Gender and pesticide management

Key facts and methodology for diagnosis and intervention

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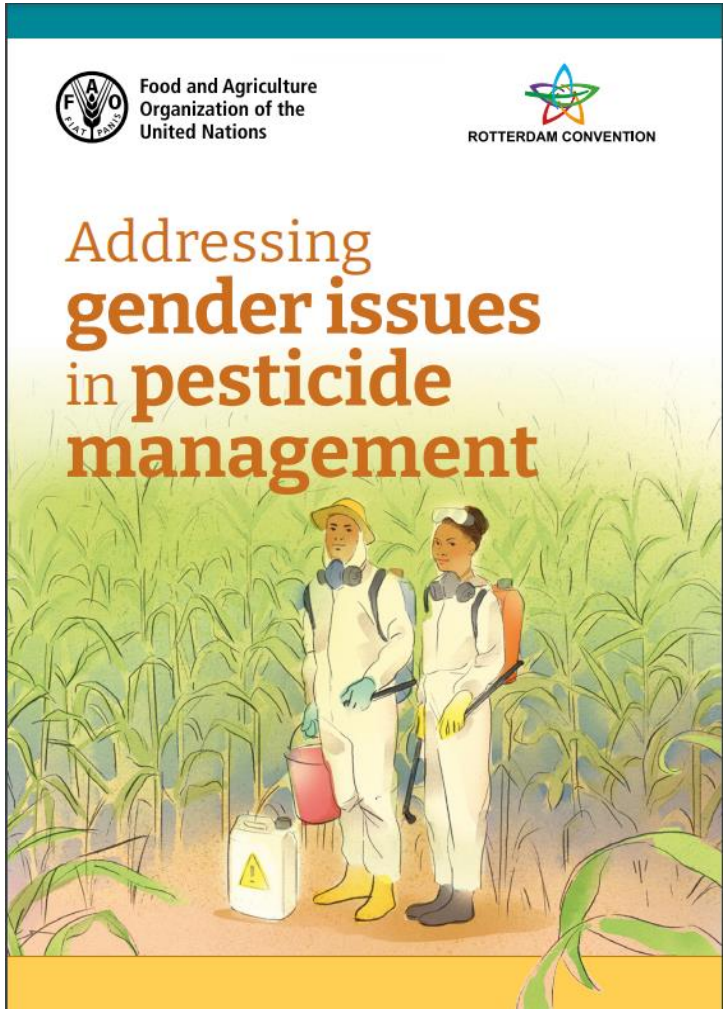

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Key facts

- Pesticides and other agrochemicals are commonly used in agriculture
- Agriculture is one of the top-three most hazardous sectors
- Global pesticide use in agriculture has almost doubled and pesticide sales have soared
- Alternatives to pesticides are widely available
- Women’s exposure to pesticides tends to be higher than recognized
- Gender-related dimensions are often overlooked in pesticide management policies and programmes.

Challenges of the pesticides sector

- Inadequate awareness among farmers of the effects of chemicals on crops and limited effectiveness in disease prevention.
- Inadequate protection of agricultural workers under labor law and incorrect application of the law.
- Lack of accessibility to and affordable prices for personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Limited data and research on the level of severity of agricultural work-related incidents, illnesses and injuries.
- Marketing of pesticides
- Inadequate empty containers disposal

The role of women in pesticide management

- Women assume important roles throughout agrifood value chains to ensure food security and nutrition at community and household levels.
- The gender distribution of labour in pesticide use and handling varies greatly from country to country, depending on household needs, traditional decision-making patterns and labour availability.

Risks are not the same – implications

The use of pesticides can have a range of adverse effects on the environment and can cause severe acute and chronic health problems

While exposure to pesticides affects both women and men, women are more vulnerable to the effects of this exposure for physiological as well as social and economic reasons.

Differentiated impacts

Exposure routes:
ingestion, inhalation and skin absorption

Women and men's direct and indirect exposure along the life cycle of pesticides

During preparation:

- when mixing different pesticide formulations;
- when preparing and mixing pesticides with no protection, even with their bare hands;
- when loading spraying equipment without taking due care.

During use:

- when applying pesticides by hand or using handheld leaky backpack sprayers;
- when repackaging pesticides without adequate protection to sell them in local markets;
- when thinning, weeding and picking of sprayed crops.

After application:

- when entering recently sprayed fields for harvesting;
- when cleaning empty pesticide containers for re-use (for example to store food) and disposing of them without due protection;
- when washing contaminated clothes together with the family laundry.

Women’s exposure to hazardous pesticides – increased vulnerability

Pesticide exposure affects women at different stages in their lives, including adolescence, pregnancy, lactation and menopause.

- Short and long-term impact

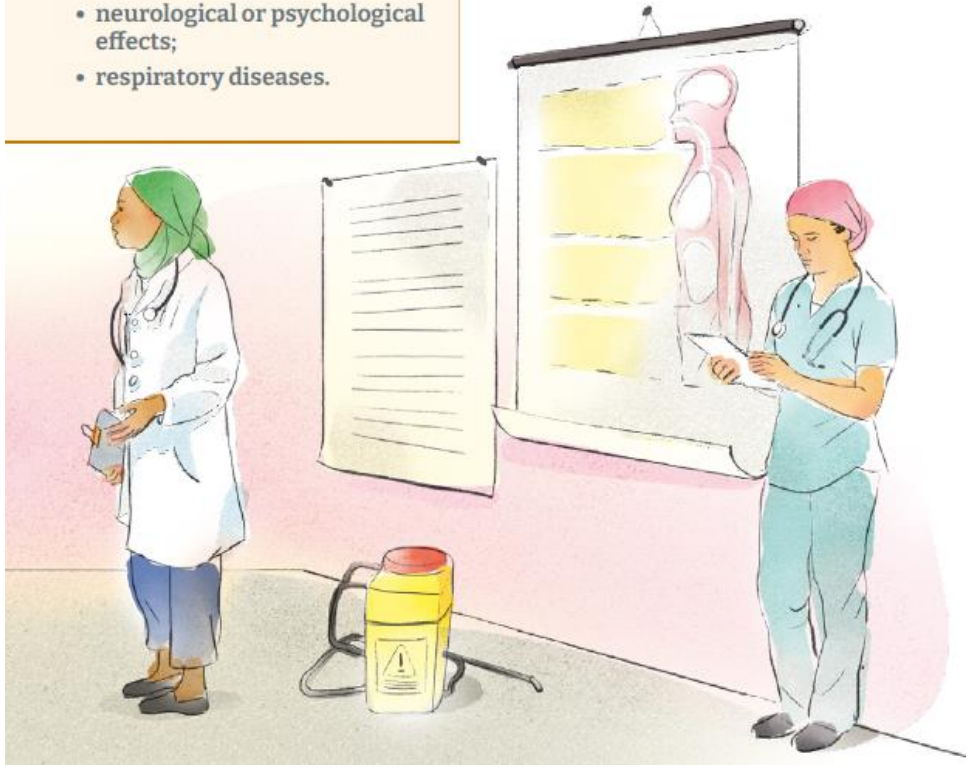
Effects on the health of women

Health-related impacts on women

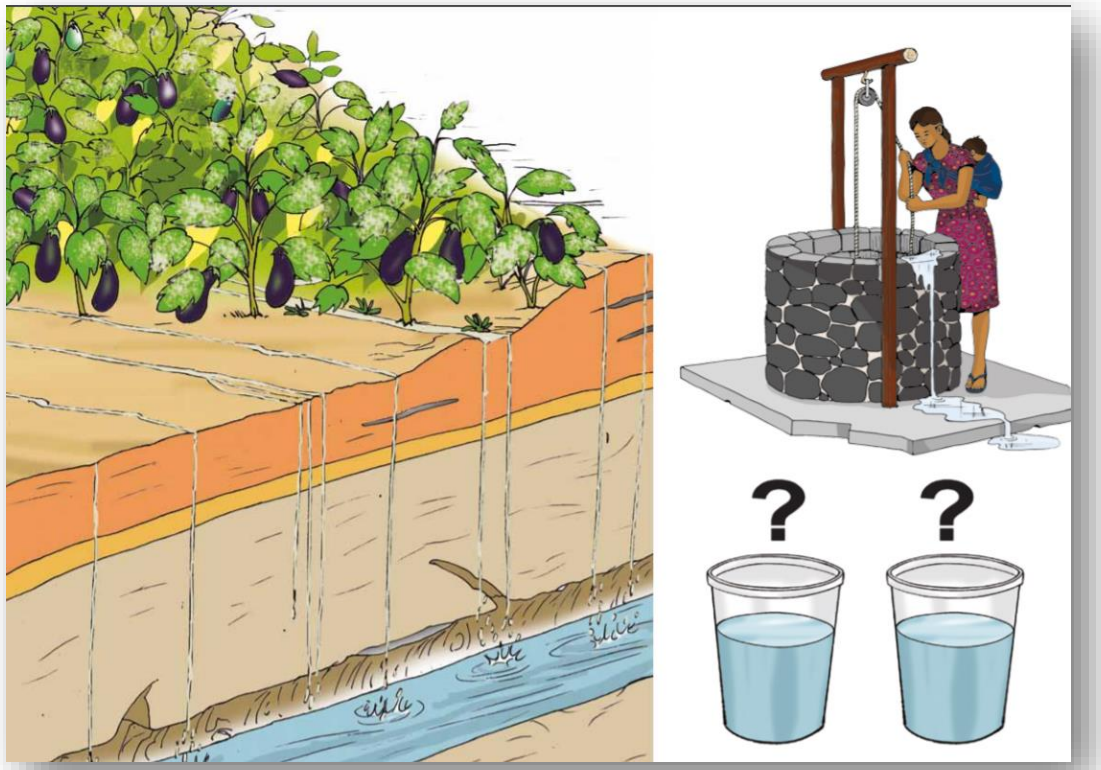
- breast cancer;
- pesticides in breast milk;
- decreased ovarian reserves;
- impaired menstrual cycles;
- higher risk of endometriosis;
- infertility;
- spontaneous abortions;
- effects on the immune system;
- skin disorders;
- neurological or psychological effects;
- respiratory diseases.

Impact of exposure in pregnancy

- premature births
- perinatal deaths
- neuro-behavioural consequences
- foetal growth retardation
- congenital malformations
- early childhood cancer



Effects on the environment



- Pesticides used on crops can enter into the **underground water source**
- When **pesticide containers are washed** at water banks or irrigation channels, the **water is contaminated**
- Pesticides can be **transported by the wind** and be dangerous to those nearby (schools, playground areas etc)

Socio-economic drivers that aggravate women's exposure

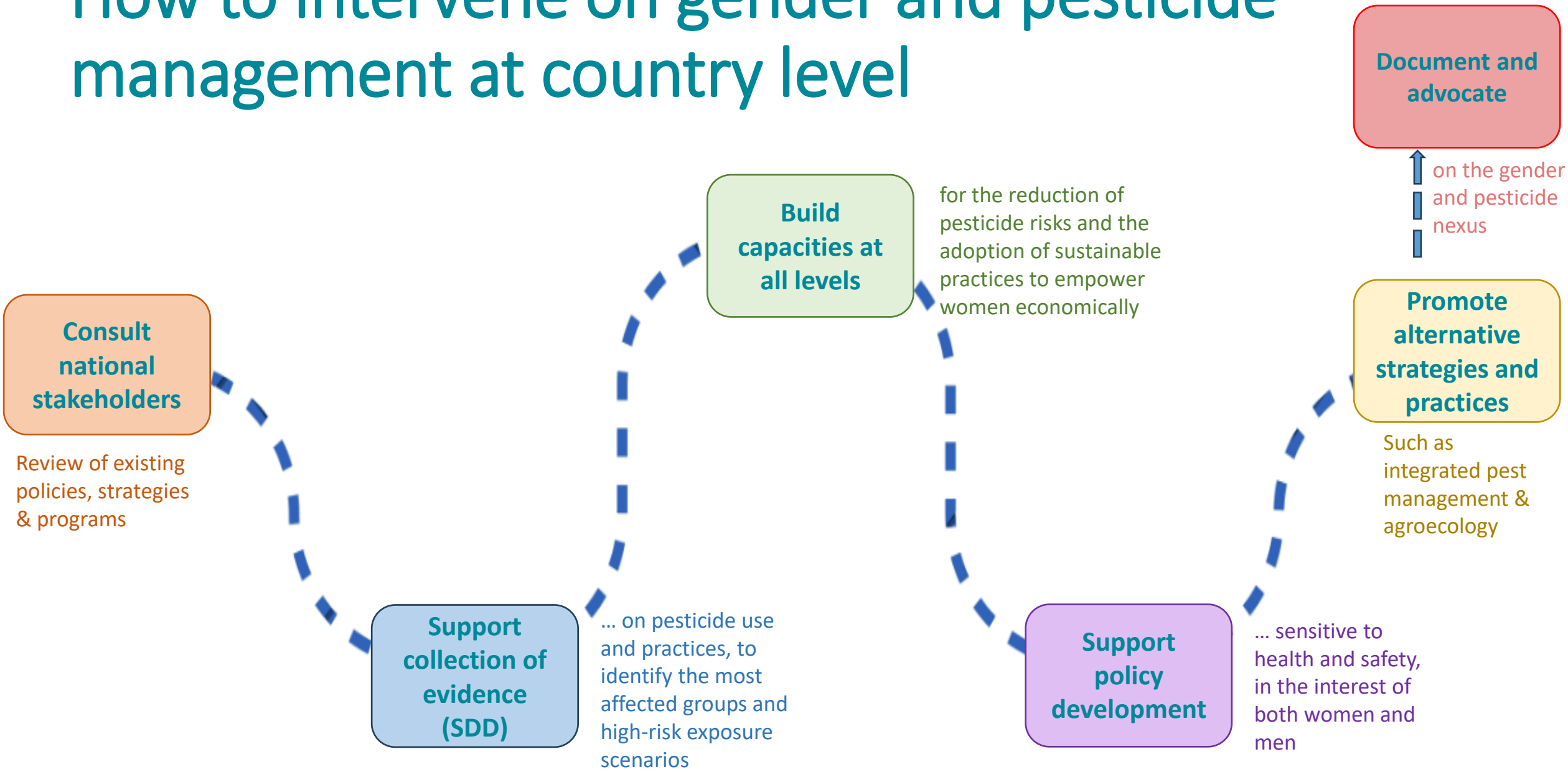
DRIVERS

- Gender-determined roles and responsibilities
- Women’s over-representation in the informal sector
- Lower educational levels, lack of training and information
- Lower access to finance and credit
- Uneven availability different PPEs in different sizes

IMPACTS

- Women face more unrecognized indirect exposure in home tasks
- Reduced capacity to respond to pesticide exposure due to invisible, and more precarious work, with no legal coverage.
- Lower pesticide risk awareness and response
- Use of cheaper / uncertified pesticide equipment
- Women risk inefficient protection

How to intervene on gender and pesticide management at country level

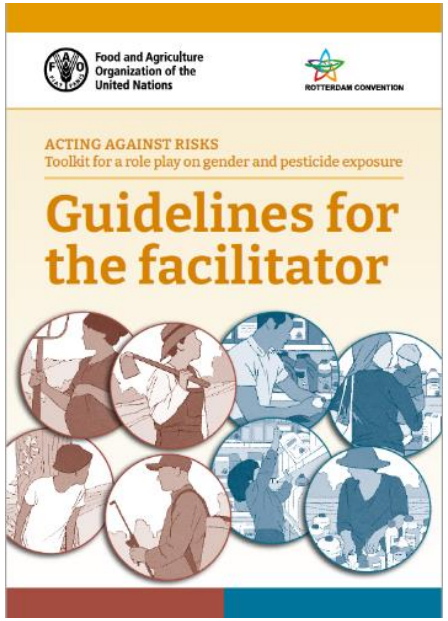


‘Acting against risks’: a capacity development toolbox

The **objective** is to raise awareness and build evidence on:

- Pesticide exposure scenarios and commonly adopted dangerous practices
- Gender-related vulnerabilities and their key drivers
- Security and prevention measures
- The use of agro-ecological practices

Role-playing helps recreate a scene from a real or imaginary situation. The aim is to prepare participants for these situations, which are closer to reality, through practice concepts and information are retained more easily.



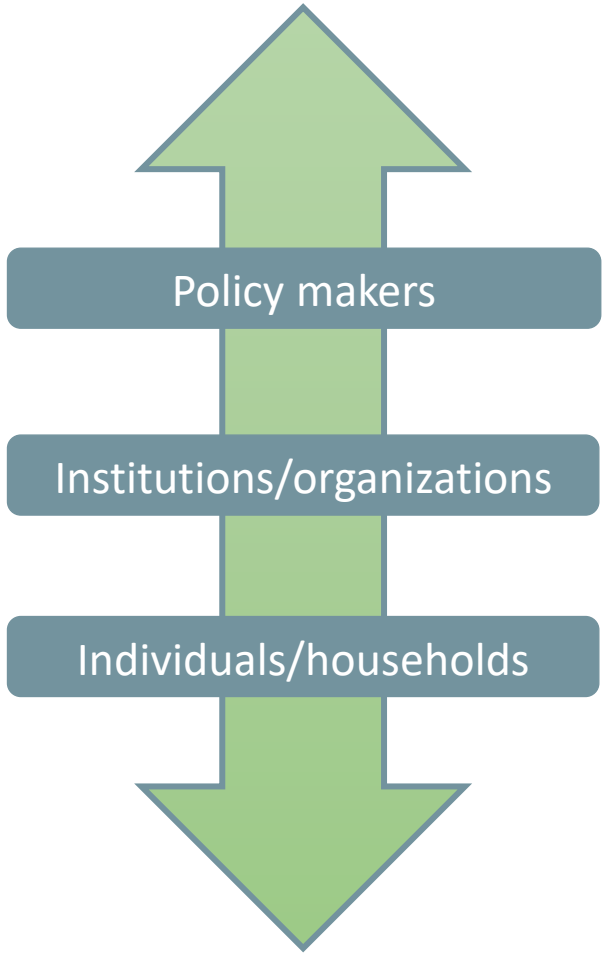
- Step by step guidance
- Guiding questions
- Recommendations

Two double –faced scenarios :
The Farm and the Market

Eight character cards:
Four per scenario

Stakeholders involved

Who should be targeted in the role play to support future **policy development** and/or guide **project / program formulation and implementation ?**



- **Extension agents**
- **Farmer organizations / Civil society organizations**
- **Cooperatives**
- **Health personnel**
- **OHS practitioners**
- **Teachers**

Tunisia example – national consultation & awareness raising

- High level consultation followed by key recommendations
- Nation-wide workshop and training of trainers (ToT) for extension agents and selected ministries staff
- Pilot test of the capacity development tool in two communities.

Vietnam example - Project implementation support

- Capacity development at community level on pesticide risk reduction with a gender perspective aligned with IPM promotion
- MoA follow up meeting (status of Rotterdam Convention and legal framework of pesticide management)

Country and regional proposals accepted!

Thank you!

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