



GENDER CONSIDERATIONS AND GENDER BALANCE

WHY is it important to include gender considerations in a national ecosystem assessment?

Relations between men and women across the world are both constructed and delineated along social, economic, cultural and power differences. The roles that women and men play in the management of biodiversity tend to be different and aligned with specific responsibilities that they shoulder at home and in the community. As such, their interactions with ecosystems and their different dependencies on specific ecosystem services should be assessed.

Men and women hold specific and complementary knowledge about species, ecosystems and biodiversity¹. The knowledge is generated through their different daily roles and activities, and as such, this complementary knowledge offers diverse solutions for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and ecosystem restoration. Following gender sensitive approaches will help to ensure that the views, values, experiences and knowledge of diverse groups of men and women are integrated in favour of a more complete and robust assessment².

It is also encouraged, that assessment teams aim to follow gender equality principles established by IPBES³. This means ensuring gender equality in all relevant aspects of the work as well as gender balance in all relevant bodies of an assessment team (e.g. technical support unit, management/steering committee, expert panel, author team, and various stakeholder groups). In regards to knowledge generation, it will be particularly important to include gender specialist(s) in the expert panel and seek to ensure balanced representation of knowledge holders (e.g. promoting the involvement of women leaders, indigenous and local women knowledge holders, and representatives from women groups/associations and youth groups), these efforts need to be carried out in a culturally sensitive manner.

WHEN should gender considerations be integrated into the assessment process?

Gender considerations should be integrated throughout the national ecosystem assessment process, however, it is of particular importance during the scoping and evaluation stages when the author teams, stakeholders and knowledge holders are first being engaged.



Who can facilitate the integration of gender considerations?

The technical support unit and management/steering committee are encouraged to ensure that gender considerations are integrated when planning engagement activities with stakeholders and knowledge holders, by promoting gender balance in the author team, and by ensuring the inclusion of gender specialist(s) and women knowledge holders in the expert panel and taskforce on indigenous and local knowledge. The use of gender-sensitive language should also be considered for the development of the assessment report and relevant documents (e.g., communication strategy).

The technical support unit and the management/steering committee lead the integration of gender considerations in the assessment process

HOW to integrate gender considerations?

Integrating gender considerations in the scoping stage of a national ecosystem assessment

To ensure that assessment findings are robust and reflect the knowledge, voices and experiences from diverse groups of men and women, gender considerations and gender balance in all relevant bodies of the assessment team (e.g., TSU, management/steering committee, expert panel, author team, indigenous and local knowledge taskforce, and stakeholder groups), needs to be planned from the scoping stage. Here are some examples that the assessment team could consider:

- **Establish gender quotas** for the assessment team and stakeholder participation and aim to monitor that the proposed target/percentage set (e.g. 50% men, 50% women) is met throughout the process.
- **Identify gender experts and women knowledge holders** to join the expert group, author team and indigenous and local knowledge taskforce following culturally sensitive approaches. For example, seek engagement from gender experts with experience on gender analysis⁴ and women knowledge holders who are interested in participating in the assessment process to share knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- **Include gender considerations** in the stakeholder engagement approach and communications strategy. This will help to plan ahead how best to engage all relevant stakeholders (the diverse groups of men and women) and ensure that gender-sensitive language is used in the communications strategy.

Integrating gender considerations in the evaluation stage

- **Identify and consult women knowledge holders**, including indigenous and local women to ensure the assessment is inclusive of diverse and complimentary knowledge. Engagement with indigenous and local women should follow culturally sensitive approaches and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- **Aim for gender balance** when establishing the expert/author teams and indigenous and local knowledge taskforce.
- **Ensure the participation of relevant women stakeholders, knowledge holders and women groups** when inviting stakeholders to provide feedback on the assessment drafts.
- **Ensure gender considerations and gender-sensitive language is applied consistently across the assessment report.** To facilitate this, it may be beneficial for gender experts and knowledge holders to provide inputs to multiple chapters of the assessment and ensure that the text is gender-sensitive (promotes gender equality and eradicate gender bias). Similarly, identifying review editors with gender expertise might help to highlight areas of the assessment that could be improved from a gender perspective.

Integrating gender considerations in the approval stage

- **Ensure the participation of relevant gender experts, women stakeholders and knowledge holders** in the validation of the final assessment drafts and the summary for policymakers.

Integrating gender considerations in the use of assessment findings stage

- **Communicate the outcomes of the assessment to relevant women stakeholders and knowledge holders** (e.g. relevant women groups and associations), to facilitate their ongoing engagement in the assessment and its findings.
- **Engage women stakeholders and knowledge holders in the co-creation of policies and actions** that develop from the assessment findings. The national science policy platform may provide the mechanism through which to do this.
- **Use the assessment to communicate gender-related knowledge gaps** if the assessment identified areas where more knowledge is needed to strengthen the assessment findings and highlight priority areas for future research.

Integrate gender considerations when engaging stakeholders and knowledge holders throughout the assessment process

Identifying relevant stakeholders and engaging them from the outset will be central for ensuring that the relevance of their knowledge is appropriately reflected in the national ecosystem assessment. It will be important to build trust and tailor strategies for engaging with women groups and associations in a way that is culturally appropriate. Some of the following points could be considered:

- **Identify all relevant stakeholders and knowledge holders**, including indigenous and local women, women's groups and women's associations.
- **Consider the time and location of meetings**, as women often have limited availability due to childcare responsibilities. Also, consider the location of the meeting and if participants have access to transportation and/or require funding to be able to participate (e.g. to cover costs of childcare and public transport).
- **Acknowledge** that indigenous and local knowledge is sometimes held differently across gender.
- **Use relevant methods** to ensure all voices are heard. Power balance, gender norms and cultural context can affect participation. As such, it is important to consider different methods that will enable all gender voices to be heard.
- **Seek local guidance** to ensure that engagement with women (including indigenous and local women) follows local norms and that the engagement approaches are designed/delivered in a culturally sensitive manner.
- The **COVID-19** crisis is not gender-neutral, the pandemic has worsened women's triple burden (productive, reproductive and community roles)⁵. It will be important to discuss with the identified stakeholders (especially women) the type of support that is needed to ensure their participation.



RESOURCES

1. SCBD, 2020. Addressing gender issues and actions in biodiversity objectives. [online]. available at: <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender-integration-en.pdf>
2. The term gender can encompass a variety of identities. However, in this work we have limited the consideration of gender to women and men and those that identify as such.
3. IPBES, 2012. Functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. [online]. Available at: https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/functions_operating_principles_and_institutional_arrangements_of_ipbes_2012.pdf
4. SIDA, 2015. Gender analysis – principles & elements. [online] available at: <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61853en-gender-analysis-principles-elements.pdf>
5. UN Women, 2020. From insights to action: Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19. [online] available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>

FURTHER READING

Gender – concepts and definitions

- An overview of gender-related concepts and definitions can be found on the UN Women website. Visit: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

Gender and the environment

- Information about the interlinkages between gender and the natural environment can be found on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) website. Visit: <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/gender>
- UNEP, 2018. Global gender and environment outlook (GGE0). [online] available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-gender-and-environment-outlook-ggeo>

Gender quotas

- OECD, 2015. Why quotas work for gender equality. [online] available at: <https://www.oecd.org/social/quotas-gender-equality.htm>
- Pande, R. and Ford, D. 2012. Gender quotas and female leadership. Washington, DC: World Bank. [online]. Visit: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/9120>
- Cook, N.J., Grillos, T. and Andersson, K.P. 2019. Gender quotas increase the equality and effectiveness of climate policy interventions. Nat. Clim. Chang. 9, 330 – 334. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-019-0438-4>

Stakeholder engagement

- Guidance on gender stakeholder consultation is available on the European Institute for Gender Equality website. Visit: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-stakeholder-consultation>
- USAID, 2014. When to use gender stakeholder analysis. In: Integrating gender in climate change adaptation proposals. [online] available at: <http://asiapacificadapt.net/gender-sourcebook/10-when-to-use-a-gender-stakeholder-analysis/10-when-to-use-a-gender-stakeholder-analysis/>

Gender-sensitive communication

- Guidance on the use of gender-inclusive language is available on the UN Women website. Visit: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/genderterm>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. Let's speak gender: 10 principles of gender-responsive communications for development. [online] available at: <https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/gender-equality/10-principles-of-gender-responsive-communications.html>
- Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), 2021. Tips for gender sensitive communication in DGACM. [online] available at: https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/assets/pdf/Tips_for_gender-sensitive_communication_in_DGACM.pdf
- A toolkit for gender sensitive communications is available on the European Institute for Gender Equality website, visit: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-sensitive-communication>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2022. Guidelines for mainstreaming gender perspectives into publications. [online] available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/38065/Gender_checklist.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Gender equality and culture

- Information on the relationship between gender equality and culture is available on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) website. Visit: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/info_sheet_gender_equality.pdf
- Schalkwyk, J. 2000. Questions about culture, gender equality, and development cooperation. Canadian International Development Agency, Gender Equality Division. [online] available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/1850708.pdf>

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