

# GENDER REPORT

2025



## INTRODUCTION

INFoCAT aims to advance women's and youth economic empowerment in rural areas of selected African countries (Ghana, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire) by promoting low-cost, clean, energy-powered technology solutions that increase agricultural productivity and income for smallholder rural farmers. With an overarching goal of advancing women's and youth economic empowerment, the project adopts an integrated gender-responsive approach across research design, implementation, stakeholder engagement, and policy advocacy.

The project has incorporated a gender lens into analysing the challenges and opportunities for women and youth in the clean energy and agriculture sectors as elaborated in the project's conceptual framework. This gender report presents the achievements, lessons learned, and ongoing efforts of the INFoCAT project to ensure gender equity and social inclusion in the clean energy and agriculture sectors. It assesses how gender has been mainstreamed in the project's rationale, methodology, team composition, field activities, and anticipated outcomes.

## STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF GENDER IN PROJECT DESIGN

From inception, the INFoCAT project was intentionally designed with gender at its core. This commitment is reflected in:

- The inclusion of gender-sensitive objectives targeting women-led MSMEs and youth-led enterprises.
- The use of a gender-transformative conceptual framework that incorporates justice principles—distributive, procedural, recognition and restorative justice.
- Adoption of gender-disaggregated baseline data, separate focus group discussions for women, men, and youth, and participatory stakeholder engagement.
- Engagement of a gender expert in each country team and an international gender advisor (Dr. Bipasha Baruah) to support conceptual and methodological rigour.



**Project Coordination has been led by both genders at one point in time**

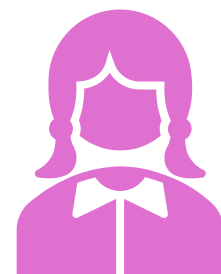
**Gifty Amponsah (She/Her)**  
**Ferdinand Tornyie, PhD (He/Him)**



Project  
Coordinating office  
in Accra together  
with all country  
team was gender  
balanced

53.9% ♂  
46.1% ♀

Focused on:  
**Youth &  
Women**



# GENDER-RESPONSIVE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS



## Gender-Equitable Team Composition

Each country team was deliberately composed to reflect gender diversity and expertise:

- Ghana: Gender expert (Maria-Ancilla Bombande)
- Côte d'Ivoire: Country manager also serving as gender expert (Dr. Namizata Binatè Fofana)
- Senegal: Gender expert (Ndèye Maïmouna Ba) provided by ENDA Energie

This structure has enhanced context-sensitive implementation and ensured that country-specific gender dynamics are addressed.

## Gender in Stakeholder Analysis & Engagement

Stakeholder analysis in each country identified women farmers' groups, women-led SMEs, civil society actors, and gender-focused institutions as critical collaborators. Workshops in Ghana, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire emphasised the following:

- Representation of women and youth in energy and agriculture policy conversations.
- Direct articulation of technology and energy access needs by women farmers and processors.
- Building awareness of gendered barriers in clean technology access.



# Gender in Baseline Design and Data Collection

Baseline tools were developed in consultation with internal and external gender experts and translated into French where necessary. Key features include:

- A sample size of 430 women in agri-value chains per country.
- FGDs conducted separately for women, youth, and men.
- Questions addressing women's energy burden, health risks, entrepreneurship constraints, and policy access.

## Gender-Focused Activities in Progress

- Design of Agritech Innovation Challenge with preferential support for women-led innovations.
- Planned capacity-building workshops and Agritech clinics targeting young women.
- Ongoing policy analysis to identify gender gaps in national energy and agriculture policies.



## EARLY GENDER OUTCOMES

- **Raised Awareness:** Policymakers now have a deeper understanding of gendered impacts in agri-energy systems due to INFoCAT engagement.
- **Network Building:** New alliances formed with women and youth groups, and local women entrepreneurs in the clean tech space.
- **Research Capacity:** Increased capacity of researchers to conduct gender-responsive research through expert training and fieldwork preparation.



## CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- Gender-related challenges in Acquiring Female Experts in Agritech: The project encountered challenges in recruiting female experts, particularly for capacity-building initiatives. While a female expert was successfully included in Ghana, other participating countries lacked representation of women in key technical and leadership roles. This gender imbalance affected the diversity of perspectives and expertise available for project implementation.
- Fewer participation of women in green agri-businesses: It is apparent that there are fewer women-owned green agri-businesses than anticipated in all implementation countries. There are also fewer green businesses that have an equal representation of men and women in their teams. The project research indicates that lower participation of women in green agri-businesses is due to several factors including less interest in the sector, reduced access to funding, network gaps, gender biases, inadequate policy support for women-led green enterprises and challenges in balancing family responsibilities with entrepreneurship. The project aims to address these challenges through capacity-building and advocacy for policy reform.
- Contextual Tailoring: Ensuring each gender strategy was context-appropriate proved complex but necessary.
- Language Barriers: Delays in translating gender instruments (e.g. FGDs, surveys) to French had time and cost implications.
- Political Instability: Political unrest in Senegal and election periods in Côte d'Ivoire disrupted the scheduling of gender engagement activities.
- Stakeholder Follow-Up: Sustaining momentum among national gender-related institutions requires intensified communications and consistent outreach.





## PLANNED GENDER-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

- Activity- Gender Focus
- Agritech Innovation Challenge- Prioritize women-led clean energy solutions
- Capacity-building Workshops- Business development training for women and youth innovators
- Agritech Clinics- Tailored training sessions for young women
- Policy Dialogues- Advocacy for gender-responsive policies in energy/agriculture
- Mentorship- Link women/youth with technical and business mentors

## CONCLUSION

The INFoCAT project has laid a strong foundation for gender equity in the clean energy-agriculture nexus in West Africa. Through inclusive design, diverse stakeholder participation, and deliberate investments in women and youth empowerment, the project is well-positioned to produce meaningful, lasting gender outcomes.

Continued emphasis on evidence-based advocacy, capacity building, and participatory processes will be key to unlocking transformative impact.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Institutionalize Gender Accountability:** Develop a gender monitoring framework with indicators to track inclusion across all phases.
- **Targeted Financing Mechanisms:** Facilitate access to seed funding and credit facilities for women and youth-led start-ups.
- **Engage Policy Champions:** Identify and work with gender-sensitive policymakers to support long-term reforms.
- **Enhance Communications:** Feature impact stories and testimonies of women beneficiaries through videos, radio, and blogs.
- **Localize Solutions:** Customize gender strategies to regional sociocultural contexts to improve community buy-in.

