

## Policy pointers

- **Integrating gender and generation into REDD+ readiness processes** is important because men and women, old and young, have different needs and play different roles when it comes to using or managing forests.
- **A key first step is to build** an understanding of the key actors and activities in deforestation and degradation through baseline surveys and value chain analysis.
- **Addressing gendered access** to and control of resources, knowledge and power may help promote activities and behaviours that support REDD+ and empower the next generation of women.
- **Integrating gender in** REDD+ is not only about assessing readiness plans and ticking boxes; it means affording women equal representation and influence in decision making at all levels.
- **Lessons from Brazil and Tanzania** show how affirmative action to structure payments around women can help ensure gender equity in REDD+.

# His REDD+, her REDD+: how integrating gender can improve readiness

To change the ways people use forested land, we need to ask questions about the roles of men, women and children. Nearly fifty countries have begun preparing for readiness to reduce emissions from land use and land use changes under the UN-REDD and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility processes. Because gender disparities profoundly shape agriculture and other land use, REDD+ readiness plans should not only avoid harming women and other marginalised groups, but actively seek to address their needs and harness their strengths. Different genders and generations play different roles in value chains for products that use — or conserve — forest resources. Analysing these value chains provides the data to improve interventions. But planners also need to consider gender differences in control of resources, knowledge, decision-making structures and distribution of benefits.

## Gender, generation and REDD+

As developing countries start planning and preparing for new efforts to mitigate climate change by changing land and forest use practices, it is critical to ensure these plans and processes are gender sensitive. Nearly 50 forested countries are now working with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN-REDD programme to 'get ready' for schemes that will reward reduced deforestation and forest degradation, conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon stocks (REDD+).

To be effective and equitable, such efforts must recognise that different genders and generations play different roles when it comes to using or managing forests, to meet different needs. Both men and women influence behaviour and practices that are critical to securing the uptake of REDD+ (see *Shaping consumption*, overleaf). At the same time, the ability of men and women to participate in, and benefit from, REDD+ is moulded by varying cultural norms and socioeconomic contexts that are often marked by large gender inequality and the marginalisation of women.

We focus here on Sub-Saharan Africa, where the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has estimated that

women constitute nearly half the agricultural labour force but own only 15 per cent of the land.<sup>1</sup> This region has 15 countries involved in REDD+ planning, some of which — such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and Tanzania — have already begun implementing the readiness process. But whether in Africa, Asia or Latin America, REDD+ readiness plans that aim to empower women are likely to produce more inclusive strategies and sustainable results.

The UN-REDD programme acknowledges the need to integrate gender in REDD+ readiness processes, in a way that reflects varying country contexts. It stresses the need to: link REDD+ to existing national development strategies; ensure the participation of local stakeholders, including women; provide equal access for men and women to REDD+ funds and benefits; make sure that REDD+ programmes do not restrict women's access to the resources they depend on for their livelihoods; and promote the involvement of women-led community-based organisations.

Yet many of the REDD+ readiness proposals from Africa and Asia that we have examined remain gender-blind — or treat gender as little more than a box-ticking exercise, using phrases such as 'gender balance', 'gender issues' or 'minimise negative impacts' without elaborating on

## Both men and women influence behaviour and practices that are critical to REDD+

what that means in practice. In some countries such as Tanzania, a REDD+ strategy has been developed first

and screening for gender issues is to follow. But these positive efforts to integrate gender would be more effective earlier in the process.

There are exceptions of course, and some of the more progressive proposals recognise four key

areas where action is needed to achieve genuine integration of gender equity in REDD+ readiness efforts:

- building an understanding of gender-differentiated roles and needs;
- addressing gendered use, access to and control of resources, knowledge and power;
- affording women equal representation and influence in all decision-making arenas; and
- introducing affirmative action to advance gender equity and integrating monitoring and evaluation of impacts.

### Setting a baseline

International guidance on REDD+ readiness highlights Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) as a useful tool for designing inclusive and equitable national REDD+ strategies that avoid doing harm to women and other marginalised groups. This is important. But it is only by going one step further that gender will be integrated into REDD+ readiness — by actively seeking to identify the role that women and men, old and young play in deforestation and degradation and finding interventions that respond to their specific needs.

Forest use has many gendered and generational dimensions. For example, men are more likely to log timber for commercial purposes, while women typically — though not always — gather forest products for food, fuel and fodder. These differentiated roles

characterise many of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including agriculture. Small-scale and subsistence farmers tend to be women and young people; large-scale agriculture is male dominated, with women working as employees and paid labourers.

And it is not just in the forests themselves that gender- and generation-differentiated roles are evident. An objective assessment of the strategic actions needed to implement REDD+ requires an analysis of the different roles that men and women, old and young, play along the whole value chain of key commodities and services — from cultivation to production to processing to retail and marketing.

For example, when it comes to biomass energy, it is largely men that fell trees for charcoal; and it is men that tend to perform the highly lucrative intermediary function of transporting and bulk selling. By contrast, women usually act as small-scale retailers, earning low profit margins and often struggling to make ends meet. At the end of the chain, women are key consumers because they tend to be responsible for cooking (see Figure).

Understanding the varying roles played by men and women throughout the value chain not only enables a more accurate definition of the problem — who is driving deforestation, where and how — but also helps identify potential solutions and allows interventions to be tailored to deliver ‘the right REDD+ to the right target group’.

In the case of biomass energy, value chain analysis suggests that a gender-sensitive REDD+ scheme might include not only efficient timber harvesting, promotion of plantations for biomass energy, and ultimately rural electrification powered by renewable sources, but also the availability and distribution of efficient cooking stoves. This would tackle drivers of deforestation and degradation from both the supply and demand sides.

REDD+ planners can also learn from forest-based value chains elsewhere, especially where women have more unusual and empowering roles. In some areas of southern and West Africa, for instance, women use non-timber forest products to produce high-value goods such as shea butter for the cosmetic and natural health industries. These may provide models to inform REDD+.

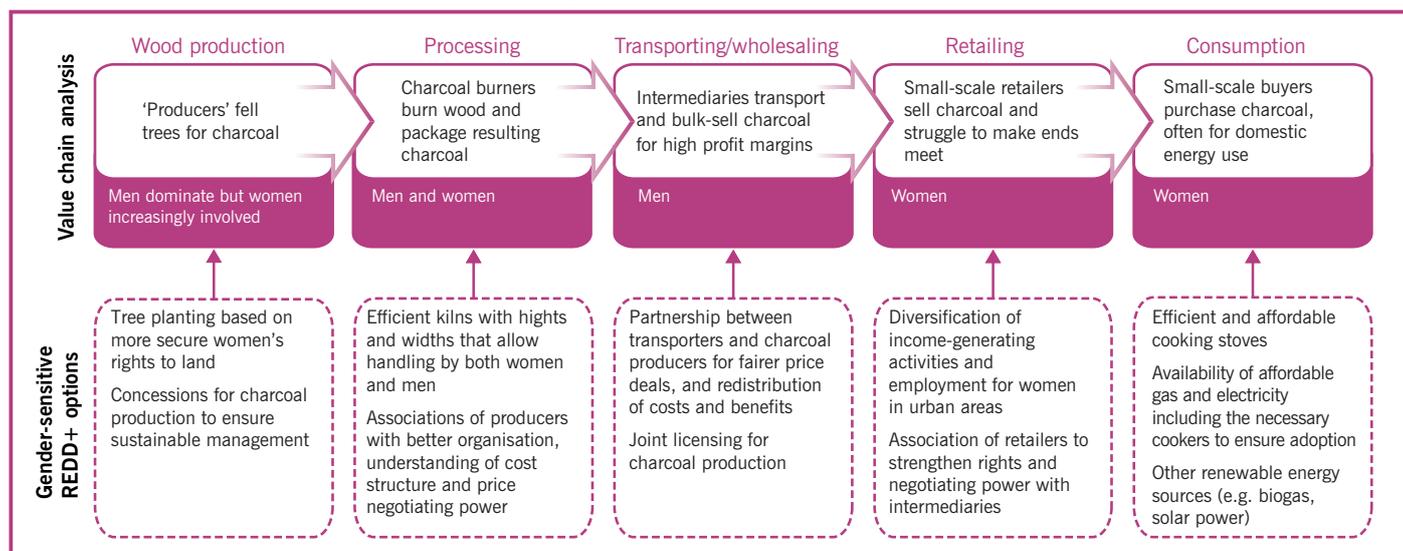
Some countries are already using value chain analysis to understand gender in the context of REDD. In Mozambique, for example, the MICAIA Foundation — an NGO in charge of REDD+ piloting in the central province of Manica — conducted a baseline survey that includes gender-specific information on the drivers of deforestation and degradation. This provides a sound basis for knowing who does what and will help shape a set of activities that can both enhance production efficiency and reduce emissions.

### Shaping consumption

One of the main indirect causes of deforestation is population growth, and the rising demand for shelter, food, fuel and fibre that it brings. REDD+ will require a change in the behaviours of both the producing and consuming populations. That means it will need the support of both men and women, for both sexes play a role in determining land use and consumption patterns.

For example, in Africa the socio-cultural and political environment often defines the extent to which men or women take decisions about reproductive health. Women with decision-making powers — often influenced by their ownership of economic assets — can have a large influence on population growth and the domestic activities that shape the demand for goods and services. Their informed involvement in designing, implementing and monitoring REDD+ could change consumption patterns to significantly help mitigate climate change.

Figure. Gender-sensitive REDD+ options in the biomass energy value chain



In general, however, there is a paucity of sex-disaggregated data in Africa and value chain analysis is yet to be included in planning REDD+. As such, policymakers, programme staff and others lack the information they need to take evidence-based decisions that address gender inequity and direct resources effectively.

## Tackling gendered access to resources

Both men and women can help promote sustainable practices in the world's forests. For example, the links between women's daily gathering and their gendered knowledge of the forest could add significant value to activities such as monitoring, land resources management and forest restoration, which are all part of sustainable community forestry.

But women's participation in natural resource management, and in REDD+, is hindered by cultural norms and socioeconomic imbalances. Integrating gender into REDD+ readiness means addressing the entrenched gendered access to and control of resources, knowledge and power.

The enduring low literacy rates among women in Africa is just one of many socioeconomic factors that limit their access to extension services, information on technologies and alternative production practices, credit and markets — all of which limits their ability to ensure activities and behaviour that supports REDD+. If such barriers are not addressed, women may have to take on much heavier workloads to participate in REDD+, as seen in some microcredit programmes.

Similarly, gendered dimensions of property rights and tenure security can undermine women's means for production and livelihood assets, and constrain their economic opportunities. Women's land rights

matter: the 'green belt' movement in Kenya, where women have planted over 40 million trees since 1977, shows the economic and environmental impacts that organised women with access to land can achieve. But the natural capital tenure system in Africa is still male and state dominated. In many places women have little leeway to change land use because often they do not legally own land.

Some states, such as Mozambique, are trying to reform legislation to strengthen the rights of communities and women. But strong traditional tenure systems do not necessarily strengthen equitable access and rights to land and forests for marginalised groups, both male and female — as can be seen in several examples, such as Ghana.

REDD+ readiness processes must consider how strategic interventions will impact these embedded inequities. For example, where tenure is weak, a REDD+ delivery model that increases productivity through sustainable intensification could see women continuously pushed to marginal land. Men will remain in control and strengthen their position through the increased income from selling more agricultural produce, but also from the potential premiums paid for reducing emissions.

## Equal representation and influence

Just as cultural norms define access to resources, so too do they shape participation in decision making. Participation, a term widely used in development spheres, may need revisiting in the context of REDD+. Women are often key users of forest resources — but they are also among the most marginalised community members when it comes to making decisions. If REDD+ readiness is to truly integrate gender, it must afford women equal representation and influence in decision-making arenas at all levels — locally, nationally and internationally.

Giving women a voice in designing, implementing and monitoring national REDD+ programmes would help ensure that interventions match their needs and, in so doing, would secure greater buy-in and more equitable distribution of benefits. Local institutions too, both formal and informal, will need to include men and women — as well as old and young — to allow full participation and influence of decisions and choices.

In some cases, extra care may be needed in monitoring gender integration at these local levels because even if women are present, they may not necessarily be able to freely express their thoughts due to social structures and entrenched asymmetries of power.

## Affirmative action

Without rights and power, women cannot effectively participate in sustainable management of natural resources, and cannot claim a fair share of the benefits from highly productive agricultural land — or high-value forest products and services. They will continue to have limited claims on any financial benefits of reducing emissions.

Experience in payments for environmental services (PES) and community-based natural resources management has already shown that it can be difficult to get monies to poorer community members due to 'elite capture'. In Ghana, for example, the main beneficiaries of the revenue from forests are the paramount chiefs and not the community at large.<sup>2</sup> Even where PES incentives take the shape of shared infrastructure there is a risk that only a small group of the most influential members will benefit.<sup>3</sup>

This means that REDD+ may need to introduce affirmative action — such as women-centred conditional cash transfer programmes — to advance gender equity. A programme in Brazil provides lessons for how to structure REDD+ payments so that women are sure to benefit.

The Bolsa Floresta programme in Amazonas is one of the world's largest REDD+ schemes. Led by the Amazonas Sustainable Foundation (FAS), the scheme

centres on a deliberate choice to make payments for reducing emissions directly to women. Alongside these women-centred payments, the programme also includes investments in education and health services, which promote the active involvement of women. The programme's approach is sowing the seeds for long-term behavioural change that protects both local forests and local livelihoods. It is one that can be replicated elsewhere to achieve gender-sensitive REDD+.

In Africa, other inclusive payment structures are under testing. REDD+ pilot schemes in the Tanzanian communities of Kilosa and Lindi are delivering payments for forest conservation to men, women and children. The Tanzania Forest Conservation Group is monitoring how to balance these rewards appropriately between genders and generations. Researchers are still trying to understand how household decision making and bargaining power is affected when men, women or children receive compensation.

## The future is now

Getting ready for REDD+ is already a complex and fast-evolving field — one in which countries have little time to deal with rapid changes. Faced with limited readiness resources, it is even more important that countries learn from the past and invest in innovative ways to tackle deforestation and degradation. Integrating gender and generation into the process using value chain analysis may appear both difficult and costly. But it is a critical step to ensuring that REDD+ benefits men and women, old and young alike and it is the surest way of achieving the fair and sustainable 'future we want' and need.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> FAO. 2011. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011*. UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome. ■ <sup>2</sup> UNDP. 2007. *The Global Drylands Imperative: Devolving Resource Rights and the MDGs in Africa*. UN Development Programme, New York. ■ <sup>3</sup> Mohammed, E.Y. 2011. *Pro-poor benefit distribution in REDD+: Who gets what and why does it matter?* IIED, London.

## Further reading

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