



MAKING EU FOREST ACTION MORE **GENDER** INCLUSIVE



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Over one billion men and women depend on forest resources for their livelihoods, and forests provide goods, services, employment and income to an estimated 2.5 billion people worldwide.

For several reasons - cultural, social, economic and institutional - women often have less access to and control over forest resources and enjoy fewer economic opportunities. The wood sector, for instance, continues to be male-dominated. Women often work in the informal economy, are paid less than men, their knowledge is not adequately valued, and their roles often are less well recognised. As a result, their contribution to the sector does not reach its full potential.

EU forest support could have a greater impact – and contribute towards delivering on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – if gender equality were placed at the heart of forest policies, political dialogue and programmes.

This Quick Tips document contributes to efforts to mainstream gender in all EU-supported action on forests and achieve more impact through a series of practical tips.



Women in forest communities derive half of their income from forests, while men derive only a third Source: FAO, 2014



WHY GENDER MATTERS FOR FORESTS

Women and men play different roles in the forest sector

- Women and men play different roles in forestry and agroforestry value chains, and in the use, management and protection of forests. As a result, they have different needs and opportunities.
- Men are mostly engaged in harvesting forest products for commercial purposes (e.g. timber), while for women it is usually to collect them for subsistence purposes (food, medicines, fuelwood, fodder) or to improve soil fertility. Both men and women are involved in the trade of forest products.
- Factors that determine the division of labour are the use of physically demanding technologies (machetes, axes, saws) – which in many cultures are regarded as a male preserve – and distance to the forest. Remote forest areas are regarded as unsafe for women.
- The distribution of labour and responsibilities varies between communities, countries and regions, and can change over time. The commonly held view that women are the main collectors of forest products is true only in Africa. In Latin America, men's share of income from unprocessed forest products is greater than that of women, while in Asia it is roughly equal.
- The difference in women's and men's roles and tasks in forest-related activities imply that their needs for support, training, knowledge, technology and opportunities are different as well. Understanding this is key for successful gender mainstreaming.



Out of the 850 million people engaged in collecting fuelwood or producing charcoal, 83% women.

Women's role is often less visible and formalised

- Forest products are key to many people's livelihoods but the role of women in their production or collection is often less visible.
- Most informal, unstable and/or low paid jobs in the forest sector are held by women.
- At a global level, of the 850 million people engaged in collecting fuelwood or producing charcoal, 83 percent are women and girls (FAO).
- Out of the 10 million formally recognised women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries, 75 to 80 percent do not have adequate access to credit in sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. This is caused by financial and non-financial barriers, such as low education/ business skills, lack of business records or collateral, and perception of women as entrepreneurs (IFC).

THE CASE OF CAMEROON

In Cameroon, most of the stable jobs in the forest sector are occupied by men, with only 3% percent occupied by women. Meanwhile, in southern Cameroon, women dominate (95%) the (mostly informal) Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) trade and do 84% of the bushmeat trade in the capital Yaoundé.



In **15** countries, women lack equal ownership access to property



In **34** countries, daughters do not have equal inheritance rights



In **35** countries, widows do not have equal inheritance rights



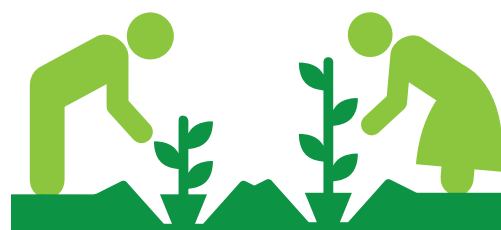
In **90** countries customs inhibit women's access to land

Women have less access to land

- In many countries women have less access to land and forest resources: they often do not have equal rights to and control over these.
- There are 90 countries where customs inhibit women's access to land, and 34 where widows and daughters do not have equal inheritance rights. Women still account for less than 15 percent of agricultural landholders worldwide.
- Land certificates alone, which do not assure ownership, do not necessarily ensure women's access to resources, due to field realities suggesting that complementary measures are much needed.
- Land is not only a key resource for other livelihoods, land certificates are a legal requirement within the Voluntary Partnership Agreement for the Forest, Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade (VPA-FLEGT) in several countries.

Women are less represented in decision-making

- Women participate less in natural resource management groups due to time constraints, social norms about public speaking, confidence and perceptions of women in leadership roles.
- Forest management structures are traditionally male dominated both at national and subnational levels.
- Involving men and women in forest-related decision making at the community level has positive effects on a range of forest management issues, such as:
 - ▶ **Effective governance** The regulation of illegal activities and the capacity of community groups to manage conflict improve when women are involved.
 - ▶ **Forest cover** A study in South Asia found that the probability of the forest canopy being medium or thick as vs. thin or patchy was 75 percent higher in community forests with a larger membership of women.
 - ▶ **Regeneration** There was a 29 percent greater probability of very good forest regeneration in community forests managed by women.



*There is a **29%** greater probability of forest regeneration being very good with community forest institutions that have all-women executive councils than other community forest institutions*

Source: [Agarwal, 2009](#)

GENDER IN EU POLICY FOR FORESTS

Gender is defined as the *socially constructed roles, behaviours and characteristics that a given society considers appropriate for males and females*. Gender hence determines:

- tasks of men and women in forestry and agriculture;
- access to and control over forest and land resources of men and women to carry out these tasks;
- control over benefits of forest and agricultural production.



The EU Gender Action Plan

The EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III) is a framework to promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in EU external relations in third and partner countries, as well as in international fora and agendas. Aligned with the European Consensus on Development, gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment are both standalone priority and cross-cutting elements, key to successful achievement of the SDGs.

The green transition is a new area of thematic engagement for gender equality. The joint Staff Working Document (SWD) provides a set of objectives and indicators to monitor progress in the implementation of GAP III and measure its results at country, regional and international levels. The SWD recommends EU staff to integrate a specific objective on gender equality in their programming Action Documents.

Gender equality in Forest Partnerships

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, when signing the first five Forest Partnerships between the EU and partner countries at UNFCCC COP27, expressed the ambition to create up to 50% new jobs for women. Forest Partnerships are a new long-term political engagement between the European Union and partner countries to protect, restore and ensure the sustainable use of the world's forests through a comprehensive, holistic and integrated approach that supports inclusive national development.

To realise these 50% of new jobs for women, the following steps are recommended:

- Political dialogue between the EU and partner countries should integrate gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the development of the Forest Partnership. Roadmaps for implementation of the Forest Partnership should include a gender strategy, based on a gender analysis of the forest sector (and available country gender analyses and profiles).
- The composition of technical and political working groups should be gender balanced and avail of gender expertise, with substantial representation of women.

Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and gender

FLEGT aims to reduce illegal logging by strengthening sustainable forest management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber. FLEGT can provide an opportunity for women's participation and empowerment if a gender perspective is included in the analysis of the legality of production and trade in timber. A good example of integrating gender in a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement comes from Ivory Coast.

THE CASE OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

In Côte d'Ivoire, the national government and the EU have included in the VPA a new gender indicator to the legality definition of timber and derived products. The indicator draws attention to the need to create proper conditions for women, especially pregnant women, working in the forest sector. Overall, gender considerations are gaining increasing importance in the Ivorian forest sector. In 2022 a gender unit was created within the Ministry of Water and Forestry, and officials are being trained in taking a gender-sensitive approach, and a strategy on gender integration in forest governance is being developed. Projects are starting to show promising results, building the capacities of rural women's associations committed to sustainable agroforestry practices, while awareness has been raised on women's equal rights and access to land and forest resources.



TIPS FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN FOREST ACTIONS

There are various means of mainstreaming gender in EU-supported forest related actions. First, you need expertise, time and budget for gender mainstreaming:

Expertise: throughout the project and institutionally in key positions of power;

Time: for analysis, from people to invest in the task, and to let things change;

Budget: without funds allocated to gender mainstreaming activities, there will be few opportunities for change for women and men.

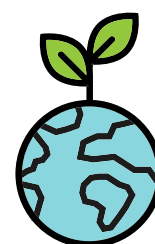


GENDER IS ABOUT MEN AND WOMEN

Gender is often confused with 'women' and women's issues, thereby losing the interest of many men (at both policy and field levels), while men are important actors to achieve gender equality.

Gender equality at the heart of policy dialogue

- ✓ Promote gender equality in policies supported by EU, across sectors, during dialogues with government;
- ✓ Policies and programmes in the forest sector should include equal rights and access for men and women to land and forest resources, investment, capacity building, access to credit, and access to information on funds, markets and economic opportunities;
- ✓ Promote women's safe access to fuelwood, and the use of healthier, more energy-efficient technologies and equipment (e.g. improved cooking stoves), and enhanced access to alternative energy sources (e.g. solar energy, electricity);
- ✓ Gender transformation is about changing norms in the long term, and both women and men need to be on board. This requires creating platforms where men and women can interact, exchange and collaborate – both at local and higher levels.





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Gender sensitive analysis and data

- ✓ Analyse and understand the different roles, experience, knowledge and needs of women, girls, men and boys in relation to forests and forest-based value chains.
- ✓ Include gender-sensitive value chain analysis: market analysis, mapping of actors (f/m), and their specific opportunities and constraints, cost-benefit analysis for each stage of value chain, vision and upgrading strategy that identifies how to grasp opportunities, tackle constraints including systemic bottlenecks and allowing for gender inclusive impact (jobs, income) at scale. The Value Chain Analysis for Development (VCA4D) methodology and capacity can be useful in this regard;
- ✓ Producing and using gender-disaggregated data for the forest sector and project design, ensuring that women's and men's work in the forest sector (both paid and unpaid) is captured in national statistics, programmes, and VPAs;
- ✓ Indicators of successful gender-transformative interventions need to include both economic metrics (i.e. profit, revenue, number of women and men participating in a chain) as well as socio-cultural metrics (i.e. men's and women's perceptions of changes and roles, social acceptability).

Gender-sensitive project implementation

- ✓ Ensure commitment to delivering on gender equality is reflected in Calls for Proposals, e.g. the requirement to draw up a gender action plan;
- ✓ Make sure that implementing partners have gender expertise and budget to implement gender actions and to do gender-related monitoring and research;
- ✓ The project's results framework includes targets on gender equality and gender disaggregated indicators;
- ✓ Ensure gender-equal representation and gender expertise at all levels of staff (from junior to senior/management);
- ✓ Assign responsibility for gender-equality results to senior leadership to ensure follow up and accountability in projects.



THE CASE OF UGANDA

A '[gender mainstreaming manual](#)' has been produced by SWAGEN and the EU supported [FAO-FLEGT programme](#) which aims to "enhance women's participation in forest governance and ensure equitable access to forest resources and their associated benefits."

"Gender-responsive forest governance involves a deliberate focus on the ways in which gender informs perceptions and usage of forest resources, relationship with and knowledge about forests, and tenure security over forest resources," says Irene Kambedha, Senior Forestry Officer and Gender Focal Point Officer at Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment. "Understanding these aspects paves the way for women's participation in decision-making, resource management and benefit-sharing. Women and children are most likely to feel the effects of forest degradation and climate change. This gender mainstreaming manual will be important to mitigate these effects."

Women in decision-making bodies

- ✓ Support women's participation in forest-related decision-making bodies, to achieve a gender balance in forestry associations and forest user groups, and enable women to participate fully in decision-making processes, e.g. through formal education, training and support for income generation;
- ✓ Support interventions that aim to change perception, by men and women, of women in leadership roles;
- ✓ Ensure that women have sufficient skills and capacities to participate in policymaking and to engage in the trade of forest-based products and services.



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