



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2029

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ACRONYMS

CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
CREMA	Community Resource Management Area
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
FA	Focused Areas
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Basic Education
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GNA	Ghana News Agency
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
PA	Parents Association
PVE	Prevention of Violent Extremism
RAINS	Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SHEA	Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMC	School Management Committee
SP	Strategic Priority
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TBD	To Be Determined
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RAINS is proud to mark its thirty-second anniversary with a great sense of fulfillment and gratitude to our partners. Over the years, we have put smiles on the faces of many children, girls, women, young people, and smallholder farmers through our education, health, climate change, child rights, livelihoods, decent work, peacebuilding, and good governance interventions. In this strategy we hope not only to consolidate the gains we have chalked over the years but also to break new grounds to expand access to quality gender responsive public services particularly in basic and complementary education, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), digital literacy, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), financial inclusion and green livelihoods to many more people in our communities. As we grind slowly towards the end of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030, we extend an invitation to you our cherish partners, community members and other stakeholders to join us to implement the following five strategic priorities for the period 2025 -2029:

1. Governance and Gender Responsive Public Services
2. Building community resilience and social cohesion
3. Biodiversity and Climate Resilience
4. Green livelihoods and decent jobs for youth and women
5. Institutional Strengthening

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our humble beginnings and modest gains

The commitment of RAINS to tackle the barriers to girls' education in Northern Ghana some 32 years ago can be retraced with pride and fulfilment. Over the years, we have collaborated with the Northern Regional Coordinating Council to establish the Tamale Girls Senior High School in 1998, which is the first Girls Senior High School in the Northern Region. This has provided an opportunity for many young girls to access secondary education. The interventions of RAINS have also been expanded to many more districts in Northern Ghana thereby providing opportunities for young people, women and children to improve their access to public services and decision-making processes. In our last strategic plan for the period 2022-2024 we are proud to have chalked some modest gains including:

- Partnering with the Ghana Health Service to form and train 138 Community Health Management Teams resulting in increased adoption of gender-responsive health-seeking behaviours and practices in over 414 communities.
- Collaborating with the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and traditional authorities to expand spaces for the participation of vulnerable groups such as women, young people, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities in local governance decision making structures through our Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) trainings, land use management engagements and inclusive development planning forums.
- Working with our communities and the Department of Agriculture to address specific biodiversity and climate change issues. This include improving the food security of 4,000 smallholder female and male farmers through the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices such as land restoration, tree planting, agroecology and use of resilient seed varieties

through the establishment of five Community-led Seed Banks to revive, promote, and preserve the communities' own seed varieties.

- Supporting 750 women and youth groups to establish eco-friendly livelihoods such as honey making, poultry and small ruminants which have increased their household incomes.
- Teaming up with relevant state agencies to support 2,200 youth to improve their enterprises. This was made possible through the establishment of a youth skills and employment hub that delivers job preparation, digital skills, business development support and advisory services to young entrepreneurs.
- Partnering with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Service to provide decent work for 5,500 youth in critical sectors such as the construction and hospitality sectors.
- Facilitating the formation of the Chamber of Women in Construction (CWC) to amplify women's voices and agency in male-dominated trades. To actualize this initiative, 60 young women were supported to acquire skills in traditionally male-dominated trades in the construction industry. This has not only broken patriarchal beliefs in some skill areas, but also increased the incomes of the beneficiary women.
- Working with 160 women and youth groups made up of 6,500 members to improve access to finances for expanding their economic activities. This was through the formation and training of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

1.2 Our Commitment

Having reflected and re-evaluated on our vision, mission, values and approaches, we are poised to fulfill the following commitments:

- Establish enduring partnerships to expand our work.
- Build social movements to promote transparent and accountable governance.
- Sustain our programmes to deepen our impact.
- Empower communities to take action.
- Promote the rights of women, young persons, and children to improve their well-being.
- Strengthen our institutional structures to sustain and scale up our interventions to our stakeholders.

2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1. National Context

As a learning organization, RAINS is always guided by the national development context and felt needs of our stakeholders. This strategic plan, therefore, addresses the significant development challenges facing our communities, which include the:

Youth bulge: The 2021 Population and Housing Census in Ghana showed an increase in the youth population (15-35 years) from 34.6 % in 2000 to 38.2 %. The situation is even higher in the RAINS intervention regions. For instance, the youth population for the Upper West region is 38%, the Upper East region, 37%, and the North-East region is 36%. The rise of the youthful population has exacerbated Ghana's youth unemployment situation. According to the Ghana Statistical Service, the national youth unemployment rate for young adults of 15-24 years is about 32.8%, but that of Northern Ghana is even higher. For instance, it is 39% for the Upper East region, 38.2% for the Savannah region, and 34.7% for the North East region (GSS, 2021). The situation remains precarious as the Ghanaian economy is yet to recover from the knockdown effects of COVID1-19 and the Russian-Ukraine war that started in 2022. Historically, the educational system of Ghana has not placed the needed premium on TVET, which has affected the absorption of the youth into the private and public sectors of the economy. It is estimated, for instance, that the over 20,000 graduates churned out every year by the public universities in Ghana are not always needed in

the formal sector (Ignatius Baffour-Awuah, Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, Ghana News Agency, 15th August, 2019). This large pool of unemployed youth is often easily mobilized to engage in various kinds of violence in the interests of their promoters.

Based on the above analysis, this strategy has prioritized youth skills development as a way of addressing the rising youth unemployment. The creation of the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment provides a good opportunity for RAINS to partner with this Ministry and other relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies to tackle the youth unemployment situation in Ghana.

Poverty and inequality: Despite the advocacy for inclusive development in Ghana, poverty remains high in Northern Ghana as compared to the rest of the country. The Ghana Living Standards Survey Seven showed that whilst 23.4% of Ghanaians lived below the poverty line, it was higher in the northern regions of Ghana. The Upper West region for instance, recorded a poverty rate of 71%, which is the highest in Ghana, followed by the Northern region, 61%, and the Upper East region with 55%. Besides the unacceptable geographical inequalities in Ghana, there is also gender inequality, as women continue to face a myriad of barriers that inhibit their access to land and other productive resources. The inequalities have been further widened by the patriarchal nature of the communities in Northern Ghana, where traditional leadership and productive resources remain the preserve of men. In terms of political representation, women remain in the minority. Ghana's Parliament remains dominated by men despite the passage and assent to the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024. The 9th Parliament, for instance, has only 41 women out of 275 members. This represents 14.9%, which is below the recommended 23% by the UN Women. Equally disturbing is the fact that, of the 275 women, only 4 come from the five regions of Northern Ghana. Violence against women also remains prominent. Statistics from the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service showed that 5,231 wives were battered in 2020. This situation remains unchanged despite the existence of a punitive Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732) and accompanying Legislative Instrument 2237, which seek to criminalize all forms of

physical, sexual, economic, emotional, or verbal abuse and harassment of persons in Ghana. Therefore, RAINS is committed to working with partners to address poverty, gender inequalities and gender-based violence during the period of this strategic plan.

Climate Change impact on communities: Ghana, just like other countries, is concerned with the negative effects of climate change on food security, biodiversity, and livelihoods. As a result, some measures have been put in place to reduce global temperatures through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Yet climate change-induced extreme events such as floods, windstorms, and droughts continue to cause existential threats to many communities, especially in developing countries. The withdrawal of the United States of America from the PARIS agreement in 2025, as indicated by President Trump that he was elected to "represent the people of Pittsburgh and not Paris," poses a further challenge to the global commitments to confront climate change. This notwithstanding, Ghana has outlined nineteen (19) mitigation and adaptation strategies in its Updated Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement (2020-2030) to address the challenges posed by climate change (Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). RAINS in its last strategic plan, implemented actions to build resilience and promote livelihood opportunities for the youth and women in climate-vulnerable agricultural landscapes and food systems. These positive initiatives will be expanded to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on households.

Increasing spate of conflicts: Ghana remains a relatively peaceful and democratic country within West Africa. However, recent conflict analysis has shown the fragility and vulnerability of the country in terms of its conflict resilience mechanisms and architecture. This is confirmed by the consistent drop in the country's ranking on the Global Peace Index. Ghana ranked 40th in 2022, 51st in 2023 and 55th in 2024 out of the 163 countries ranked (Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Peace Index 2024). Also, the proportion of Ghanaians reporting "feeling unsafe" one or more times in the past year has equally doubled from 14.7% in 2012 to 30.3% in 2023. Another worrying

situation is the loss of trust in public institutions that are meant to safeguard the rights of citizens. Public trust in these institutions continue to decline. This is shown by the most recent public corruption perception survey which revealed that more than 9 out of 10 Ghanaians perceiving the Police to be corrupt (96.4%), Parliament (95.9%), Judges (95.2%), President (94.2%) and Traditional leaders (90.3%) (Afro barometer, 2024).

The widespread corruption in the public sector has contributed to the many conflicts in Ghana. The five northern regions of Ghana in particular, are among the hotspots of violent conflicts, insecurity and instability in Ghana. This is due to the plethora of chieftaincy, ethnic and natural resource protracted conflicts. Among the leading drivers of the conflicts in Northern Ghana are increasing poverty and youth unemployment. Some of the protracted chieftaincy conflicts in Northern Ghana include: the Bawku chieftaincy conflict between the Kusasis and Mamprusis, the Bunkpurugu chieftaincy conflict between the Jafoak and the Jamong clans, the Konkomba intra-ethnic chieftaincy conflict in the Gbingbani and Gbankurugu communities in the Chereponi district, the chieftaincy conflict in Jimbale between the Bimobas and Komkombas, among others, which are yet to be resolved. Some of these conflicts have escalated to the open violence stage, claiming several lives and destroying several properties. One noticeable trend related to these conflicts is that the youth are often at the centre of these conflicts using Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) materials to maim their opponents. A study by the University for Development Studies and TAMA Foundation (2024) identified gold mining, herder-farmer conflicts, and tree felling as the three most prominent natural resource conflicts in the five northern regions of Ghana. Additionally, the growing violent extremists' activities in the Sahel region also pose security threats to the peace and security of Ghana and more especially Northern Ghana. It is therefore, in this respect that RAINS has included peace and security as one of the strategic priorities to be addressed in this strategic plan.

Child rights concerns: RAINS interest in safeguarding the rights of children is justified because the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) of Ghana showed that a significant proportion of the country's population, that is 42% (12,949,448) are children, that is under 18 years. The percentages of children in the RAINS zone of influence are even higher than the national average with percentage of children in the Northern region being 50% (1,155,570 children), North-East, 51% (336,063 children), Upper East, 44% (572,539 children), Upper West, 45% (405,676 children) and Savannah 49% (320,100 children). Therefore, access to quality education and health care services for children is a key priority as supported by several legislations. For instance, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, under Article 25 (1), guarantees the right of every child to Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE). Ghana also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990, which calls on states to ensure access to quality education for all children. Sadly, it has been thirty-four years now since Ghana ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and 1,215,546 children aged 4-17 are out of school children (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The passage of the Complementary Education Agency (CEA) Act, Act 1055, which, among other objectives, is to provide functional basic literacy education to disadvantaged groups, offers RAINS an opportunity to address this gap. Children also require good health and nutrition to grow well and achieve their fullest potential. According to the Ghana Health and Demographic Survey (GHDS) (2022), the rate of stunting for children in the Upper East Region was 21.1%, and that of the North-East region, 29.4%. These percentages are way above the national percentage of 17.5%. Therefore, interventions to improve the health-seeking behaviours of communities and access to quality health and nutrition services will be supported by RAINS in this strategic plan.

Changing donor architecture. The donor architecture offers both limitations and opportunities to RAINS. On the downside is the reduction of international aid due to COVID-19 and its impacts on the global economies. Also, major donors' priority countries keep changing, which may affect programme delivery. The 2025 suspension of USAID projects in Ghana is a case in point. Additionally, the call for proposals usually

makes room for large, medium, and small NGOs to compete for funding and this means the success of winning grants cannot be guaranteed. However, on the positive side is the recent localization agenda by most development partners. The localization agenda admonishes bilateral, multilateral and foundations to invest more in local organizations because of their knowledge of the development context and motivation to improve the well-being of their own people. RAINS within this strategic period will therefore strengthen its institutional systems and structures to take advantage of the ongoing localization agenda in international development.

Need to diversify funding streams. The changing official donor priorities and stiff competition for donor funding pose a risk to the work of RAINS. However, Ghanaians are beginning to appreciate the need to be self-reliant in driving its development. In this respect, RAINS could explore two potential income sources for its work. These are: (1) local philanthropy opportunities and (2) Social Enterprises. In terms of local philanthropy, RAINS could partner to raise funds from individuals such as celebrities, community leaders, business moguls and Corporate institutions such as telecommunication companies for example MTN Foundation, Manufacturing companies such as Ghacem Cement Foundation, Mining Companies such as Cardinal Mandini Mining Company (Upper East), Earl International Group (Upper East) Azumah Resources Ltd (Upper West), Savanna Cement Company Ltd (Savannah Region) and Newmont Goldcorp Ghana (Ahafo and Western Regions), and financial institutions. This could be pursued by building a good relationship with these individuals and corporate institutions. RAINS could also take advantage of digital technology to engage in online fundraising. This will require setting up the required digital infrastructure and human resources to take advantage of this opportunity. Social Enterprises operate with a business model but with a community development motive. It is one way RAINS can improve its financial sustainability. Fortunately, RAINS has a good track record of working with women and youth groups to establish eco-friendly livelihoods such as honey making, poultry, and small ruminants. RAINS also facilitated the establishment of a youth skills and employment hub that delivers job preparation, digital skills, business development support, and advisory services to

young entrepreneurs. These successful projects could be repackaged into social enterprises to rake in some income to support the work of RAINS.

2.2 Our environmental scan- SWOT Analysis

RAINS, as part of the process for developing the strategic plan for 2025-2029, conducted a SWOT analysis with the active participation of its stakeholders. The findings are indicated in Table 1. Within this strategy period, RAINS will endeavour to improve on its strengths, address its weaknesses, explore the available opportunities, and mitigate potential threats to its work.

Table 1: RAINS Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Skilled and committed staff and volunteers. • Strong and engaged Board of Trustees. • RAINS remains a trusted, legitimate and credible organization in the eyes of communities. • RAINS has strong collaboration with state and non-state partners. • The organization has a good track record of partnerships with development partners spanning thirty-two (32) years. • RAINS has a strong financial and accountability systems and controls in place which ensures the judicious use of resources. • The stakeholders of RAINS are involved in project design, implementation, M&E. • RAINS has put in place mechanisms and structures for regular feedback. This helps in improving the organizational performance.	• RAINS funding streams are currently limited to a few donors which poses a risk to the organization. • Retention of experienced staff remains a challenge to RAINS as it struggles to secure adequate funding to pay competitive remuneration and incentive packages. • There are currently some technical areas in RAINS that needs to be beefed up with technical staff such as monitoring, evaluation and learning and communication units. • The use of technology in project management, financial management, M&E and research is currently low. • Over the thirty-years history, RAINS has implemented several projects and development models. However, these compelling success stories and achievements have not been adequately documented and profiled by communication unit of the organization. • RAINS is yet to roll-out its Emergency and Risk Responses Plan to deal with eventualities such as conflict

• RAINS has adequate working space and modest logistics for staff and partners.	situations, epidemics and other disasters.
Opportunities • Ghana has adequate policies and laws on child protection, inclusive education, climate change, biodiversity and good governance. These legal frameworks provide a good basis for RAINS advocacy in these sectors. • In Ghana both state and non-state institutions are willing to collaborate with NGOs. This presents an opportunity for RAINS to work with a Ministries such as the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment to address youth unemployment and the media to advocate for the rights and freedoms of women, children and ethnic minorities like the Fulbe. • The natural security architecture and development partners have prioritized the prevention of violent extremism and peace building as strategies for ensuring sustainable development. This increased interest presents opportunities for partnerships between RAINS and other conflict prevention institutions to secure the peace in its communities for development. • This era of technology innovation also presents an opportunity for RAINS to leverage technology in managing its organizational processes but also in creating digital jobs for the teeming youth in its project communities. • The Localization agenda of most development partners presents an opportunity for RAINS to	Threats • Some of the RAINS communities still practice patriarchal systems that limit women's access to land and productive resources. This could potentially limit the impact of food security and livelihoods interventions that together women. • The existing chieftaincy conflicts and threat of violent extremists' activities in the Sahel could pose security challenges which may stall project implementation in some of the communities where RAINS operates. • The shifting donor agendas and withdrawals from Ghana, may affect donor funding to NGOs necessitating the downsizing of project interventions. • The growing stiff competition and rivalry among NGOs could hinder the building of networks, alliances and coalitions to address development challenges and to benefit from the localization agenda of development partners.

leverage more resources for upscaling its project interventions.

3. OUR VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

3.1 Vision

RAINS envisions a just society that is based on equity with equal opportunities for all and respect for diversity.

3.2 Mission

RAINS works with communities, social movements and development partners to take action to improve the quality of life for all people facing barriers especially young people.

3.3 Values

The values stated in Table 2 guide the development approaches of RAINS.

Table 2: RAINS Core Values

Value	Description and Commitment
Respect of Human Rights and Freedoms	Human rights define certain minimum standards and rules of procedure to which those in power (duty bearers) should or must adhere in their treatment of people (rights holders). RAINS is therefore committed to safeguarding the political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people. RAINS will therefore support women, young people and minority ethnic groups like the Fulbe to participate in local governance planning and decision-making processes. In project implementation RAINS will ensure good representation of the various genders and apply the required sanctions spelt out in its child safeguarding and sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse policies.
Transparency and Accountability	Transparency refers to the openness, clarity, and accessibility of information. It involves providing clear, accurate, and timely information to stakeholders, ensuring they

	can understand decisions, actions, and processes. Accountability means being responsible for one's actions, decisions, and their outcomes. It involves holding individuals or entities answerable for their actions and ensuring there are consequences for their performance (both good and bad). Therefore, RAINS will share information on its activities with stakeholders and be answerable to its stakeholders in the use of financial and non-finance resources for our work. Transparency and Accountability will also be operationalized by ensuring the participation of community members in decision-making processes.
Partnerships and Collaboration	Partnerships are based on the rules of the game and relationships between parties for mutual benefits. Collaboration is the process of working together with other to achieve a common goal leveraging on its others experiences, resources and networks. RAINS with therefore enter into formal and informal partnerships with stakeholders to achieve its objectives. This will be through joining consortia to bid for funding, signing MoU with Universities and technical institutions and joining and supporting policy advocacy through its membership of Networks, Coalitions and Platforms.
Volunteerism	Volunteerism offers ordinary people and professionals an opportunity to use their time, skills and resources to support community development initiatives without expecting financial compensation. In this respect, RAINS will create avenues for youth people and community members undertake internship at RAINS, mobilize local resources for the implementation of projects, collect data and to participate in special events.

Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI)	Gender inclusion focuses on ensuring that people of all genders, abilities, ethnic backgrounds and ages are treated equitably and have equal access to opportunities, rights, and resources. Therefore, at RAINS GESI provisions will be inserted in all staff contracts. Also, workshops, identification of beneficiaries, research, monitoring and evaluation activities and formation of community committees will all be done with a GESI lens.
Innovation	Innovation entails creating improved sustainable solutions to addressing human problems by employing technology, new ideas, products and partnerships. RAINS, will therefore practicalize this value by adopting digital tools for tracking finances, monitoring indicators, engaging in on-line fundraising, collecting and analysis, data, monitoring weather, tracking conflicts, reporting and receiving feedback from partners.
Sustainability	Sustainability entails balancing the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, RAINS will diversify its funding streams to be financially sustainable, support mentorship, training and successive planning to ensure organizational sustainability and use environmentally friendly approaches such as agroecology, agroforestry and indigenous seed preservation among others to protect the environment.

3.4 Approaches

The implementation of this strategy is underscored by our tried and tested development approaches. These approaches will shape and guide the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes across the organization and our communities.

3.4.1. *Human Rights Based Approach*

The programmes and interventions of RAINS are guided by the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). RAINS has been successful in using HRBA to advocate for the inclusion of the Fulbe in decision-making processes at the District Assembly level through dialogues with the West Mamprusi and Gushegu Municipalities supported by STAR Ghana Foundation. The concept of including the Fulbe and other minority groups has now caught up with many of the local planning authorities. HRBA provides a framework for development which draws on global, continental and national laws and standards aimed at promoting, protecting, and realising the human rights of people. RAINS believes in the power and responsibility of the state to provide quality gender responsive public services including education, health, water, hygiene and sanitation, and opportunities for decent work and food and nutrition security for all Ghanaians. In this respect, RAINS employs research into national laws and policies to ensure they are inclusive and empowering. Our social movements, women and youth groups draw on this approach to hold duty bearers accountable. RAINS however, recognizes the challenges facing public institutions and therefore, operates in ways that creates room for collaboration, partnership and cooperation in solving societal developmental challenges.

3.4.2. *Volunteerism*

Volunteerism remains a core approach in the work of RAINS. Volunteerism is a conduit for people to contribute to addressing human problems, for young people to acquire knowledge, develop desirable attitudes and build on their skills. However, nationally, the spirit of volunteerism has seen a nosedive. The hitherto common communal spirit exhibited in the forms of communal labour, volunteer skilled labour and time is on

the decline. RAINS however, believes in the spirit and value of volunteerism and finds ways to rekindle this value. In the early days of the organization, opportunities were provided for young graduates to support teaching of girls in rural schools. This opportunity continues to exist in the form of internships for many young women, men and girls who are desirous of pursuing a career in the development arena. In the long run, these cadre of volunteers will become advocates of RAINS, with some helping with fundraising and others providing pro bono technical support as professionals.

3.4.3. *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)*

GESI is a key consideration in the work of RAINS. This is from the premise that, all people are different, and need different kinds of support and resources for their rights to be

realised and their needs to be met. RAINS is therefore, guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) principle of “leaving no one behind”. Gender and social inclusive sensitivity analysis guide the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all RAINS projects. RAINS has already chalked some successes in GESI by breaking gender-stereotypes in so called male-dominated trades. Under the PASEWAY project, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), RAINS successfully trained seventy-two (72) females in carpentry, welding, Excavator use and other area demonstrating unequivocally that women can venture into any vocation and profession of their choice.

The focus of RAINS GESI policy is not just to expand access to services for socially excluded groups but also to include them in the decision-making processes so that they can influence and make decisions, and set their own rules. RAINS in this strategy will continue using a GESI approach to address barriers faced by women and girls in accessing resources, reproductive health services, and decent jobs through. TVET programmes. Partnerships will further be explored to ensure an inclusive and just society within this strategy period.

3.4.4 *Promotion of local technologies*

One unique approach that drives the work of RAINS is the mainstreaming of local technologies in its operations. This approach is based on the understanding that local communities do have human, physical, social, natural and spiritual resources that can be harnessed for sustainable development. Our spiritual resources which include religious and traditional leaders, sacred practices, groves and values have been the foundation of our projects. Our Eco-friendly agroecology practices for example have been rooted in spiritual teachings about the earth's sacredness. Our volunteerism approach has been supported by the spiritual beliefs and values of service to humanity and our social cohesion and conflict resolution mechanisms have been supported by the religious and traditional leaders in the communities that we work.

Our recognition of the place of the ecology, values, beliefs, aspirations and positive social norms of the communities where we work has accounted for the sustainability of our programme. We therefore take advantage of these resources to promote the use of local indigenous seeds to secure the rights of people to food and work through traditional authorities to address negative socio-culture norms and practices that infringe on the rights of people.

3.4.5 *Strengthening of community structures.*

RAINS believes in the power of community structures at the national, sub-national and community levels. We therefore, facilitate local organisations to link with wider movements, alliances, networks, or campaigns to demand changes in the lives of people living in poverty. We challenge ourselves, partners, and communities to add value to our work by connecting our work with broader movements and building bridges across all levels. We empower and work with social movements, traditional authorities, smallholder farmer organizations, artisan associations, self-help groups, Village Savings and Loan Associations, and Climate Justice Media Networks to address developmental challenges.

4. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (SPs)

Tackling the underlying causes of poverty and inequality requires partnerships, resources, and deploying multiple and differentiated strategies. RAINS, drawing on the lessons learnt from the previous approach, SWOT Analysis, and national development contexts, has prioritized five (5) Strategic Priorities (SPs) and thirty-five (35) Focus Areas (FAs) to dwell on for the period 2025 – 2029. The SPs and their corresponding FAs are diagrammatically presented in Figure 1.

Goal
Just and resilient communities, offering equitable opportunities for young people and people facing barriers

SP1

Governance and
Gender Responsive
Public Services

SP2

Building community
resilience and social
cohesion

SP3

Biodiversity and
Climate
Resilience

SP4

Green livelihoods
and decent jobs for
youth and women

FAs

FA1.1: Quality Basic
Education
FA 1.2: Inclusive &
complementary
Education
FA1.3: SRHR
FA1.4: WASH
FA 1.5: Teacher
capacity development
A 1.6: School
governance
FA1.7: Child rights
FA1.8: Social
spending &
Accountability
FA1.9: Inclusive
Local governance

FAs

FA2.1: PVE
FA2.2: Community
peace structures
FA2.3: Social
cohesion & peace
building
FA2.4: Community-
security relations
FA2.5: Conflict
prevention &
resolution
FA2.6: Conflict
Early warning
mechanisms

FA

FA3.1: School & Dry
season gardens
FA 3.2: Agroecology
for food sovereignty
FA3. 3: Agroforestry
& reforestation
FA 3.4: Community
Ecological
Governance (CEG)
FA 3.5: Indigenous &
climate smart seeds
FA 3.6: Climate
Justice
FA 3.7: Methane
reduction

FAs

FA 4.1 Access to
sustainable fertile land
FA4. 2: Climate Smart
Agric
FA 4.3: TVET for
youth & women
FA4. 4: Agro-value
chains development
and Market linkages
FA 4.5: Financial
literacy and inclusion
FA 4.6: Eco-friendly
livelihoods.
FA 4.7: Women's
participation, decision-
making and Unpaid
Care Work

Figure 1: RAINS Strategic Goal, Priorities and Focused Areas, 2025-2029

4.1 Strategic Priority One (SP1): Good Governance and Gender Responsive Public Services

This pillar seeks to expand access to quality public services for the people in the RAINS zone of influence. Under this pillar, RAINS will train community members on the use of community scorecards for monitoring local and national budget performances and quality of public services. RAINS will also partner with the media and allow community members to provide candid feedback to duty bearers on the use of financial resources and the quality of public services in their communities.

Programme implementation under the SP1 will revolve around eight (8) Focused Areas (FAs). These include access to quality basic education, SRHR, WASH, teacher capacity development, school accountable governance structures, child rights, local governance and prudent social spending.

4.1.1. FA1: Quality Basic Education

Though the 1992 Constitution under Article 25(1a) and the UNCRC Article 28(a) all guarantee the right to free compulsory basic education for all children, some children in Ghana still face barriers in accessing quality basic education. Key challenges include inadequate furniture in schools, poorly ventilated classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning resources, inadequate qualified teachers in rural schools, limited incentives to get Fulbe children enrolled in school and limited opportunities for rural children to benefit from early use of ICT services. RAINS will therefore work with state and non-state institutions to eliminate barriers and expand access to improved quality and gender responsive public basic education for all children in its programme communities.

4.1.2. FA 2: Inclusive & complementary Education

RAINS will work with the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Services, Complementary Education Agency, Fulbe associations, Ghana Federation of Disabled Organizations, development partners and local communities to provide opportunities for out-of-school children to benefit from complementary education services. RAINS

will use education campaigns, promote safe and friendly schools' programmes to get Fulbe children and other ethnic minorities to access education services. In spite of the launch of the Ghana Inclusive Education Policy in 2016, children with disabilities continue to face challenges in accessing quality education services in Ghana. RAINS will work with the relevant stakeholders to make education inclusive and promote opportunities for out-of-school children to access education opportunities.

4.1.3. *FA 3: Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)*

Ghana has a youthful population made up of 38.2 % of the population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). Many of these young people face many challenges related to their sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR). These include early and unintended pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), gender-based violence, and child marriage. These challenges seriously undermine education opportunities, especially for girls, and affect future health and opportunities. Therefore, investing health ensures that the youth can grow into healthy adults who can contribute productively to the economy. RAINS will continue with its Social Behaviour Change programmes to improve health seeking behaviours and practices in its communities. RAINS will partner with the Ghana Health Service and other stakeholders to implement Interventions focusing on family planning/reproductive health; malaria prevention and treatment; maternal, new born, and child health. RAINS will also join coalitions to campaign for the removal of taxes on sanitary pads.

4.1.4. *FA 4: Water Sanitation and Hygiene*

WASH will be a priority programme area within this strategic plan. RAINS will work with community members, state and non-state partners to expand access to portable water for people in the communities and schools. The popular Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) model will be adopted to promote good sanitation and hygiene. Community self-sustaining and affordable WASH services will be promoted in the communities.

4.1.5 FA 5: Teacher capacity development

Ghana introduced a new National Pre-tertiary Education Curriculum Framework in 2018. Embedded in the current framework is the introduction of the standard-based curriculum. However, the required in-service training for the teachers to adopt this approach has been ad hoc. The required text books are also yet to be implemented. Hence RAINS will collaborate with the Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders to improve the capacity of teachers on the standard-based curriculum approach and other child friendly pedagogies.

4.1.6. FA 6: School governance

Education is a shared responsibility requiring collaboration amongst teachers, parents, children, education authorities and other stakeholders. A strong school governance system contributes to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Therefore, RAINS will support school governance structures such as Parent Associations, School Management Committees, District and Regional Education Oversight Committees and structures available for improving the judicious use of the school financial, human and physical resources. Specific strategies will include leadership training for school heads and school management boards, stakeholder engagement fora and policy review assessments.

4.1.9. FA 7: Child rights

The focus on child rights advocacy in recent years has become even more compelling because, Ghana's 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) showed that a significant proportion of country's population, 42% (12,949,448) are children. Yet the challenges confronting children are enormous. For instance, out of the 727 reported human trafficked cases in 2020, 578 (80%) were children (Ministry of Gender Children Social Protection, 2021). The period 2015-2020 also recorded 5,639 defilement cases (DOVVSU, 2021) and the GSS, 2021 Census revealed that close to 230,000 (3.2%) children (5-14 years) are engaged in economic activity. RAINS will therefore work with community leaders, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Children, security agencies and other stakeholders to strengthen policies and programmes to protect

children from violations such as: child labour and the worst form of child labour, child marriages, forced marriages, teenage pregnancies, child trafficking, child sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and discrimination, Streetism, female genital mutilation, juvenile delinquency, on-line child sexual exploitation and others.

4.1.8. *FA 8: Social spending & Accountability*

The transparent and judicious use of public resources can contribute to improved public services for the people. Therefore, RAINS will partner with other stakeholders to track social spending in education especially on the Ghana School Feeding Programme, Capitation Grant, health and WASH. Other initiatives will include research on social spending by analyzing MMDAs and National budgets accompanied with campaigns to address inequalities through the allocation of national resources, and using community score cards to analyze use of local resources.

4.1.9. *FA 9: Inclusive Local governance*

The focus of this area will be to strengthen the voices of citizens in pursuance of formal and informal responsive, democratic and accountable institutions. RAINS will promote adequate representation of women, minority groups including Fulbe, young people and persons with disabilities on statutory local governance structures. Particular focus will be paid to the use of the District Assembly Common Fund, the management of the Disability Fund and other social protection interventions by the MMDAs.

4.2 Strategic Priority Two (SP2): Building community resilience and social cohesion

The building community resilience and social cohesion pillar seeks to prevent conflicts from escalating to the violent stage. Programming in this area is important because conflicts draw back development and violates the rights of community members especially women and children. RAINS also works closely with the MMDAs to mainstream GESI into their Medium-Term Development Plans and to foster social cohesion. Specific interventions will therefore, be implemented to prevent violent extremism, strengthen community peace structures, improve social cohesion,

improve community-security relations, prevent and resolve conflicts and strengthen conflict early warning mechanisms.

4.1.1. *FA2.1: Prevention of Violence Extremism*

In view of the threat posed by the activities of violent extremists' groups in the Sahel and internal chieftaincy, land, mineral and ethnic conflicts, RAINS will prioritize programming in the prevention of violent extremism. This will be through education on PVE in communities, promoting security-civilian engagements, strengthening early warning systems, promoting peacebuilding initiatives, and supporting livelihood interventions to address the possibility of recruiting young persons to engage in violent activities due to unemployment.

4.2.2. *FA2.2: Community peace structures*

RAINS will work with the relevant institutions to strengthen the capacity of community watchdog committees, community Policing groups, community and district peace committees to enable them to resolve conflicts.

4.2.3. *FA2.3: Social cohesion & peace building*

To ensure sustainable peace in the RAINS programme communities, social cohesion and peace building activities such as organizing games, festivals, communal labour and youth events to promote friendship, unity and tolerance amongst the youth, training of media personnel on fact checking for misinformation and disinformation to ensure factual reporting, and organizing cultural sensitivity training for community leaders on the importance of diversity, inclusion, and the negative consequences of hate speech on their communities. Also advocating for the inclusion of Fulbe in the traditional and formal local governance structures to reduce the many Fulbe herder-farmer conflicts.

4.2.4. *FA2.4: Community-security relations*

The safety of the communities depends on information sharing between community members and the security agencies. RAINS will therefore create platforms of the security agencies to engage with the community members on security issues. Security

and community members games will also be used to build trust between community members and security agencies. The security agencies will also benefit from trainings on the prevention of violent extremism and non-violent approaches to resolving conflicts. This will be done in partnership with the National Peace Council and other peace and security institutions.

4.2.5. *FA2.5: Conflict prevention & resolution*

RAINS will conduct conflict sensitivity analysis in its programme districts and map out strategies for resolving potential and existing conflicts. RAINS will train chiefs, queen mothers and the youth to use alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and other non-violent approaches to resolve conflicts to prevent them from escalating.

4.2.6. *FA2.6: Conflict Early warning mechanisms*

RAINS will educate community members on the “see something say something” strategy to enable community members to report security concerns to the security agencies timeously while protecting the identity of whistle blowers. Regular community meetings will be organized to discuss any emerging security challenges. This will make it possible for early identification of potential conflicts and prompt resolution.

4.3 Strategic Priority Three (SP3): Biodiversity and Climate Resilience

The conservation of biodiversity and employing measures that address climate change are important for ensuring a balance between human development and the natural environment. RAINS will therefore focus its interventions under this pillar on the following: promoting school and dry season gardens, promoting agroecology practices to ensure food sovereignty, promoting agroforestry and reforestation programmes, supporting community ecological governance, promoting indigenous and climate smart seed production and use and advocating for climate justice.

4.3.3. *FA3.1: School & Dry season gardens*

Northern Ghana has only one planting season. This poses a challenge to food and nutrition security for many households. RAINS will collaborate with the Department

of Agriculture in the districts and community members to promote dry season gardening especially in riverine communities. Also, small dugouts and other rain water harvesting technologies will be employed to store water for this purpose. Women in particular will be encouraged to produce vegetables in the dry season as a way of improving the nutritional status of their households and as a source of income to meet other demands. RAINS will encourage and provide support to the management of community schools to engage in school gardening. This strategy has the co-benefit of supporting the school feeding programme and also serving as a resource for teaching and learning.

4.3.2. *FA 3.2: Agroecology for food sovereignty*

RAINS is an advocate of agroecology as a way of promoting food sovereignty. Agroecology provides more sustainable opportunities for improving soil health, controlling pests, building resilience and local ownership of food chains, opportunities for growing variety of crops, maintaining natural habitats, and integrating livestock and crops in diverse ways. This approach to agriculture is ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially just. The agroecological practices will be strengthened by incorporating mobile apps for weather monitoring and forecasting for farmers and e-marketing opportunities for small holder producers. RAINS will therefore, work with women and young small holder farmers to use compost, manure and mulching to improve the fertility of the soil and use botanical herbs such as neem for treating pests and ensuring safe storage of seeds.

4.3.3. *FA3. 3: Agroforestry & reforestation*

The exigencies of climate change have threatened food security in many ecologically fragile communities especially in Northern Ghana. RAINS will therefore promote agroforestry by supporting small holder farmers to integrate crops, trees and livestock farming to reduce food insecurity. RAINS will also promote reforestation of degraded lands to serve as carbon sinks and wind breaks to storms and floods occasioned by climate change.

4.3.4. *FA 3.4: Community Ecological Governance (CEG)*

The increasing human population, climate change effects and profiteering motives of corporations have put undue stress on natural resources including forests, minerals, grasslands, water bodies, land and biodiversity. For instance, the wide scale illegal mining in Ghana has resulted in the pollution of water bodies, degradation of land and pollution of the air in some communities. RAINS will therefore support local communities to take decisions that ensures the judicious use of natural resources particularly endangered tree species such as shea, rosewood, dawadawa and baobab. RAINS will adopt the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) concept developed by the Wildlife Division (WD) of the Forestry Commission (FC) and other strategies to involve communities in natural resource management and conservation and enhance their governance structures for decentralization and agricultural development.

4.3.5. *FA 3.5: Indigenous & climate smart seeds*

Access to quality seeds is important for ensuring food security. RAINS will continue to support the production, multiplication, storage and use of indigenous seeds. This is important because indigenous seed varieties are more resilient against the effects of climate change, are readily available and also affordable to small holder farmers.

4.3.6. *FA 3.6: Climate Justice*

Land grabbing for commercial farming and real estate development compromises the livelihoods of small holder farmers. Other activities such as mineral extraction and related human rights and health violations associated with land degradation, water and air pollution, protection of communities prone to flood and rights of “climate refugees”, the global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy all have implications for women and low-income families. The improper disposal of solid and liquid wastes by waste management companies, rosewood trade and impact on the environment and others are all climate justice issues worth championing. RAINS will support climate mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce the impact of climate change on women, children and low-income households. RAINS will also join climate justice coalitions, networks and campaigns to promote eco-friendly interventions and

policies including the repeal of Legislative Instrument 2462, which permits mining in protected forests.

4.3.1. *FA 3.7: Methane reduction*

Methane emission is a major contributor to global warming within the agriculture sector contributing significantly to methane emissions. The decomposition of rice residue and anaerobic fermentation processes, enteric fermentation processes from livestock and the inappropriate management of manure result in methane emission into the atmosphere. RAINS will therefore work with small holder farmers and communities to introduce methane reduction technologies through training on Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) under a System of Rice Intensification (SRI), selection of low methane emission animal breeds, use of energy saving cooking stoves and improved ways of composting.

4.4 Strategic Priority Four (SP4): Green Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for youth and women

This strategic priority seeks to address the concern of rising unemployment among young people in the RAINS operational districts. Its focused areas include: expanding access to land for women, promotion of climate smart agriculture, promotion of TVET, support to agro-value chains entrepreneurs, deepening financial inclusion, promoting eco-friendly livelihoods, expanding market linkages, and raising awareness on unpaid care work.

4.4.1. *FA 4.1 Access to sustainable fertile land*

Land remains a vital, productive resource for the socio-economic development of communities. However, women, young persons, and settler communities often find it difficult to access and control land. This is largely due to the patriarchal nature of some ethnic groups, which have vested family lands in the hands of men and older persons. The barriers to accessing land for productive activities are also due to the increasing population and pressure on land for the development of public facilities. RAINS will therefore collaborate with the traditional authorities and landowners to secure fertile land on a sustainable tenure basis for women, young persons, and

settlers to engage in farming and other livelihood activities that will improve their well-being.

4.4.2. *FA4. 2: Climate Smart Agriculture*

Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) has become important because of the impact of climate change on food systems. RAINS will collaborate with the Department of Agriculture in its programme districts and other development partners to introduce CSA technologies to smallholder farmers. These include agroforestry, use of drought-resistant seeds, integrated pest management, post-harvest handling, water management, and soil conservation techniques to increase productivity, adapt to climate change extreme events and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

4.4.3. *FA 4.3: Technical and Vocational Education and Training for the youth & women*

Skills development, entrepreneurship and financial inclusion are ways that can address the rising youth unemployment and low incomes of women. RAINS will collaborate with development partners, the TVET service, the Ghana Enterprise Agency and National Youth Authority to provide skills training opportunities for the youth and women. Key interventions will include the establishment of youth skills and employment hubs, digital skills training opportunities and provision of business development support and advisory services to support youth and women enterprises.

4.4.4. *FA4. 4: Agro value chains development and Market linkages*

Post-harvest losses remain high in Ghana. RAINS will support women and young people to venture into agro-value chains. This will be from production, processing and distribution. Some of the agro-value chains to be considered are rice, fruit and vegetables, livestock, aquaculture, soya, shea and ground nut oil. RAINS will undertake market surveys for some identified agro-value chains and facilitate linkages between the women and young entrepreneurs and other actors in the selected agro-value chains. RAINS will link young women entrepreneurs to successful entrepreneurs for mentorship.

4.4.5. *FA 4.5: Financial literacy and inclusion*

Many women and young people face barriers in accessing financial products from the banks and other financial institutions to expand their activities. This is because they do not have a relationship with these financial institutions and also lack the required collateral. RAINS will therefore introduce the youth and women to saving programmes to improve their financial inclusion.

4.4.6. *FA 4.6: Eco-friendly livelihoods*

RAINS values the environment and will therefore support the development of eco-friendly livelihoods in its programme communities. These include composting and rainwater harvesting for dry season vegetable production, production of briquettes to replace fuel wood and charcoal, production of energy saving cooking stoves, apiculture (beekeeping), aquaculture using locally prepared feed, handicrafts and bead-making, waste recycling products, herbal products and eco-tourism enterprises.

RAINS will undertake market surveys for some identified agro-value chains and facilitate linkages between the women and young entrepreneurs and other actors in the selected agro-value chains.

4.4.8. *FA 7: Women's participation, decision-making and Unpaid Care Work*

Women in Ghana continue to bear the burden of performing majority of the household chores which is not recognized and paid for. RAINS will collaborate with development partners and community members to educate community members on the need for the recognition, redistribution, reduction and reward for unpaid care work. RAINS will also promote enhanced technologies for farming, agro-processing and for performing household chores that reduce the drudgery on women. RAINS will advocate for early childhood development centres to reduce the burden of working women having to carry their babies whilst working. RAINS will join coalitions to campaign for the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention (ILO Convention 189) and the Violence and Harassment Convention (ILO 190).

4.5. Strategic Priority Five (SP5): Institutional Strengthening

Strategic priority five seeks to provide a firm foundation for delivering the programmes of RAINS. Key focused areas include: strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning systems, expanding funding streams, improving financial and accountability systems, enhancing Board governance and oversight and improving the organizational performance and staff capacity.

4.5.1. *FA 5.1: Strengthen Communication and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)*

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and Communication are of upmost importance and form essential component of the programme cycle. During this strategy period staff will be trained to use digital tools for tracking finances, collecting and analysis data to measure indicator performance. Efforts will also be made to adequately document project successes and lessons learnt for dissemination to the appropriate stakeholders using traditional and new media. MEAL generates data and evidence to demonstrate the extent to which intended results are being or have been achieved and to draw lessons on the best practices and workable approaches for adoption/replication while also noting the pitfalls that should be avoided during the execution of similar interventions. As such MEAL is of high priority in the implementation of the RAINS Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. RAINS is committed to attracting the best human resources, establishing requisite systems, values, and employing user-friendly technologies to perform this function.

Prioritized activities under this focused area include: conducting baseline surveys, midline and end line evaluations for this strategic plan and specific projects, facilitating effective planning, implementation, monitoring, progress, and impact reporting, undertaking periodic reporting including monthly updates, quarterly progress reports and annual reports, development of a RAINS MEAL Management Information System and building the capacity of staff to use it, conducting programme quality assurance audits, staff and partner programme reviews and learning.

4.5.2. *FA 5.2: Diversify funding streams and strategic partnerships*

RAINS over the years has established a creditable brand as a youth and socially inclusive organisation. This has attracted the needed partnerships, financial and human resources to implement its programmes. However, the increasing youth bulge and unemployment, the many barriers to women access to land and productive resources and participation in decision making processes and the effects of climate change on livelihoods of small holder women and men farmers require more resources. Under this strategic plan RAINS will explore opportunities to diversify its funding portfolios and partnerships to be able to scale-up and consolidate its gains. Therefore, the planned actions under this focused area include the following: identifying and joining strong networks; developing a resource mobilization strategy, communicating impact, organizing an annual donor and stakeholders forum, profiling and building strategic partnerships and building the capacity of staff and Board members on resource mobilization.

4.5.3. *FA 5.3: Strengthen financial and accountability systems*

At RAINS, every financial resource must be used to address inequalities and poverty. Therefore, the judicious use of resources and accountability are our hallmarks. Within this strategic plan we are committed to improving the existing financial and ICT infrastructure to make us even more efficient, transparent and accountable to our stakeholders. Therefore, the following actions will be under taken: review of internal financial controls to reflect the demands of the aid industry, upgrade of financial software, facilitation of routine and end of year audits and improvement of ICT Infrastructure.

4.5.4. *FA 5.4: Improve governance and Board Oversight*

The stability and credibility of RAINS are due to the investments made in its governance structures. The Board of Trustees of RAINS have been providing quality oversight support to the management over the years. This will be further enhanced through capacity building for the Board members and their involvement in resource

mobilization and programme implementation. Specific actions planned include the following: governance training for the Board, facilitation of Board meetings, involvement of Board members in resource mobilization and building of strategic partnerships, facilitation of annual retreat involving the Board and staff, and facilitation of Board visits to project locations.

4.5.5. FA 5.5: Improve organizational performance and staff capacity

At RAINS, we recognise that the expertise, commitment and diligence of our human resources drive the strength of our organization. RAINS will therefore explore opportunities to develop further and motivate her staff to perform optimally. The capacities of the existing human resources will be developed, and new skills and expertise will be procured to deliver this strategic plan. Key actions outlined for this focused area include: providing opportunities for staff capacity development, ensuring meritocracy in recruitments and promotions, putting in place and implementing SHEA and other safeguarding policies, exploring opportunities to improve conditions of staff service, and conducting salaries and incentives surveys periodically.

4.5.6. FA.5.6: Improve policy and regulatory frameworks

RAINS recognizes the importance of organizational policies in guiding the work of the organization. Therefore, some of the existing policies will be reviewed, new ones developed on need basis for the Board approval.

4.5.7. FA 5.7. Expand volunteerism and Internship Opportunities

Within this strategy period, RAINS will create more opportunities by designing volunteer projects for young people to contribute to community development. Internship spaces will also be created for young people interested in international development.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The M&E framework aims to help RAINS track its progress and performance under the three strategic priorities. Generally, a mixed research approach will be used to track the KPIs. The monitoring and evaluation tools will therefore include both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments and methods. The quantitative findings will help RAINS to track progress and changes, and the qualitative findings will help RAINS to explain the changes and outcomes achieved.

Table 3: Strategic Plan MEAL Framework

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (SPs)							
Strategic Priorities	KPI	Baseline	Target	Data collection methods	MoV	Freq of data collection and reporting	Responsibility
SP1: Good Governance and Gender Responsive Public Services	1.1. % of net enrolment in RAINS basic schools	TBD	TBD	Annual enrolment reviews	Enrolment reports, Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	1.2. # of Fulbe children enrolled in basic schools and complementary basic education	TBD	TBD	Annual enrolment reviews	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports, Case studies	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators

	programmes in RAINS communities						
	1.3. # of teachers trained in child centred pedagogy	TBD	TBD	Training workshops	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	1.4. # of functioning Community Health Management Teams	TBD	TBD	Annual community Assessments	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	1.5. Proportion of households with access to improved WASH (potable water, clean toilets and waste disposal sites) facilities in the RAINS communities	TBD	TBD	Household survey	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators

	1.1. % of District Assembly and Unit Committee members who are women and young persons in the RAINS Districts	TBD	TBD	Annual project assessments	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
SP2: Peace and Security	2.1. # of Community Watch Dog Committees formed	TBD	TBD	Quarterly monitoring and annual assessments	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	2.2. # of traditional leaders trained in conflict resolutions techniques	TBD	TBD	Quarterly monitoring and annual assessments	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	2.3. # of community PVE awareness	TBD	TBD	Key Informant Interviews & Focused Group Discussions	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and

	programmes organized				Evaluation Reports		external evaluators
	2.1. % reduction in community conflicts	TBD	TBD	Annual conflicts assessments	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
SP3: Biodiversity and Climate Resilience	3.1. % of small holder men and women farmers that adopt and practice agroecology, agroforestry and climate smart agriculture	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	3.2. % of Households in RAINS communities that are food secured	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	3.3. # of community led seed	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and

	banks established				Evaluation Reports		external evaluators
	3.4. # of small holder women and men farmers using resilient seed varieties	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	3.5. # of schools with school gardens	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	3.6. % of basic schools with functioning PA and SMCs			School assessment			
	3.7. # of women benefiting from dry season gardening	TBD	TBD	Focused Group Discussions	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	3.1. # of climate justice advocacy actions championed	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and

	by social movements facilitated by RAINS				Evaluation Reports		external evaluators
SP4: Green livelihoods and decent jobs	4.1. # of women and youth with improved access to finances for economic activities	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	4.2. # of youth with access to decent work under TVET programme	TBD	TBD	Annual, mid and end of project evaluations	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	4.3. # of women practicing traditionally male-dominated trades	TBD	TBD	Focused Group Discussions and annual assessments	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy Evaluation Reports	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
	4.4. # of women and men involved	TBD	TBD	Survey	Annual reports. Mid and End of Strategy	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and

	in Agro-value chains				Evaluation Reports		external evaluators
	4.5. % reduction in time spent by women and girls on household chores	TBD	TBD	Survey	Time-use surveys	Annually, Mid and End line strategy evaluation	Head of Programmes & Partnerships, M&E Officer and external evaluators
SP5: Institutional strengthening	5.1. Type of MEL system in place (digital portal with various interfaces)	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Donor partners due diligence reports and annual audit report	Annually	Executive Director and M&E Officer
	5.2. # for funding partners • Short-term donors (1 year funding contract) • Medium term (3 years and more)	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Annual financial Report and Annual Audit Report	Annually	Executive Director and Head of Finance

	funding contracts)						
	5.3. Type of integrated financial system in place (accounting software, updated financial policies, grant management, reports, digital banking and levels of authorization	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Donor partners due diligence and Annual Audit Report	Annually	Executive Director and Head of Finance
	5.4a. # of board meetings held in a year	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Board Minutes	Annually	Executive Director and Board Chair
	5.4b. # of trainings organized for board members annually	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Board Minutes	Annually	Executive Director and Board Chair

	5.4c. # of Board decisions implemented annually	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Board Minutes	Annually	Executive Director and Board Chair
	5.5a. # of specialists recruited (M&E, Communication, Peace and Security, Grants)	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Employment Contracts	Annually	Executive Director and Head of Administration and HR
	5.5b. % of staff recruited and retained within the strategy period	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Employment Contracts and Audit Report	Annually	Executive Director, Head of Finance and Head of Administration and HR
	5.6 # of policies and regulatory frameworks developed or revised	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Copies of Policies and regulatory frameworks	Annually	Executive Director and Head of Programmes
	5.7 # of volunteers and interns engaged in a year	TBD	TBD	Key informant interviews	Copies of letters of engagement	Annually	Executive Director, Head of Finance and Head of

							Administration and HR
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6. ASSUMPTIONS, RISKS AND MITIGATION

We recognize the dynamic nature of the aid industry, human and natural conditions, which may affect the smooth implementation of this strategy. The strategy was therefore couched with these assumptions in mind:

- Traditional authorities and community leaders will show more commitment towards reforming socio-cultural practices that perpetuate patriarchy, which deny women access to land and other productive resources and expose them to domestic servitude.
- The volunteerism and communal spirit in the communities will continue to ensure the collective protects biodiversity and other natural resources sustainably.
- Communities will generally remain peaceful and use due process to resolve conflicts in order not to create instability and the displacement of people requiring emergency assistance.
- The newly created Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment will be willing to collaborate with NGOs to implement programmes that will create decent jobs for the youth.
- The governance structures will be more inclusive to enable women, young people and minorities to participate in the decision-making processes.
- Government will invest resources in policies and programmes that promote climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to protect livelihoods and the environment.
- The government will continue to invest in public services, including education, health, and WASH, to expand access for rural and urban communities.

We are equally mindful of the following risks to the successful implementation of the strategy:

- The declining donor support to NGOs, particularly the United States Executive Instrument to temporarily halt USAID-funded programmes in Ghana and other countries. Therefore, co-funding models with the private sector, social enterprise initiatives, local philanthropy, volunteer skills, and local

technologies and resources will be galvanized to minimize the effects of donor-funded project cuts on our communities.

- The effects of climate change and natural disasters extreme events such as drought, floods, pests and disease outbreaks and windstorms could affect food security, health. This could exacerbate illegal mining in particular. Therefore, climate change adaptation measures will be invoked to minimize climate change effects on community members.
- The unresolved chieftaincy, land and other natural resource conflicts may disintegrate communities. RAINS will therefore continue to strengthen community conflict early warning mechanisms and conflict resolution systems.
- Political instability accentuated by sharp political divisions and electoral violence may affect the peace and stability of communities. RAINS will therefore support community, district and national level social cohesion initiatives to promote tolerance in the communities and country.
- The Ghanaian economy is still a fragile one vulnerable to various global shocks which may affect the delivery of goods and services. RAINS will therefore work with its beneficiaries to improve their income and food resilience and support community social protection interventions to minimize the impact of economic shocks on community members.

7. CONCLUSION

This strategy is modelled around partnerships and our common desire for a just, equitable, and peaceful country. We look forward to engaging with our cherished stakeholders, including our funding and technical partners, community leaders, local and national government authorities, traditional and religious leaders, and other collaborators to pursue this agenda. For us, success at the end of the strategy period means:

1. All children are healthy, are in school receiving quality education, and are free from violations, including early marriages, child labour, and gender-based violence.
2. Communities have strong mechanisms for resolving conflicts, and the human rights of children, women, and minorities are respected and safeguarded.

3. Communities are more resilient, with improved access to nutritious foods and the capacity to adapt to climate change impacts.
4. Young people and women have decent jobs.
5. The capacity of RAINS to deliver impactful and sustainable programmes in Ghana is enhanced.

You certainly have a role to play, and you are welcome.

