-making.

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[8]   See Working Paper Series SD/WP/10/October 2019 , https://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp10october-2019-mainstreaming-gender-environment-statistics-sdgs.

[9]   UNEP and IUCN (2019): Gender and environment statistics: Unlocking information for action and measuring the SDGs. See: https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/gender-and-environment-statistics-unlocking-information-action-and-measuring-sdgs.

[10]   Case studies were conducted in Lao PDR, Kenya and Mexico.

[11]   https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030; https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf.

8.   This set was presented during the Expert meeting on Statistics on Gender and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific, which was organized by the above-mentioned partners in September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting brought together statisticians, policy makers, academicians and civil society organizations. The experts who attended this meeting supported the region-specific indicator set in principle and suggested adding indicators to cover more thoroughly other regional policy needs and priorities. Some of the additional thematic areas of relevance to the region, as suggested by the experts, included:

(a)   Exposure to disasters;

(b)   Environment-related conflict, migration and displacement;

(c)   Gender-based violence in the context of environment;

(d)   Harnessing women's traditional ecological knowledge;

(e)   Women in environmental conservation roles;

(f)   Rural women's leadership on environmental issues;

(g)   Small-scale industries, environment-related employment and livelihoods;

(h)   Sustainable production and consumption, including sustainable agricultural practices, organic farming and waste management.

These recommendations have been used to inform the way forward in furthering the development of the indicator set and supporting countries in designing related data collection initiatives.

III.   The way forward

9.   Since the expert meeting in Bangkok in September 2019, the secretariat and partners have made progress in identifying additional indicators that could speak to the above-mentioned additional thematic areas. While some of them are drawn directly from other indicator sets and therefore have internationally agreed methodology for calculation, others required modification to capture the gender angle more comprehensively, and slight methodological development may be required to generate internationally comparable estimates. In the coming months, inputs from national statisticians and other experts in Asia-Pacific countries will be needed to design and test some of these methodological adjustments (refer to annex II for a full list of additional indicators).

10.   The participants to the September 2019 expert meeting in Bangkok also discussed ways forward to further mainstream gender into environment statistics. Solutions ranged from enhancing technical capacity and resources allocated to funding statistics on the environment-gender nexus to exploring non-conventional data sources and utilizing data integration techniques. Most importantly, the experts highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation to progress work on environment and gender, noting that three countries in the region, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Mongolia, are global pioneers in spearheading the collection of environmental data from a gender perspective through targeted surveys, such as post-disaster needs assessment surveys and environment-gender surveys.

11.   The experts also expressed the need to institute a regional mechanism that would be tasked with promoting statistical capacity building on this topic across the region, advocating for better statistics to capture the environment-gender nexus, and boosting related resource mobilization efforts for data

production.[12] Further guidance from member States through regional inter-governmental forums, such as the Committee on Statistics, was also deemed essential to take the work forward in the region and funnel it into global forums. Finally, participants encouraged stronger coordination within the international statistical community to support national efforts for the production and use of these data.

12.   Since then, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia and Viet Nam have expressed interest to conduct surveys on the environment-gender nexus in 2020-2021, which will provide an opportunity to start compiling information for some of the environment-gender indicators in the proposed set for Asia and the Pacific.[13]

13.   A second consultation was held in New York in November 2019, on the side-lines of the 13th meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS). The consultation brought together 15 participants representing country members of the IAEG-GS from the Asia-Pacific region.[14] The indicator set and results from the previous meeting of experts held in Bangkok were presented, and participants were asked to comment on possibilities for furthering this work. Participants noted that, although national development strategies and other strategic documents in some countries covered the issue of environmental sustainability from a gender perspective, financial resources were rarely attached to data production on this topic - a key limitation to the production of related data. Overall, countries requested further support from the international community, both technical/methodological and financial. UN-Women, ESCAP, UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) were encouraged to further the development and refinement of the indicator set, and to work with national statistics offices, ministries of environment and national disaster management agencies to support efforts towards identifying national data sources, exploring proxy indicators, compiling metadata and supporting the collection of related data.

14.   The indicator set was also presented to the broader participants of the 13th meeting of the IAEG-GS on the same dates, to seek views from global experts. IAEG-GS members suggested furthering the work in the Asia-Pacific region and reporting experiences, achievements and lessons learned to the group in due course, so that other regions could take up and adapt this work to suit their specific needs.

15.   Since then, UN-Women and ESCAP in consultation with the other partners have been working to refine the indicator set (including modifications to some of the initially proposed indicators). UN-Women has also initiated the development of a model questionnaire for environment-gender surveys, which will be tested in Bangladesh and Mongolia in 2020. The questionnaire is envisaged to be used either for stand-alone surveys, or as a module to attach to other planned surveys. If the latter, the questionnaire is suitable for any household survey that compiles information at the individual level, and where separate questions are asked from at least one adult male and one adult female in each household.

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[12] See Working Paper Series: SD/WP/10/October 2019 , https://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp10october-2019-mainstreaming-gender-environment-statistics-sdgs.

[13] Refer to paragraph 15 for additional details.

[14] Australia, Georgia, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

Annex I

Environment-gender indicators for Asia and the Pacific (updated set as of May 2020) core indicators[1]

A. Land and biodiversity

GE1. Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 1.4.2).

GE2. Proportion of agricultural area under environmentally sustainable agriculture, by sex of land user/owner (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 2.4.1).[2]

GE3. (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 5.a.1).

GE4. Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 5.a.2).

GE5. Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked, by sex of perpetrator (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 15.7.1)[3].

B. Natural resources including food, energy and water

GE6. Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 5.4.1).

GE7. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 6.1.1)[4].

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[1] This list includes slight modifications from the initial set of indicators proposed in September 2019. See Working Paper Series SD/WP/10/October 2019, https://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp10october-2019-mainstreaming-gender-environment-statistics-sdgs for the initial proposal put forward in 2019. The list includes the 19 indicators in the UNEP and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) environment-gender indicator list (in black font), as well as additional indicators proposed for addition to specifically capture Asia-Pacific issues.

[2] Similar indicators are those with modification of the original/official indicator such as addition of a disaggregation characteristic to make the indicator gender relevant. The formulation of this indicator was slightly modified from the previous proposal, to narrow the focus to environmental and gender issues only, and to enhance measurability.

[3] This indicator was moved from context to core indicator, as it captures both an environment and a gender angle simultaneously.

[4] The formulation of this indicator was slightly modified from the previous proposal, to capture intrahousehold inequalities. Data is available at the individual level through Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS).

GE8.   Proportion of population with access to electricity, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 7.1.1)[5].

GE9.   Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 7.1.2).

GE10.   Share of income that directly comes from hunting, fishing, harvesting and collecting plants, firewood or fuels, by sex[6].

GE11.   Time spent collecting plants, mushrooms, flowers and wild fruits; fishing and hunting for household consumption, by sex.

GE12.   Time spent planting, tending and harvesting a garden patch, and breeding of farmyard animals for household consumption, by sex.

GE13.   Time spent collecting fuel for household consumption, by sex.

GE14.   Time spent collecting water for household consumption, by sex.

C.   Climate change and disasters

GE15.   Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to hydrometeorological disasters per 100,000 population, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicators 1.5.1; 11.5.1; 13.1.1).

GE16.   Number of people whose damaged dwellings were attributed to disasters, by sex (similar to Sendai indicator Sendai B-3).

GE17.   Number of people whose livelihoods were disrupted or destroyed, attributed to disasters, by sex (similar to Sendai indicator B-5).

D.   Sustainable consumption, production and waste

GE18.   Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 2.3.2).

GE19.   Proportion of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 8.9.2).

GE20.   Proportion of population that (a) has convenient access to public transport by location (urban/rural), sex, age and persons with disabilities; and (b) use public transport by location (urban/rural), sex, age and persons with disabilities (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 11.2.1).

GE21.   Proportion of employed population in heavily polluting industries (animal producers), by sex (similar to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) (62)).

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[5]   The formulation of this indicator was slightly modified from the previous proposal, to provide sufficient information to capture intrahousehold inequalities. Data is available at the individual level through Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, among others.

[6]   The formulation of this indicator was slightly modified from the previous proposal, to enhance feasibility and ease of measurement.

GE22.   Proportion of employed population on waste management (refuse workers), by sex (similar to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) (961)).

GE23.   Proportion of the population that are subsistence farmers, fishers, hunters and gatherers, by sex (similar to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) (63)).

E.   Health, well-being and sanitation

GE24.   Mortality and morbidity rates attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 3.9.2).

GE25.   Mortality and morbidity rates attributed to environmental causes (unintentional poisoning, air & water quality), by age and sex (similar to sustainable development goal Indicators 3.9.1, 3.9.2 and 3.9.3).

GE26.   Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity; (b) basic drinking water; (c) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (d) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions) (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 4.a.1).

GE27.   Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 6.2.1)[7].

GE28.   Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 11.1.1).

GE29.   Mortality rate attributed to vector-and water-borne diseases, by sex.

F.   Environmental decision-making

GE30.   Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 4.7.1).

GE31.   Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 12.8.1).

GE32.   Proportions of positions in national and local public environment institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 16.7.1).

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[7]   The formulation of this indicator was slightly modified from the previous proposal, to capture intrahousehold inequalities. Data is available at the individual level through Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

GE33. Proportion of population who make their own decisions over household spending, by product and sex[8].

GE34. Women in governmental environmental decision-making (a) Heads of environmental ministries, by sex, by sector.

GE35. Women's participation in environmental decision-making fora (a) Delegates to international environmental COPs, such as for UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD and BRS Conventions, by sex (b) Heads of delegations to international environmental COPs, such as for UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD and BRS Conventions, by sex (c) Participants in national level environmental fora, by sex.

GE36. Women's participation in sector-specific environmental governance bodies (a) Participation in communal land governance bodies, by sex; (b) Participation in forest groups, by sex; (c) Participation in water governance bodies, by sex; (d) Executive managers of national energy utilities, by sex.

Context-specific indicators[9]

CS1. Prevalence of undernourishment, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 2.1.1).

CS2. Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 2.1.2).

CS3. Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 5.2.2).

CS4. Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 5.3.1).

CS5. Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 5.5.1).

CS6. Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 6.4.2).

CS7. Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 8.10.2).

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[8] The formulation of this indicator was slightly modified from the previous proposal to enhance measurability. Methodology and data are already available for this indicator, in line with Demographic and Health surveys, although further work will be necessary to classify the products from an environmental perspective.

[9] Context specific indicators are those that may refer to gender or environment and are important in understanding the nexus between both, but do not explicitly address both gender and environment issues simultaneously. Refer to SD/WP/10/October 2019 for details on the differences between core and context indicators

CS8.   Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 14.4.1).

CS9.   Forest area as a proportion of total land area (identical to sustainable development goal indicator 15.1.1)

CS10.   Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live, by sex (similar to sustainable development goal indicator 16.1.4).

Annex II

Additional environment-gender indicators to fill gap areas highlighted by member States during consultations

The following indicators have been selected with the goal of filling some of the priority areas identified by experts and member States during consultations. The list is currently being expanded, and further research and consultation are needed to address some additional priority areas.

Gap areas	Proposed indicators for addition	Source	Requires methodological development	Priority area
Exposure to disasters	- Total number of people exposed to or at risk from disasters, by sex	Similar to Sendai indicator B-5	No	C
	- Percentage of population exposed to or at risk from disasters protected through pre-emptive evacuation following early warning, by sex	Similar to Sendai indicator G-6	No	C
	- Proportion of people that reported being able to access, understand and use relevant disaster risk information, by sex	Post-disaster needs assessment surveys	Slightly (to standardize survey question)	C
Women in environmental conservation roles	-			
	- Proportion of women in managerial positions in environment-related occupations, by type of occupation (conservation/use)	Similar to sustainable development goal indicator 5.5.2	Yes (International Standards Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) subclassification for "environment related")	F

Gap areas	Proposed indicators for addition	Source	Requires methodological development	Priority area
Environment-related conflict, migration and displacement	- Number of people who migrated in the last 12 months as a result of environmental factors for every 1,000 people, by sex	Some Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)	Yes (definition of "environmental factors" and standardization of Demographic and Health Surveys question)	C
	- Number of internally displaced population due to environmental related factors, as a proportion of the national population of country of origin, by sex	Similar to Internal Displacement Monitoring Center indicator	Yes (IDMC only reports on disasters, but misses CC)	C
Rural women's leadership on environmental issues	- Average area of forest and other wooded land as primary land use, by sex of the holder	Identical to FAO core set indicator 11 [1]	In consultation with FAO	A
	- Incidence of female agricultural land owners, by sex	Identical to FAO gender and land indicator 1	In consultation with FAO	F
Gender-based violence in the context of environment	**None identified yet. Further consultations needed.**			
Small-scale industries, environment-related employment and livelihoods	- Percentage of population employed in agriculture, by sex	Identical to FAO core set, Indicator 14	In consultation with FAO	A
	- Average area of aquaculture, by sex of the holder	Identical to FAO core indicator 12	In consultation with FAO	A
	- Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status	Identical to sustainable development goal indicator 2.3.2	In consultation with FAO	B
Harnessing women's traditional ecological knowledge	**None identified yet. Further consultations needed.**			

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[1] See: http://www.fao.org/3/b-bb179e.pdf%20%20%20.

Gap areas	Proposed indicators for addition	Source	Requires methodological development	Priority area
Sustainable production and consumption, including sustainable agricultural practices, organic farming and waste management	- Agriculture area under organic agriculture, by sex of holder and by sex of user	Similar to FAO core set of gender indicator 9[2]	In consultation with FAO	A
	- Percentage of agricultural holdings using chemicals by type of chemicals and sex of the holder	Similar to sustainable development goal 2.4.1	No	A
	- Average hourly earnings of female and male employees in environment-related industries	Similar to sustainable development goal indicator 8.5.1	Yes (sub-classification of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) for environment-related)	D
	- Proportion of the population engaged in extractive industries, by sex	Similar to International Standards Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)	Slightly (Aggregation if International Standards Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) categories only)	D

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[2]   See: http://www.fao.org/3/b-bb179e.pdf%20%20%20.