



# Mainstreaming Gender into Ghana's REDD+ Process

Successes and Challenges of the Journey

June 2016



## Introduction

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation plus conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), is a framework that seeks to provide financial incentives for developing countries to conserve and sustainably manage their forests. The ultimate aim of REDD+ is to encourage sustainable forest management for the benefit of the people who depend on it. Being an international mechanism, which is part of the current United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the REDD+ process provides many opportunities to address various challenges faced in the forestry sector. However, in order for REDD+ to become a successful mechanism to combat climate change, and in order for it to provide optimal co-benefits, gender-responsive standards and safeguards that incorporate gender equality and women's rights must be at the core of REDD+ policies, programmes, and measures.

Ghana has been undertaking REDD+ readiness activities since July 2008, when the nation's REDD+ Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) was approved by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). A \$200,000 FCPF Preparation Grant Agreement for REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) was signed on 1 April 2009 and disbursed by November 2009. The FCPF Readiness Grant Agreement was signed in October 2011 and the formal launch of the REDD+ Readiness Programme took place

on 26 April 2012 in Accra. In developing the various activities under the REDD+ mechanism, there have been efforts to ensure a gender-sensitive REDD+ process. Indeed, Ghana was one of the first FCPF countries to develop a Gender and REDD+ Roadmap and Action Plan for streamlining gender mainstreaming efforts and to establish a gender sub-working group as part of its national REDD+ architecture.

This brochure highlights the processes, approaches and tools, successes and challenges of Ghana's journey towards mainstreaming of gender considerations into the national REDD+ process. It provides an avenue for sharing the Ghanaian experience with stakeholders at the local, national and international levels. It also provides information for advocacy on gender issues, and highlights the importance of integrating gender issues and women's participation into policy and decision making at both local, regional and national levels. The brochure targets project and programme implementers, development partners, donors, civil society organizations and other actors in the natural resource management sector and REDD+ space. It was developed through a systematic review of project reports, meeting and workshop reports, policy documents, websites and other sources of information on the initial state of gender integration into Ghana's REDD+ process. It also highlights tools that have been employed to improve the situation, and successes as well as challenges faced in the course of mainstreaming gender into REDD+ in Ghana.

## Why Mainstream Gender Considerations Into The REDD+ Process?

The Forestry sector has historically been a rather male dominated field, with very few women attaining top management positions and actively engaging in decision making. This has resulted in major decisions being taken without adequate consideration for women's perspectives on issues. Men and women utilize different knowledge and resources in the forest to derive different benefits and this must be reflected in the design of projects and programs, with gender considerations being given priority.

Generally, women are both the primary users of forest resources and the main producers of food, through agricultural activities. They also perform important roles in the conservation of natural resources. In addition, women are active in the collection of forest products for various

household and entrepreneurial uses. However, the central role of women as contributors to forest management and conservation has traditionally been unrecognized. Indeed, in many developing countries, women lack access to income-generating forest activities and land tenure rights, resulting in most benefit sharing schemes being largely gender blind.

REDD+ initiatives could pose significant risks and create harmful impacts on women and men at the community level, if gender concerns are not considered and adequately addressed. Women-specific risks include violation of women's rights, increased vulnerability of women, inequitable distribution of benefits, and invisibility of women's role as major stakeholders and

### What is Gender mainstreaming?

It involves integrating a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination.

*Source: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>*

### What are Roadmaps?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Cancun Agreements in 2010 and Durban Outcomes in 2011, called for REDD+ national strategies and systems to provide information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected to integrate 'gender considerations'. The main goal of a Gender and REDD+ Roadmap is to give both men and women equal opportunities to access, to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from various forestry policies, programs and funds. This way, they will be contributing to environmental and social sustainability

*Source: IUCN/WEDO/PDA (2011).*

forest resource managers. Women are also powerful agents of change; they can enhance strategies related to integrated forest management due to their differentiated knowledge, roles and responsibilities. Thus, gender equity and women's empowerment must be at the heart of REDD+ policy design and implementation.

The Forestry Commission (FC) of Ghana, through its National REDD+ Secretariat (NRS), is leading the implementation of REDD+ in Ghana, with the support of a grant from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank. Two main activities have been key in mainstreaming gender into the REDD+ process.

**(1)** With funding from the World Bank, a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) of the REDD+ mechanism in Ghana was undertaken in 2014. The SESA outlined the social and environmental issues on the ground and proposed appropriate mitigation measures that would ensure that stakeholder groups are not disadvantaged during or after REDD+ implementation. The overall objective of the

SESA was to ensure that SESA principles were applied to integrate environmental and social considerations, including gender equality, into Ghana's REDD+ readiness process. This was done in a manner consistent with Ghana's environmental laws and regulations, as well as the World Bank's environmental and social safeguard operational policies. The SESA was carried out to ensure that the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism contributes positively to sustainable forest management, in line with the objectives of Ghana's 2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy.

**(2)** Prior to Ghana undertaking the SESA study, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the FC had already envisaged the need to mainstream gender considerations into the REDD+ process as a means of safeguarding the rights and interests of both men and women, with particular attention to women and children, who are often disadvantaged in such processes. This necessitated the development of a Gender and REDD+ Roadmap, through collaborative efforts between IUCN, the FC and other partners.

## The Process: Developing a Gender and REDD+ Roadmap for Ghana

As stated in the Ghana's National REDD+ Strategy (2015), gender considerations are essential to REDD+ since they have the potential to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation, poverty reduction and climate mitigation efforts. The driving principle of the Road map is to ensure that both men and women are fully recognized

and engaged as REDD+ stakeholders and that they have equal access, use and control of forest resources as well as equitable shares of associated benefits. Hence, the activities outlined in the Road map are targeted at ensuring men and women derive equal opportunities and benefits from the REDD+ process and that overall, gender

considerations are mainstreamed into all natural resources projects and programs. This will help ensure that implementation of Ghana's National REDD strategy is gender responsive and meets international safeguards standards.

In September 2011, with technical support from the IUCN Global Gender Office in Washington DC and funding from Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), IUCN embarked on an initiative to develop roadmaps for mainstreaming gender considerations into REDD+ efforts in Ghana, Uganda, and Cameroon, in collaboration with Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). These gender and REDD+ roadmaps were developed through participatory multi-stakeholder workshops convening national policy makers, women's organizations, gender experts, and other actors. The workshops facilitated trainings on gender and REDD+, a dialogue about country-specific gender issues, and the proposal of actions leading to gender-sensitive national REDD+ processes.

In Ghana, the Gender and REDD+ Roadmap is a product of multi-stakeholder workshops, organised from 5 to 9 September 2011, which brought together women's organisations, gender experts and national level policy makers. The workshops were jointly facilitated by IUCN in collaboration with WEDO, the FC and Participatory Development Associates (PDA), with funding from DANIDA. The workshops, held in Accra, were conducted in two parts. The first three days were devoted to the training

of gender officers from key government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), as well as representatives from traditional authorities/ communities, civil society, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private sector, and gender-based or women organisations working in the environment and forestry sectors. It brought together 41 participants with an objective of enhancing stakeholder awareness and understanding of the following:

- ✓ The ecological functions of forests in relation to the carbon cycle.
- ✓ The state of the forests in the world and in Ghana and an acknowledgement of women's role in the forest sector in Ghana.
- ✓ Climate change and its differentiated impacts on women and men.
- ✓ REDD+ and its relation with climate change.
- ✓ What gender constitutes and identification of gender considerations in REDD+.
- ✓ The REDD+ process in Ghana and identification of women's role/ involvement in relation to REDD+.

The second part was a two-day workshop which brought together 27 policy level stakeholders and gender experts from government and civil society, as well as the media.

The workshop sought to explore gender considerations in REDD+ and to identify possible entry points for mainstreaming these considerations into REDD+ processes in Ghana.

The two workshops allowed participants to improve their knowledge on gender and REDD+, discuss country-specific gender issues related to forest management, and identify entry points for mainstreaming



© Andrea Quesada: Participants at Training Workshop for Development of the Gender and REDD+ Road Map, Accra (Sept 2011)

gender considerations into Ghana's REDD+ process. A key outcome of the workshops was the Gender and REDD+ Roadmap for Ghana "A Roadmap to Mainstream Gender Considerations into Ghana's REDD+ Process"<sup>1</sup>. This document has since provided the much-needed national framework and guidance for coordination and effective mainstreaming of prioritised activities, identified by key stakeholders.

The draft Gender and REDD+ Roadmap was circulated to key stakeholders for inputs, after which it was finalized and

launched by the Chief Director of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) on behalf of the Minister, on 13 November 2012. Present were stakeholders from across the country including representatives from government MDAs; traditional authorities and communities; civil society organisations including NGOs, the private sector, development partners/donors and the media. The Roadmap has been divided into phases to align with how REDD+ processes are being conducted. They are: Phase 1: Readiness and Phase 2: Implementation and Management. Each phase outlines various activities to mainstream gender (Table 1).

<sup>1</sup>"A Roadmap to Mainstream Gender Considerations into Ghana's REDD+ Process". [https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/ghana\\_gender\\_and\\_redd\\_road\\_map\\_press\\_copy\\_final.pdf](https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/ghana_gender_and_redd_road_map_press_copy_final.pdf)

**Table 1: Actions outlined in the Gender and REDD+ Roadmap**

Phase	Action
<p><b>Phase 1</b> Readiness phase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Recognise women as key forest stakeholders and harness the roles of both men and women;</li> <li>❖ Establish and support organisations and networks to work on gender and forest related issues;</li> <li>❖ Empower and build the capacity of women and men on gender issues;</li> <li>❖ Ensure the inclusive and meaningful consultation and effective participation of women in negotiations and in the design and implementation of demonstration activities (pilot projects);</li> <li>❖ Support the mainstreaming of gender into policy reforms associated with REDD+;</li> <li>❖ Strongly encourage and promote the collection of sex-disaggregated data throughout the REDD process, and the inclusion of gender analyses for the use of, access to, and control of forest resources;</li> <li>❖ Foster a partnership with the media for effective information sharing of practices that address women’s needs;</li> <li>❖ Develop safeguards to ensure women’s rights to land and natural resource use; and ensure that subsequent changes proposed by the REDD+ projects comply with international safeguards standards;</li> <li>❖ Incorporate grievance mechanisms that establish and support legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with those of men;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 2</b> Implementation and Management Plan of Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enable full and effective consultation and participation of women and men in all stages of the REDD+ process;</li> <li>❖ Provide women and men with equal access to information regarding all aspects of REDD+;</li> <li>❖ Build the capacity of women and men to enable inclusive decision-making and informed consent;</li> <li>❖ Involve women in all monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) activities, and provide the necessary tools and knowledge needed for women to engage meaningfully;</li> <li>❖ Ensure that women have the option to participate in all types of formal and non-formal training and education, in order to increase their technical capacity to engage in MRV activities fully;</li> <li>❖ Ensure the equitable distribution of benefits; paying special attention to traditional practices that entrench inequality and could exclude women from participating in all activities and/or having access to or control of resources;</li> <li>❖ Design and implement gender-sensitive benefit sharing systems that ensure women are provided with fair and appropriate compensation, incentives, benefits and revenues associated with REDD+ projects;</li> <li>❖ Design and implement a gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation system;</li> <li>❖ Create opportunities and capacity building for girls and women to be more actively involved in technical aspects of forest management.</li> </ul>

*Source: Ghana Gender and REDD+ Roadmap (2011)*

## Establishing the National REDD+ Gender Sub-Working Group

One of the key strategies of Ghana's Gender and REDD+ Roadmap was the establishment and training of a multi-stakeholder gender advocacy group to spearhead the gender mainstreaming

process and provide technical support in the review of REDD+ documents and processes to ensure gender responsiveness, as well as capacity building at the grassroots level.



© Forestry Commission: GSWG members and IUCN Staff at the Inauguration, Accra (Mar 2015)

In 2015, Ghana took a bold step in its commitment to mainstream gender considerations into its REDD+ readiness and implementation process by establishing a national REDD+ Gender Sub-Working Group (GSWG), with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the facilitation of the IUCN Global Gender Office. As an initial step, a Terms of Reference was developed to guide the establishment of the gender advocacy group. The GSWG, which includes representatives from different MDAs, traditional authorities, local communities, academia, private sector and non-governmental and civil society organizations, was convened and subsequently trained from 18 - 19 March, 2015 in Accra, on climate change, REDD+ and its status in Ghana, the links between

gender, REDD+ and safeguard issues, and the importance of mainstreaming gender considerations into REDD+. The training was culminated with an official inauguration event on 19 March 2015, to create public awareness about the existence of the GSWG and its mandate to ensure a gender-responsive approach to REDD+ in Ghana.

The FC's Gender Desk Officer was designated as coordinator of the GSWG, a role that involves convening quarterly meetings of the GSWG, serving as the liaison between the NRS and GSWG, and providing progress updates to other related working groups on GSWG activities. Although the scope of the GSWG work is mainly at the national-level, it liaises with relevant decentralized institutions through the NRS.

The establishment of the GSWG has not only provided the driving force for the implementation of the country's Gender and REDD+ Roadmap, but also provided a critical voice for ensuring gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of Ghana's REDD+ architecture. This is being done through advocacy and provision of technical support to the other REDD+ sub-working groups and the broader National REDD+ Working Group (NRWG) in the development and subsequent implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy.

Efforts to mainstream gender into Ghana's REDD+ process, which began in 2011 are still on-going (Figure 1). Since the establishment of the GSWG, the group has reviewed and provided technical inputs into Ghana's draft National REDD+ Strategy and Grievance Redress Mechanism Report as a means of ensuring that the national

REDD+ framework and implementation process is inclusive, pro-poor and gender responsive. The capacity and knowledge of the GSWG about REDD+ issues and process in Ghana has also been enhanced in the process and their mandate and role in the national REDD+ architecture of Ghana strengthened.

To build up on the momentum and foundation laid by these initial actions, the Ghana NRS and IUCN, in collaboration with its local implementing partners at its two project landscapes- A-Rocha Ghana (Mole Ecological Landscape) and Codesult Network (Wassa Amenfi Landscape), as well as the GSWG, organised a series of activities at the local or landscape level in order to create awareness about the national REDD+ process, particularly safeguards and gender issues.



Figure 1: Steps for Mainstreaming Gender Considerations into Ghana's REDD+ Process

## Successes Achieved in Mainstreaming Gender Considerations into REDD+

Ghana's commitment to ensuring a gender-sensitive REDD+ process has received recognition and commendation at the national and international levels. For example, the Roadmap served as a guide for other REDD+ processes including the National REDD+ Strategy and SESA, which have built in gender considerations, based on the Roadmap and Action Plan. The GSWG has developed a Gender and REDD+ Action Plan (Table 2) and has engaged in key activities that continue to contribute to the development of Ghana's REDD+ strategy and the REDD process as a whole.

Furthermore, the MLNR has also engaged the services of a gender desk officer who will lead on gender mainstreaming into the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) activities- an opportunity catalyzed from the establishment of the Roadmap. Other successes include:

- ✓ A National REDD+ Gender Sub-Working Group (GSWG) established, trained and functioning as key component of Ghana's National REDD+ Architecture;
- ✓ The capacity of many institutions, including government agencies at national and district levels, civil society groups and organizations, and traditional authorities in regards to gender and REDD+ has been strengthened;
- ✓ Local stakeholders in some communities have been trained to spearhead mainstreaming of gender considerations into the implementation of project activities and district level policies/strategies;
- ✓ Ghana's draft national REDD+ Strategy and the Grievance Redress Mechanism reports have been reviewed by the GSWG and inputs provided to ensure an inclusive, robust and gender responsive national REDD+ framework and process;
- ✓ The capacity and knowledge of the GSWG about REDD+ issues and the REDD+ process in Ghana was enhanced and their mandate/ role strengthened in the national REDD architecture of Ghana.

*Table 2: Ghana's Gender and REDD+ Action Plan for 2015 and Early 2016*

Tasks	Timelines
Support the establishment of a gender and forest task force (GSWG) in Ghana;	February to March 2015
Build capacity of the GSWG, women and women's organizations, and implementing partner organizations (IPOs) on gender and REDD+ issues;	February to August 2015
Support women's participation in REDD+ demonstration activities (pilot projects) (as part of Piloting and Testing);	March to September 2015
Provide best practices and guidance on gender-sensitive benefit sharing mechanisms at national level;	August to October 2015
Provide technical support on legal frameworks, including on women's rights, gender equality and REDD+ Safeguards and Grievance mechanisms;	August to November 2015
Monitor and communicate importance for, and results of, gender-inclusion in REDD+;	November 2015
Engage women in MRV through appropriate methods (participatory MRV).	January to December 2016

## Challenges in Mainstreaming Gender Considerations into REDD+

The process of mainstreaming gender into Ghana's REDD+ process has not been without challenges. A key challenge has been the lack of funds to comprehensively implement the Roadmap and Action Plan. Other challenges include:

- ✓ Weak institutional structures for ensuring gender equality and equity within policy, and for enforcing mandates on gender.
- ✓ Misconceptions about gender advocacy (e.g. it may undermine men's positions or power).
- ✓ Inadequate knowledge and capacity, preventing women from participating meaningfully in decision making

at all levels and ensuring that their interests are taken into account.

- ✓ Gender disparities in land and resource access due to socio-cultural norms and practices. Inequalities in the rules for inheritance of resource by men and women.

## Policy Recommendations

Activities to mainstream gender into the REDD+ process in Ghana have produced innovative actions to empower women and promote gender equality in Ghana's REDD+ programme. The mainstreaming process has highlighted a number of issues to be addressed by policy makers, practitioners/

implementers and other stakeholders. The process has shown that the dynamics of existing customary and statutory laws within the context of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and custody and land tenure have significant implications on access, use and control of resources by women and men and hence implications for natural resource based interventions such as REDD+. Creativity is needed in working around barriers posed by traditional gender roles/customs that may be impeding women's participation.

In order for gender discussions to move from perceived issues and background information to real and concrete actions on the ground, building the capacity of all stakeholders is key. Given the existing gaps and challenges in promoting gender equality in all spheres of life in Ghana, specific ways in which gender can be mainstreamed with reference to climate change and REDD+ must be highlighted. Policy recommendations include:

- ◆ Empowerment and resourcing of gender “champions” or advocates to effectively mobilise and lead gender actions at the local and national level;
- ◆ Collection of sex-disaggregated data on access to and control over natural resources and developing gender-sensitive indicators and criteria for monitoring and evaluating programmes;
- ◆ Incorporating a gender perspective when designing and implementing REDD+ projects especially at the local level;

- ◆ Establishing various strategies to continuously empower women, as well as sensitise men, on the importance/benefits of harnessing the contribution of women;
- ◆ Establishing gender-sensitive livelihoods schemes to support vulnerable groups, especially those adversely impacted by climate change;
- ◆ Ensuring that specific funding is secured and allocated to support gender-based climate change programmes, including REDD+;
- ◆ Allocation of resources (financial and human) specifically for gender research;
- ◆ Strengthening the capacity of women and women's groups to participate in the budgeting process of MMDAs, including the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection Gender Responsive Budget Monitoring Unit;
- ◆ Engaging the private sector to contribute financially towards women's access to resources through the provision of loans and other financial services;
- ◆ Up scaling existing initiatives to enhance women's access to and control over natural resources;
- ◆ Initiating new programmes to enhance and safeguard equitable access to and control over natural resources such as land;

- ◇ Identifying potential risks of REDD+ implementation on women right's and livelihoods (with particular attention to land and natural resource use) and ensuring women and men are fully educated on these risks;
- ◇ Developing creative approaches to include women fully in decision-making, such as meeting women separately from men, choosing meeting times and approaches
- ◇ chosen with women's gender/ household roles in mind;
- ◇ Involving informal justice systems in dispute resolution and using Queen mothers, women traditional leaders and chiefs as agents of change and arbitrators;
- ◇ Foster a dialogue with traditional authorities/ local government institutions on women's rights issues pertinent to the forest sector.

## Further Reading

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