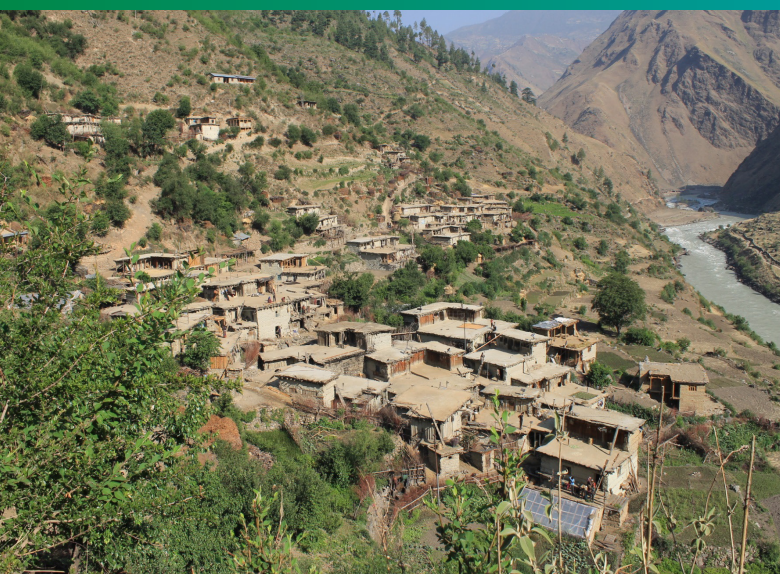


GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTAIN AREAS OF ASIA

Exploring the role of gender equality in addressing climate change,
biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security

MAIN REPORT



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Cover Page Photo Caption:

The remote/rural mountain landscapes of the study area (Chhipra village, Humla district, Karnali Province, Nepal – top left; Stone village, Lijiang city, Yunnan Province, China – top right; Mountain terrace agriculture landscape, Bhutan – bottom left; Members of Boon Rueang Community Forest, Chiang Rai, Northern Thailand – bottom middle; and Members of Trapeang Tortim Community Forest, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia – bottom right)

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Empowering women and promoting gender equality is critical in addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, food systems, and overall, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This study was a desk review of how gender equality has been integrated in policies, institutions and interventions in selected mountain areas in Asia, to share the knowledge more widely and to generate more effective discourse on this critical issue.

This study was possible due to the financial support provided by UNEP-IEMP/IGSNRR-CAS through the 'Strategic Priority Research Program of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (XDA20010303)' and the Science-Based Advisory Program of the Alliance of International Science Organizations (Grant No. ANSO-SBA-2020-02). The study was executed by Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD) – an organization in Nepal, committed to diversifying choices and securing livelihoods of smallholder farmers through innovative approaches to research and development in agriculture, biodiversity/ecosystem, climate change and natural resources.

The study was conducted through desk-based stocktaking, and virtual interviews and interactive discussions and consultations with relevant individuals/experts and institutions in the study countries.

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We hope that the findings, lessons learnt and recommendations of the review will be of benefit to many institutions and expert individuals across Asia and beyond.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. THE CONTEXT: GENDER, MOUNTAINS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Mountains are an important landscape globally - covering a little over a fifth of the land surface of the Earth, home to nearly 15 percent of the world population, hosting about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots, and home to rich socio-cultural diversity. Mountains provide 60-80 percent of all freshwater resources for the planet; the 'Roof of the World' - the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau - alone stores the most ice after the polar regions, and are the source of waters in rivers which help sustain life for over 1.3 billion people downstream (WMF, 2018). Livelihood for mountain communities is based on the natural capital i.e., biodiversity and land-based ecosystems including agriculture, forests and non-timber forest products. Thus, a healthy biodiversity and well-functioning ecosystem goods and services are a crucial element of sustainable livelihoods of mountain communities. The existence and health of mountain ecosystems and communities is therefore critical for the existence of humanity across the globe.

Empowering women and promoting gender equality is critical in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is at the core of efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, improve education and health, combat climate change, and address environmental problems and other goals. Worldwide women continue to be the major stewards of natural resource base, especially biodiversity and common property resources, and they have a major role in restoring ecosystem goods and services. Yet, they have very limited ownership and control over these resources, and thus suffer disproportionately from realizing the benefits. Women also play a leading role in food security, income and household resources but the outcomes of agricultural investments, among others, for women and men differ in rural areas where gender inequalities are deeply entrenched and persistent. At the same time,

climate change and environmental degradation have disproportionate impacts on women's livelihoods, health, food and nutrition security, access to water and energy, as well as coping capabilities (Goodrich, Mehta, & Bista, 2017). All of this poses major challenges to women's livelihoods and household food security.

Globalization, climate change, land degradation and other drivers of change are creating new challenges, dilemmas and opportunities for mountain women and men. Mountain communities are experiencing rapid depletion of the natural resource base resulting in loss in agriculture production, biodiversity and ecosystems. In the Asian sub-continent, countries are already facing water shortages and extreme weather, and have to increasingly contend with mass unemployment, hunger and disease. The implications of climate change are far and wide, not only in the areas of mountain economy and livelihoods, but also on the disruption of ecosystem services, and survival of the downstream population. The climate and other socio-economic changes may also have opened up new avenues for building resilience and sustainable livelihoods, which are yet to be explored and act upon.

This study aims to review how gender equality has been integrated in policies, institutions and interventions, to address multiple SDGs, particularly those related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security, in selected mountain areas of Asia.

Gender Responsive SDGs in the Context of Mountains

Out of the 17 goals set within the Agenda 2030, almost half of the SDGs (# 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 15 16 and 17) have specific targets that are directly relevant for this study, though there are interconnections among many of the targets. These targets recognize the importance of mountain ecosystems, biodiversity and building resilience in mountain communities for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Across the global SDG monitoring framework there are 54 gender-specific indicators that have been included (UN Women, 2018). Only six out of the 17 SDG goals are gender sensitive (SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 16); five goals are gender sparse (SDG 2, 19, 11, 13 and 17) and the remaining six are gender blind (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 15) (Sijapati-Basnett, 2018). Monitoring progress disaggregated by gender is difficult due to the insufficient integration of a gender perspective across all SDGs, gaps in gender data, quality concerns, and lack of trend data. The SDG Goal 5 specifically aims at gender equality and empowerment of women, while the other goals recognize women as key contributors and therefore considers gender as a cross-cutting and guiding principle in the implementation of SDGs. Yet, how gender equality, especially empowering women and girls, contribute towards responding to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security – key areas for this study – remain overall poorly understood and acknowledged (Molden, Verma, & Sharma, 2014; Goodrich, Mehta, & Bista, 2017).

Food security, biodiversity and ecosystems feature prominently across many of the SDGs and associated targets (CBD, 2016). But women's stake in forests (SDG 15) and in fisheries (SDG 14) receive no mention in the SDGs; there is also no mention of women farmers in relation to climate change (SDG 13). Neither SDG 13 or 14 mention gender equality in access, thus missing key synergies between gender equality, conservation and food security (Agarwal, 2018).

It is clear that systemic and contextual gender factors such as women's education, health, skills, mobility, income, unpaid care work and gender-based violence is likely to affect the effectiveness of the SDGs implementation and outcomes (UN Women, n.d.). Thus, SDG 5 needs to be an "anchor" to be taken in conjunction with other SDGs, since there are potentials and limitations to the targets within this goal. Targets related to access to land and property, and access to natural resources, are critical since they help enhance productivity and give women more decision-making power. It also improves intra-household nutritional distribution since land ownership can increase women's bargaining power (Agarwal, 2018). Access to natural

resources such as fisheries and forests increases sources of nutritional diversity for women as they are also the main producers of small-scale fisheries. Gender equalities in asset ownership and increased access, for example, will also have positive effects on intra household food distribution, better child survival, nutrition and health. Thus SDG 5 (gender equality) needs to be teamed up with SDGs 1 and 2 (poverty and hunger).

These conditions will also apply to efforts towards climate change mitigation and adaptation (SDG 13), and restoring ecosystems and halting biodiversity loss (SDG 15). With climate change, food outputs are expected to lag; women will be expected to bear the burden of adaptation, shift to less labor intensive but less bio-diverse and nutritional crops, and bear the burden of increase in production and processing time due to changes in temperatures. Despite successive yet often under-resourced gender 'mainstreaming' efforts over time in policies and programmes, women in general, and mountain women in particular have not always had equitable access to development resources and opportunities. As a result, their potential contribution as an active agent in meeting the SDGs is not yet realized. All of these factors make it imperative for the SDG 5 to create synergies with other SDGs to increase gender equality and impact.

In the spirit of the principle of 'Leave No One Behind', it is critical to address gender-based and other key identity-based forms of exclusion in the implementation of the SDGs. The groups that are most likely to be 'left behind' are those that face "intersecting inequalities" – those whose economic disadvantages intersect with socially and culturally defined identities, locational disadvantages and lack of political representation (Kabeer 2010; Arauco et al. 2014). Reversing centuries of exclusion and discrimination requires sustained policy efforts as well as changes in social values and norms (ibid). Thus, the intersection of gender with all other markers of difference – class, caste/ethnicity, disabilities, location, and political participation – requires using a gendered lens in all analytical frameworks (Pradhan & Gurung, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far reaching and devastating impacts on individuals, families, communities and countries. The impact is exacerbated for women and girls across every sphere, notably as reduced food security, income and savings due to loss of jobs; reduced access to reproductive health services due to reallocation of resources and priorities; increased unpaid care work due to the closure of schools and working spaces; and increased gender-based violence (United Nations, 2020). Many of the socio-economic and psychological impacts are likely to have medium to long term consequences. Studies have also shown how the pandemic has negatively impacted the SDG achievements due to factors linked directly to the pandemic or the measures taken to control them (Pradhan, et al., 2021; UNDESA, 2021). Care needs to be taken in understanding the long-term impact of the pandemic especially on vulnerable populations and how the conservation and sustainable management of natural resource can provide much needed support to such groups.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES, STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

The overall objective of this study is to: *Review and analyze the role of gender equality in addressing multiple SDGs, particularly climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food security in selected mountain areas in Asia.*

Specifically, the study aims to: (i) Identify and analyze existing policies, institutional mechanisms and, regional and country specific initiatives, partners/stakeholders, that address and integrate gender equality within the areas of climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food security; (ii) Identify gender-friendly strategies, tools, and technologies that countries have adopted, to promote sustainable development in the mountain areas of Asia; and (iii) Provide recommendations to strengthen gender equality and women's participation in national and regional initiatives that are related to agriculture, biodiversity, ecosystem, and climate change policies, plans and interventions.

The study was led by Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development, a pioneering research and development non-governmental agency in Nepal, that has over 25 years of experience in designing and implementing research and development programmes in agriculture, climate change, ecosystem, biodiversity and livelihoods in Nepal and other South Asian countries. The study was commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme–International Ecosystem Management Partnership through the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Study Areas

This study covers five selected mountain countries in Asia namely, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal, and Thailand. All these case countries are being impacted by climate change with implications for sustainable development and livelihoods of its people. The study also presents an overview of selected regional programs and initiatives that are taking place in the region.

All of the countries selected have mountain terrains that have valuable and diverse ecosystems, flora fauna biodiversity, and rich socio-cultural diversity. Yet they have terrains that are also marked by marginality, inaccessibility, vulnerability and fragile landscape that not only affect their immediate vicinity but can have tremendous impact on low lying regions affecting billions of people. They are home to a large majority of indigenous/tribal and rural populations, where traditionally women have been key resource managers. Yet these countries have also been identified as some of the most vulnerable in terms of the impacts of climate change as well as non-climate stressors; inadequate physical infrastructure, early warning systems and low capacity of farmers to adapt to the adverse effect of climate change exacerbate the risks associated with changing weather patterns in these countries, with huge repercussions to the rest of the region.

The Study Methodology

The study is primarily a desk review and stock-taking of the key elements to be assessed and documented. It also conducted some virtual

interactions with key informants in some of the study countries. It is descriptive and qualitative in nature with country cases presenting the experiences from the “field”. The primary Study Team was based in Nepal, while international experts from the four case countries were based in their home grounds.

The desk review of policies, institutions and interventions within the study sectors - climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security – was supported by a combination of two specific gender mainstreaming guidelines to analyze the information, namely - the Gender Audit Score Card (Moser, 2005) and the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist in the SDGs (CAAF, 2017).

3. GENDER RESPONSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTAINS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The study uses an integration of two key conceptual frameworks: (i) Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods: a nexus approach to address sustainable development; and (ii) Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment Framework (World Bank & DFID, 2006) to identify domains of interventions for a holistic approach of gender equality.

The Climate, Ecosystem, and Livelihoods (CEL) Framework is based on two fundamental premises: (i) the relationships among climate change, ecosystems and livelihoods are multifaceted, interdependent and interactive (Zhang, Liu, & Fu, 2018; Rana, et al., 2020); and (ii) solutions to the spiral of climate change impact, ecosystem degradation and on-going poverty depends upon how best one can address these issues in a systematic and synchronized manner (ibid). Hence, the primary priority of the work is the nexus of climate change, ecosystem services and livelihoods – i.e., a synergy of ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods in a changing climate. The secondary priority involves paired interactions between climate change and ecosystem services, climate change and sustainable livelihoods, and ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods. The SDGs targeted programmes are expected to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation and

enhance interdisciplinary research that brings together natural science, economics and social science (ibid), and to help address the poverty and environmental problems of low-income countries while also assisting in achieving their commitment for the SDGs and climate targets.

The original CEL Framework has been adapted in this study to integrate key elements to ensure the analysis and integration of gender equality within the framework. While there are several different frameworks that support the integration of gender equality within policies, and programs, and at an individual and household levels, the study team uses the Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment Framework and integrates key elements of this within the CEL Framework to support the gender-based review of the SDGs related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security.

The Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment (GSEA) framework examines traditional hierarchies that continue to structure access to political influence, and economic opportunities. It presents three *domains of change* at the core, which are inter-connected where changes (by the state, civil society and development organizations) can help improve the well-being of women, the poor and excluded groups by: (i) enhancing access to livelihood assets and services and improve livelihood security of women; (ii) building the ability to exercise voice, influence and agency, as well as the capability of mountain men and women to claim their entitlements, control resources and in decision-making; and (iii) having a say in framing “the rules of the game” or influencing policies that mediate and regulate people's participation in the life of the state and larger society as well as their access to livelihood opportunities and political influence. Changes in these domains has the potential to transform power relations, modify the institutional barriers, and increase the capacity of women and other marginalized groups (the poor, caste and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, people located in geographically remote areas) to exercise their rights, equalize access to opportunities, and improve their life conditions (World Bank & DFID, 2006).

Policies, institutions and programmes need to establish a fair balance in these three domains, as well as in terms of capacity, knowledge, policy and technologies. Additionally, it is important that a horizontal and vertical coherence is achieved at all stages of programme cycle management. Thus, at each stage of the interlinked cycle within the “Gender Responsive CEL Framework” the following elements are envisioned: (i) identifying barriers and opportunities for gender integration; (ii) analysis of policies, strategies guidelines and plans from a gender responsive perspective; (iii) investigating institutions and investments in relation to human resources, capacities and budgets; (iv) understanding the systems for monitoring, evaluation, state of data, learning and feedback; and (v) examining interventions – the gender responsive tools, methods, technology, and knowledge that exist and have been applied successfully.

Gender Integration in all Spheres of the Climate, Ecosystem and Livelihoods Intersections:

To a large extent, there has been a growing understanding of the differential gender roles, responsibilities, knowledge and practices of men and women at the intersection of all three spheres of CEL. The structural barriers, institutional constraints and gender norms and values are what negatively affect women’s access to and control over resources, and their ability to engage meaningfully in the policy formulation processes.

Women’s considerable involvement in the agriculture and natural resource management sector highlights the need to address the gender gap in terms of access to resources, productivity, and vulnerability in the sector, especially so in the wake of climate change and increased feminization of agriculture (as is the case in Nepal). Competing gender norms simultaneously enable and constrain women’s social practices; with growing out-migration of men, women’s decision-making on farming matters is increasing but they are still discouraged to engage in markets and public spheres (Holmelin, 2019). In most cases caste, ethnicity, class, and age influence women’s ability to negotiate and alter local gender roles. On top of this the impact of climate change on biodiversity, ecosystems as well as agriculture,

is already known to have a detrimental impact on women from poor, small land holding households in rural areas and more so in mountain communities, leading to growing food insecurity. Thus, a better understanding of how countries are addressing the gender factor within their sectoral policies, how they are developing strategies for coherence between the sectors, how institutional mechanisms are becoming more conducive to address the critical multisectoral issues, and how programs are supporting the development of approaches, tools and technologies to address gender inequalities and transform gender relations, will make a valuable contribution.

4. REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

The study conducted a brief review of selected regional initiatives in the Asia region. This region has a number of regional forums which bring together different countries for mutually reinforcing aims through cooperation and collaboration, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. There are also a number of programs/projects that are being implemented in the region spanning two or more countries related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security. A brief review of around 16 different initiatives was done; many of the projects treated gender equality as a crosscutting issue and only few had mountain **specificities**. Some key issues from the review are as follows:

- ***Review of policies and mainstreaming gender equality in policies and programs*** within the countries where the projects were being implemented was a key area of support in a number of different projects such as CARE for South Asia and others. Capacity Building for Women’s Leadership in Farmer Producer Organizations in Asia and the Pacific Region, attempted to assist the performance and impact of IFAD projects in Lao PDR, Maldives and Sri Lanka, through the provision of a focus on gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment.

- **Capacity building in gender mainstreaming** was another component aimed at different stakeholders – government agencies, civil society organizations, local communities and farmers specifically, as well as local women's groups and cooperatives. Projects like EmPower and WAVES are focusing on developing the capacity of leadership of women from different areas, and strengthening their voice and leadership to enable women's CSOs to understand, participate and influence climate change and DRR decision-making processes, and promoting women's leadership in governments and civil society for climate action and disaster risk reduction.
- Several projects have focused on supporting the development of **gender sensitive climate-smart agricultural practices**. Projects like Developing Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices in South Asia, and Climate Services for Resilient Development in South Asia, aim at identifying adoptable and gender sensitive climate-smart agriculture practices and farm management. They aim to develop and validate models for agricultural climate services that can be replicated in other regions with similar farming systems and climate risks, while fine-tuning weather/climate advisories for farmers' decision-making.
- Projects like the Himalica Initiative and AdaptHimal of ICIMOD had an explicit focus on **rural mountain livelihoods and empowerment of women** from different areas, and focused on the promotion and development of pro-poor value chains of mountain niche products and services; diversification of livelihood opportunities; and the promotion of ecologically sustainable tourism with direct community involvement and benefit.
- Projects like the HICAP recognized how the different components of the project were **interrelated and needed inter-sectoral actions**, such as how climate change impacts on water resources can have far-reaching implications for both ecosystem services and food security, and thereby increased vulnerability of mountain communities.
- South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative was created as a targeted step to advance the **food and nutrition security**

agenda and promote intersectoral action in South Asian countries. The programme was a catalyst in driving the food and nutrition security agenda among countries in the region and enhancing sensitivity to nutrition issues in the World Bank's various activities in South Asia. The project also worked with the Business, Enterprise and Employment Support Network for Women in South Asia, to improve family income through dairy development, fisheries management and other entrepreneurial endeavors.

- An objective of several regional initiatives is **fostering knowledge sharing and cross learning** across the countries. CARE for South Asia adopts promoting knowledge products on gender responsive climate actions and south-south learning on gender issues for policy dialogue. The EmPower Project also aims to improve regional mechanisms, processes and knowledge on climate change and disaster risk reduction through partnerships. The WAVE project has developed 31 leaders and their networks on gender equality in climate change and forestry actions across seven countries. FLOURIS adopts stimulation of cross learning on forest landscape restoration as a priority actions across the countries.
- Studies have shown that the rise in temperature will be higher in the mountain regions, even if the global temperature rise is limited below 1.5 degrees by the end of the century. Yet attempts at creating **solidarity and action for a global mountain caucus** has not been successful due to a lack of strong leadership on this issue and clarity on which countries would form such a caucus. Advocacy for increased action and investments on this critical issue is a regional agenda of importance to many mountain countries, especially those who are economically poor.

5. COUNTRY CASES

The **Kingdom of Bhutan** is located in the fragile eastern Himalayan ecosystem. The environment of the country is one of the most pristine in South Asia with clean air, water and primeval forest which covers almost 71 percent of the country - contributing to the country's status as "carbon negative". Over 64 percent of

its population depends on subsistence farming for their livelihoods and the key resources (such as hydropower, agriculture) are expected to experience impacts of the changing climatic conditions. Bhutan has made efforts to maintain and conserve the environment at its policy and programmatic fronts in line with the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. Therefore, the holistic and inclusive nature of the policy context of Bhutan could be a “good practice” for other countries in the region. Bhutan has also made efforts to mainstream gender into all levels of plans and program, with recognition of the cross-cutting nature of gender and climate change.

The Constitution of Bhutan makes every citizen a trustee of the natural resources and environment and requires them to contribute towards conservation of biodiversity and prevention of ecological degradation. It also makes the state responsible for elimination of all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women and gender equality. These provisions, together with international commitments provide the basis for its policies, institutions and interventions related to climate change, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and gender equality, all of which are identified as important issues in Bhutan’s 12th Five Year Plan and Gross National Happiness. Major sectoral policies include the National Climate Change Policy (2020), Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2014), National Environment Strategy (2020), National Adaptation Plan for Action (2012), Biodiversity and Action Plan (2014), Agriculture Research Strategy (2018-2028) and intended Nationally Determined Contribution (2015). Most of these policies recognize the disproportionate impact of climate change and biodiversity loss on women; they also recognize the need for technologies, tools and capacity building for women. But these provisions are scattered and not consistent across the sectors, nor backed up with action plans and guidelines. Bhutan’s policies also lack provisions related to women’s participation in decision making.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests is the overarching government institution to implement policies and programmes related to agriculture, forestry and environment. The National Biodiversity Center, National

Environment Commission, and the Commission for Women and Children are the key institutions with oversight on issues related to environment and gender equality. The National Commission for Women and Children has developed gender mainstreaming guidelines for situation analysis, planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring. The National Plan of Action for Gender Equality developed by the Commission has made capacity building and gender disaggregated data mandatory across all sectors. The Mainstreaming Reference Group is established to integrate crosscutting issues such as gender equality, environment and climate change in local government policies, plans and projects. Gender Responsive Planning Budgeting is coordinated by the Ministry of Finance to strengthen gender integration in public finance management and budget allocation systems. Gender Focal Persons are appointed in every sectoral ministry, commissions and agencies from the center to local levels, who are assigned with the responsibility to identify and address gender issues and integrate gender equality in policies, plans and programmes specific to the sector (refer to Chapter 3, Good Practice on Institutions). However, they are constrained due to gaps in capacity and resources. The gender equality action plan also remains in isolation and there is no specific budget and resources allocated for implementation and monitoring of the plan.

Some of the major interventions on food security, climate change and ecosystem restoration are Food Security and Agriculture Productivity Project, Community Forestry Development Programme, and the Living Landscapes and Non-Wood Forest Products Development Programme. Chapter 3 of the main report provides a detail assessment of the state of gender integration in Bhutan’s policies, institutions and interventions.

The **Kingdom of Cambodia** has been categorized as among the ‘very high’ impacted countries in terms of climate change by the World Risk Index (2019). The diverse ecosystems present in Cambodia provide critical services essential to livelihoods, health, and economic development. However, they are threatened by the adverse effects of climate change combined with numerous non-climate stressors (USAID,

2019). Agriculture accounted for 31.15 percent of the employment in Cambodia in 2020, yet inadequate physical infrastructure, early warning systems and low capacity of farmers to adapt to the adverse effect of climate change exacerbate the risks associated with changing weather patterns. The rural poor of the country, the majority of whom are women, are the most vulnerable to climate change impacts due to their high dependence on agriculture and natural resources.

The policy framework for addressing climate change, food security, ecosystem and gender issues in Cambodia mainly consists of Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP 2014-23), Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2018-30), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-20), National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (2019-23) and Nationally Determined Contribution (2020). All agencies and line ministries are mandated to develop their own climate change plans that supplement the CCCSP. These policies have increasingly recognized the importance of addressing gender concerns, yet the gender analysis and policy responses are inadequate. There are limited guidelines and interventions to translate the policies/strategic plans into implementation at the national and sub-national levels.

The National Council for Sustainable Development promotes sustainable development, and monitors and reports on progress against international commitments related to the SDGs, especially biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and climate change. The Ministries of Environment, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery are the two key institutions for policy making, implementation and monitoring climate change, biodiversity and food security issues. A Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework for gender integration across the sectors has been developed, however, there is only a manual developed by the Ministry of Women's Affair for mainstreaming gender into adaptation investments. This Ministry is an overarching institution, mandated to provide policy guidance on gender mainstreaming, and it has developed the National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The Cambodia National Council on Women also

exists as the highest body with oversight for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The Commission has also formed the Gender and Climate Change Committee, and Gender Mainstreaming Action Group to facilitate gender mainstreaming across all the sectors.

Cambodia's non-government sector presents some promising gender mainstreaming approaches in addressing climate change effects and food security. A Women's Resilience Index has been jointly developed and implemented by UNDP and Action Aid International; and the Watershed Environmental Services Tool (WESTool) was developed by a USAID supported Project. Additionally, the 'Gender Roles and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture Guidelines' has been developed and integrated into the Farmer Field School Guidelines. Reducing the Vulnerability of Cambodian Rural Livelihoods through Enhanced Sub-National Climate Change Planning and Execution of Priority Actions Program, Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, and the McGovern-Dole Grant Food for Education Programme are key interventions in the study areas. However, a lack of gender disaggregated data for monitoring the SDGs and lack of mandatory provisions for gender responsive budgeting are major challenges for Cambodia for gender integration in SDGs relevant to the sectors. Chapter 4 provides a detail assessment of gender integration in policies, institutions and interventions in Cambodia.

The **People's Republic of China** is spread over a total land area of about 9.6 million square kilometers, of which mountains, plateaus and hills account for about 67 percent (MEE, 2018). It has a population of 1.44 billion in 2021 (NBS, 2021). China is one of the twelve countries in the world with richest biodiversity. Yet the country is among those that are most severely affected by the adverse impacts of climate change (NDRC, 2015). The average temperatures in China have increased 0.9°–1.5°C in the past century, which is more than the global average. Trends can also be discerned in precipitation, sunshine, wind speed and extreme climate events (MEE, 2018), thus climate change has had, and continues to have, significant impacts on its ecological environment, society and economy.

China has attached great importance to addressing climate change, making it a significant national strategy for its socio-economic development and promoting green and low-carbon development. Since 2006 various policy documents have been prepared such as the National Climate Change Program (2007) and the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (2013). China submitted its INDC in 2015 and has pledged to peak carbon dioxide emissions “by 2030” and achieve carbon neutrality “by 2060”. Since 2015, the country has adopted a series of policies related to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, which provide top-level design and overall arrangements for ecological civilization development. The government updated and launched the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2030. There are at least 28 different plans related to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, and over ten policy streams on agriculture and food systems.

In relation to the protection of women’s rights and interests to achieve gender equality, over the past 20 years, China has promulgated or revised more than 20 laws and regulations related to the protection of women’s rights and interests. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women that came into force in 1992 was the first fundamental law in China designed specifically for realizing gender equality and protecting the rights and interests of women and this system now covers over 100 separate laws and regulations (SCIO, 2019). Three National Program for Women’s Development have been formulated to guide equal development of men and women, advocate for gender equality, and stand for forging an advanced gender culture and realizing women’s rights and interests. There is significant progress for gender integration in food security and poverty alleviation in recent years. Yet, most of national strategies, programmes, and plans on climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration are not gender sensitive and need to further incorporate gender equality related targets and indicators in the future.

China established the Administrative Centre for China’s Agenda 21 to effectively promote the

implementation of Agenda 21. The domestic *inter-agency coordination mechanism* comprised of 43 government departments has been established for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. There are institutional frameworks for addressing climate change on national, local and relevant departmental levels. The National Leading Group on Climate Change, Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction (2007), is a cross-department coordination organization for climate change, energy conservation and emissions reduction. The Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the State Forestry and Grassland Administration, and the National Development and Reform Commission are major government agencies for ecological conservation and environmental protection. The Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Ecosystem Research Network are leading academic and research institutions that also offers services of ecosystem monitoring, research, demonstration, and policy support. The Leading Group for Rural Work of the CPC Central Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and a number of different departments are responsible for areas related to food and agricultural production, rural areas and farmers.

China also has a number of national institutions and working mechanisms for promoting the status of women. The Office for Labor, Youth and Women’s Affairs, established by the National People’s Congress and its Standing Committee takes the protection of women’s rights and interests and promotion of gender equality as an important task. The National Working Committee on Children and Women, established under the State Council, organizes, coordinates, guides, supervises and urges departments concerned in promoting gender equality and women’s development. The state also supports *women’s federations* in representing and safeguarding women’s rights and promoting gender equality. There is a comprehensive *gender statistics system* and improved women’s health, well-being and development indicators and gender-disaggregated indicators, which have been included in the routine statistics and statistical surveys undertaken by relevant departments. However, the integration of gender equality with

other sectors, or women's multidimensional role in the sustainable development agenda, is still much under appreciated.

There are a number of noteworthy projects in China in the sectors of climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food security such as Strengthening Qinghai Women Farmers' Income Security and Resilience in a Changing Climate, Natural Forest Conservation Program, Conversion of Cropland to Forest Program (Grain to Green Program), TEEBAgriFood in China Project and the Farmers' Seed Systems Enhancement Programme. Meanwhile, in China women's organizations have launched a series of public welfare projects to serve the majority of women, focusing on employment rights, social security, resource allocation, and so on. Most of the national programmes have not integrated gender concerns well and need to learn more from the experiences and good practices of the participatory approaches implement by women's organizations and other NGOs. For more details on the context of China please refer to Chapter 5 of the main report.

The **Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal** is highly vulnerable to climate change and has already experienced changes in temperature and precipitation at a faster rate than the global average. Due to its geography, Nepal is exposed to a range of climate risks and water-related hazards triggered by rapid snow- and ice-melt in the mountains and torrential rainfall episodes in the foothills during the monsoon season. Millions of Nepali people are estimated to be at risk from the impacts of climate change including reductions in agricultural production, food insecurity, strained water resources, loss of forests and biodiversity, as well as damaged infrastructure.

Nepal's policy framework to address climate change, food security, ecosystem restoration and gender equality mainly consists of National Climate Change Policy (2019), Environment Policy (2020), Local Adaptation Plan of Action (updated 2019), Forest Policy (2019), Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-35), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014-20), Agrobiodiversity Policy (revised 2014), and the 2nd Nationally Determined Contribution (2020). The SDGs are integrated into the long-

term development plans and sectoral policies. Nepal's policies and strategies increasingly demonstrate gender responsiveness, considering gender equality as a crosscutting theme, and has emphasized the involvement of women in decision-making and benefit sharing mechanisms. Separate gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategies and action plans have been adopted in agriculture, forestry and climate change to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed at all stages of policies, institutions and interventions. Gender Responsive Budgeting has been in place for more than a decade and has attempted to narrow the gap between policy intentions and investments (see Good Practice from Nepal in Chapter 5). However, GESI provisions in the sectoral policies are not well implemented. Often the policies suffer from inadequate coherence, consistency and clarity on the way gender equality is integrated. In most cases, guidelines do not exist or lack coherence and consistency. Nepal's policies also suffer from insufficient provisions and investments in technology, tools and methods to empower women in the sector.

The National Planning Commission is the specialized, apex advisory body of the government which is responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the SDGs. The Ministry of Forest and Environment is the lead institution for policy making and implementation in climate change, environment and biodiversity sectors. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, is the lead on agriculture and livestock production and food security matters. The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens is responsible to coordinate gender equality matters and has developed an overarching Gender Equality Policy (2021) that provides a mandate for all sectoral ministries for gender integration. Additionally, there are gender mainstreaming strategies developed in the climate change, environment and agriculture sectors. The National Women's Commission is the constitutional body with oversight on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The Ministry of Finance has oversight and a coordination role related to 'gender responsive budget' and 'climate budget' across the sectors.

A number of programmes/projects have been successfully implemented in Nepal: Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond the Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihood in Agriculture Sector, Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Program, Home Garden Project, Hariyo Ban Program, Nepal Climate Change Support Programme, Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas. Among them, community forestry, a nationwide programme and one of the major interventions of Hariyo Ban, provides a good example of a holistic programme that not only addresses climate change, biodiversity and food security challenges but also contributes to multiple SDGs targets and empowers communities and women by building capacity and expanding their space to influence wider socio-economic and environmental matters (see Good Practice from Nepal in Chapter 5). Nepal also demonstrates development and use of a number of GESI responsive approaches and climate smart gender responsive tools and equipment that have been found effective to empower women. Refer to Chapter 6 for details of Nepal's review and Table 6.7 for a list of gender responsive approaches, tools and equipment.

The **Kingdom of Thailand**, especially the mountain landscapes in the north, has relatively high forest cover and is a critical area for sustainable development in the region. There are important watersheds of rivers originating from these areas that provide water for irrigation and commercial users during lengthy dry seasons (Masud, Soni, Shrestha, & Tripathi, 2016). But much of the forest areas have been slowly converted to agricultural lands in the recent past due to a host of economic, social, and political drivers. Additionally, this area has been experiencing the impact of climate change due to its fragile agro-ecosystem where a majority of resource-poor and increasingly migrant population reside (Shrestha, Chaweewan, & Arunyawat, 2017).

The Government of Thailand has made different committees, strategic frameworks and master plans for climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security. Major policies are: Climate Change Master Plan (2015-2050), National Adaptation Plan (2018), Agriculture Strategic Plan on

Climate Change (2017-21), Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management (2015-2021), Agriculture and Cooperative Strategy (2018-2037), Strategic Framework for Food Management (2012-16), and an updated Nationally Determined Contributions (2020). The Thai National Food Committee is the main authority to create an effective national food management system, promote the cooperation and integration of budgetary and other resources to ensure food availability during normal times and in emergencies. There are over 30 units and 30 Acts related to food management in Thailand.

The country has a separate Gender Equality Act (2015) that mandates all sectoral ministries to develop policies and mechanisms to advance gender equality. The Women's Development Strategy (2017) developed by the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development provides a framework for the protection of women's economic, social and cultural rights. The 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) requires all government agencies to formulate and adopt the gender equality master plan for the sector. The Thai Constitution (2017) provisioned for gender budgeting following which, the government developed a gender budgeting action plan as well as a separate Act on Gender Equality. Yet sectoral policies in Thailand show limited gender integration; there is a lack of analysis and recognition of gender needs and priorities, as well as a lack of guidelines for gender mainstreaming in the sectors.

Thailand has established a separate National Committee for Sustainable Development to oversee the SDGs implementation. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and the Agriculture and Cooperatives Planning Boards are the main institutions responsible for formulation of policies, strategies and to facilitate agriculture and food security related interventions. The National Committee on Conservation and Utilization of Biodiversity oversees and coordinates biodiversity conservation related initiatives. The National Committee on Climate Change is the apex body responsible for defining climate policies, institutions and related interventions. The National Commission on Women's Affairs

and Family Development coordinates implementation of women's development plans across all agencies. Chief Gender Executive Officers and Gender Focal Persons are instituted in all ministries/departments to integrate gender perspectives in policies, projects and programmes in the sector.

Key interventions in the study sectors in Thailand include the Government's Extension Project for Home Economics for Food Security in Household and Community, Voices for Mekong Forests Project, Risk-Based National Adaptation Plan Project, the Climate Justice Program, and the Forestry and Climate Change Program. These projects and programmes do not have explicit focus on gender equality in objectives, outcomes and methods, though some have developed and used gender sensitive approaches. For example, the Climate Justice Program has used the global south feminist perspectives to critically analyze public participation and its intersectionality for climate action related negotiation and dialogues. The programme conducts Feminist Participatory Action Research with grassroots women's organizations and their communities to engage them in developing deeper understanding of the problems, and enhance documentation, advocacy and campaigning skills, and develop leadership. Refer to Chapter 7 for a detail analysis of gender integration in policies, institutions and programs in Thailand.

6. OVERALL FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Findings and Lessons from the Policy Context of the Region

All the five countries studied, are at different stages in their attempt to integrate gender equality in sectoral policies related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security. There are different approaches being adopted, with varying outcomes. There is increasing recognition of the importance of addressing gender concerns, and demonstrating gender responsiveness. They also recognize the disproportionate impact of climate change and biodiversity loss on women, and treat them as one of the vulnerable groups. In most cases gender equality is considered as

a crosscutting theme, but the sectoral policies have an inadequate level of gender analysis and policy response. The review uncovered a number of common issues in the region, and has drawn out lessons learnt and challenges that remain to be addressed.

i. **Policies are in place but there are limited guidelines, resource mobilization and internalization.**

There is an increasing trend of considering gender equality as a cross-cutting theme or guiding principle or approach in policies and strategies. But only few policy provisions have been backed up by sectoral guidelines, plans and budget for gender integration. The few gender provisions that exist in policies are inadequately internalised, funded and implemented. In Bhutan (Chapter 3), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests has carried out many gender-related initiatives through project-tied activities; yet gender integration into plans, programmes and policies has always been a challenge due to lack of proper knowledge and skills (UNWomen/MoF RGB, 2013).

ii. **There is limited recognition of the specificity of mountains.**

Most of the sectoral policies lack an understanding of the mountain specific opportunities and challenges, resulting in only partial attention being paid to mountain issues and lack of interventions that suit mountain contexts.

iii. **Gendered barriers are increasingly recognized but not adequately analyzed.**

The increasing acknowledgement of the important role of women is not backed by a proper gender analysis and understanding of factors that enables and/or prevents women from participating, contributing and benefiting from the policy provisions and interventions. Traditional gender barriers are not recognized and addressed in policies, guidelines and incentive schemes; the intersection of gender with other key markers such as age, class, caste, ethnicity, geographic location, disabilities, etc. have also not been taken into consideration.

iv. **Women's assets are recognized in the light of exacerbated impact.**

There is increasing recognition of the disproportionate impact of climate change, loss of biodiversity and food insecurity on women who are considered as one of the vulnerable groups. Though limited, attempts are made to protect women from vulnerability and minimize the adverse impact; yet there is a complete neglect of women's agency and the role they have been playing in sustainable development as an actor and agent. Women hold vast knowledge, skills and capacity for conservation and sustainable management of natural resources but the assets that women hold need to be valued, protected, enhanced and promoted for replication/adoption at wider scale. The sectoral policies across the region are silent on these important aspects. The domination of vulnerability perspectives in policy making has resulted in the lack of provisions and funding to empower women for more effective engagement and contribution, as change agents, in the different sectors.

v. **Cross-sectoral coherence is necessary in technical and gender matters.**

A common gap across the region is the lack of consistency and horizontal/vertical coherence within and between the sectors. Gender equality is considered as a crosscutting theme, yet equality provisions are treated in isolation. Additionally, the nexus between gender, agriculture, ecosystem, climate change, and livelihood has rarely received policy attention. In all the countries reviewed, agriculture and/or climate change sectors have sectoral gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans that have proper gender analysis and policy response. But these strategies and plans exist in isolation, i.e., they are not funded, not aligned, and not reflected in sectoral plans and budgets for implementation.

vi. **There are limited instances of women's voices in decision-making.**

Climate smart technologies and practices are adopted more successfully when they are appropriate to women's interests,

resources and demands, and this requires participation of women in policy-making processes. Nepal has consistent emphasis on effective participation of women from policy making to planning, implementation and monitoring. In the other countries the sectoral policies lack provisions for women's participation, signalling serious neglect in women's perspectives and voice in decision-making, planning and implementation.

vii. **There is limited investments in women friendly tools and technology.**

Research and technology development have received the least priority in sectoral policies with a complete neglect for gender responsive information, tools, methods and technologies to support women to fully utilise their potential. Countries like Bhutan (Chapter 3) have recognised the need for technologies, tools and methods for women to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, but these provisions are not consistent across the sectors, nor backed up with action plans, guidelines and budget. Thailand (Chapter 7) has made Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) mandatory by the constitution, but the sectoral policies are silent on its operationalization. With the exception of Nepal where GRB is consistently reflected in policies across all sectors (Chapter 5, Good Practice), GRB is neither backed by guidelines nor operationalised in the other countries. This also explains the limited budget and investment in gender equality.

viii. **There is a need for disaggregated data.**

Gender transformation requires attention on understanding who has been impacted and how have the roles, responsibilities and power relations been transformed. This requires data that is disaggregated by sex, and other key intersectional differences – age, caste, ethnicity, race, class, abilities and capabilities, languages, regions, etc. - to ensure that the most marginalized and discriminated also has equal access, voice and are engaged in the decisions that affect their lives. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data, participatory monitoring and evaluation systems need to be in

place. China has a comprehensive *gender statistics system* that tracks improvements in women's health, well-being and development and gender-disaggregated indicators.

ix. **The SDGs are a priority in all the countries.**

The national legal frameworks in all the countries studied have commitments and provisions to advance gender equality especially in the context of the Agenda 2030. But women's agency and contribution to achieve sustainable development, especially in climate change, ecosystem restoration, and food security is poorly understood and is less recognized. This gender neglect is evident in most of the sectoral policies that also has a limited focus and investment on gender friendly information, knowledge, tools, technologies and capacity building. This gap will hamper the achievement of the SDGs.

6.2 Findings on the Institutional Arrangements, Mechanisms and Gender Integration

Institutional Settings: Institutions and institutional mechanisms are necessary to implement the policy directives, monitor and evaluate the outcomes and processes and support the refinement of the policies. 'Institutions' often mean the 'rules of the game' and 'organizations'; but, for gender integration into policies, institutions, and programs, the role of the 'informal institutions' – socio-cultural norms, values, attitudes and practices – have an equal or more important role in ensuring equitable socio-economic development. Some of the key learnings from the review of institutions are presented below.

i. **Planning Commissions, Ministries, Departments and Divisions:**

All countries have adequate numbers of such institutions at the central and other levels of government to formulate policies, make plans, allocate budgets and support the implementation of programmes, in the four sectors – climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security.

ii. **Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs:**

In most of the countries the Planning Commissions are the focal agencies engaged in this responsibility through a number of supportive high-level committees. In Thailand the National Committee for Sustainable Development is the focal agency, while in China it is the Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21.

iii. **Instituting Gender Responsive Governance:**

Cambodia and Nepal have a specific Ministry, while Bhutan and Thailand have a high-level Commission to provide strategic guidance to institutionalize a gender responsive governance system. In Cambodia, at the sub-national levels, there are Women and Children's Consultative Committees which are important actors in the implementation of social policies, dialogue and negotiation. However, they are mainly consultative bodies; they focus on health and education services for women and children, lack decision-making power and have inadequate programme budget.

iv. **Mechanisms for Coordination:**

In Nepal, there are a number of coordinating institutional mechanisms for climate change which also addresses biodiversity and ecosystems, such as the 'GESI, Livelihoods and Governance Thematic Group'. China's *inter-agency coordination mechanism* comprises 43 government departments particularly for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite such close inter-linkages within the four sectors there do not seem to be any inter-sectoral coordination committees or other mechanisms in any of the countries.

v. **Non-Government and Research Agencies:**

In most of the countries there are a number of national and international non-governmental and civil society organizations, and networks, that play an important role in service delivery, building capacity, advocacy for policy formulation and reforms, and advocacy

for gender equality and inclusion of the most marginalized segments of the population. But research agencies in many of the countries are poorly funded and have limited capacity.

Human Resources, Knowledge, Skills and Capacity

i. Gender Focal Points/Persons are Catalysts for Gender Transformation.

Most of the countries have provisions for Gender Focal Persons/Points in sectoral ministries, responsible for gender mainstreaming. But most often they have limited space to participate in policy making, and lack the mandate, skills, resources and authority to perform their tasks. Experiences from Bhutan and Nepal show that the institutionalization of Gender Focal Persons and ensuring accountability still remains a challenge. Thailand is the only country that has Chief Gender Executive Officers - high-ranking officials in all Ministries and Departments to integrate gender perspective into projects and programmes.

ii. Capacity in Gender Integration:

In Cambodia, there is no responsible department for the promotion of gender equality under the leadership of the National Council for Sustainable Development. The capacity of sub-national administrations is also weak; they only have basic ability to identify climate-related challenges, and to propose and implement basic responses. In Nepal too there is an overall lack of qualified, technical staff in relation to knowledge and skills in gender analysis and integration of gender equality into programs especially at the provincial and local levels, even though many line agencies have their own gender equality and social inclusion strategy and guidelines.

iii. Representation of Women in Decision-Making/Bureaucracy:

There are significant gaps in the representation of women and marginalized caste and ethnic groups in the bureaucracy in Nepal, overall, as well as in the four study sectors. Numbers of women in senior level technical positions are very low compared to more junior and administrative positions.

iv. The Deeper Challenges of Informal Institutions:

Informal institutions – the patriarchal system, paternalistic behavior towards women, strict conventions, norms and values – continue to influence attitudes, behaviors and mindsets within the bureaucracy and political institutions. This continues to influence deep-rooted discrimination against women, creating barriers for equal opportunities and safe working environments in most of the countries studied though in some of the countries, these issues are not explicitly discussed.

v. The Allocation, Tracking and Impact of Gender Responsive Budget:

All countries have provisions for Gender Responsive Budgeting. Nepal was relatively ahead, yet the transition to federalism has created challenges in harmonizing the allocation and tracking, and an overall impact evaluation of the appropriate coding and the effectiveness of the budgeting has not been taken up so far. In Bhutan, Cambodia and Thailand gender responsive planning and budgeting takes place to some extent but the tools and processes are not well development. There is limited understanding across government officials, a lack of awareness on how government programmes can have a direct or indirect impact on gender equality, and there are key gaps in the availability of gender-disaggregated data.

6.3 Gender Responsive Strategies, Tools, and Technologies within Programmes/Interventions

The approaches, tools and methods used to integrate gender equality and to reach, benefit and empower women varies across countries and programs. Some interventions have integrated gender equality consistently at all stages while for others, it is not consistent. The key findings and lessons emerging from the review of selected projects in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand, are summarized below within six key themes.

Theme 1: The integration of successful technologies, tools, approaches or models generated by project/programme interventions into government policies, strategies and plans is critical for scaling up and achieving impact at scale.

Theme 2: Hands-on awareness raising and capacity building of key stakeholders, especially local political leaders, with regards to GESI, is key to secure their buy-in for scaling up technologies and approaches and to sustain project outcomes.

Theme 3: Gender sensitive financing for local adaptation is a catalyst. When local community groups, especially women-led natural resource management groups are given seed money, topped up by capacity strengthening support, they are able to leverage significant additional funds to achieve their adaptation goals.

Theme 4: Blending local knowledge and practices, with science and technology that generates tangible benefits to the local communities are most likely to be adopted, sustained and scaled-up.

Theme 5: While promoting technologies, tools and practices, the manner in which technologies are demonstrated, packaged/bundled, communicated and incentive mechanisms are negotiated, can influence adoption and scaling up of technologies.

Theme 6: Targeting women and girls, addressing gender needs and monitoring gender impact of interventions is smooth and effective if GESI approaches are explicitly prioritized in project documents, funding, human resource and operational strategies.

Tools/Methods/Approaches for Integrating Gender Equality Across the Region

A number of strategies, approaches, tools and technology have been identified that were designed and used by different projects in the study countries to ensure integration of gender equality and address the socio-economic burdens of women and other marginalized groups. Some of them are: Gender Responsive Approach, Farmer's

Field School Approach, Environment and Social Management Framework, Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment Tool, Participatory Governance Assessment Tool, Participatory Well-being Ranking Tool, Public Hearing and Public Auditing Tool, Gender, Poverty and Social Exclusion (GPSE) Conceptual and Operational Framework, Vulnerability Assessment Tool, Gender Responsive Budgeting and Auditing Tool, Gross National Happiness Policy Screening Tools, Women's Resilience Index for Cambodia, Watershed Environmental Services Tool, to name a few. Each country chapter provides a list of gender responsive approaches and chapter 8 provides a summary from the region.

Gender Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation

In most countries, gender equality and social inclusion sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks and practices are usually enforced to meet donor requirements. In other cases, some level of analysis is done in the programme documents but is not followed through in the implementation. Monitoring and evaluation are weak, partly due to the lack of clear and specific guidelines and adequate capacity at all levels of staff. Additionally, the lack of an M&E system that allows for the collection, and analysis of disaggregated data is also a big gap in all the countries. There are limited systems, tools, and practices in place to measure changes in gender roles, power relations, meaningful participation of women and marginalized where their voices are heard and acted upon.

There are no **gender sensitive annual performance monitoring systems** in place to assess skills, knowledge and application of gender equality and social inclusion in practice, among government institutions in Nepal. This is true for even within the planning divisions, where the Gender Focal Points are housed and tasked with mainstreaming gender equality, signaling poor accountability measures and systems.

6.4 Recommendations to Strengthen Gender Equality within Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystems Restoration and Food Security for Sustainable Development: The Context of Policies, Institutions and Interventions

i. **Gender integration is necessary in all sectoral policies and strategies, as well as in all stages of the project cycle.**

The practices of separate, sector specific GESI strategies and policies are useful in the short term to highlight its importance, but a separate document can easily remain as an afterthought. With limited resources and technical ability, a separate sector specific GESI strategy or policy is likely to not receive adequate resources that are needed. Therefore, all sector specific policies and strategies need to have integrated principles and applications of gender equality and social inclusion, based on a thorough GESI analysis, and those strategies need to be backed by implementation guidelines and plans.

The ability to mainstream gender equality (and social inclusion) in all programmes/projects start with an in-depth understanding of the structural barriers and constraints in the particular context. Thus, project designs need to start with a gender (or GESI) analysis which will then guide the project implementation, action plans, as well as monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks. Checks and balances need to be put in place to strengthen accountability of gender mainstreaming through the programme/project cycle.

ii. **Allocation and tracking of Gender Responsive Budgets is important for improved impact and accountability.**

Equal distribution of resources and opportunities should be ensured by a gender responsive budget. This is important to mainstream gender dimension into all stages of the budget cycle. It should be considered in planning, approving, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive way.

iii. **Improved understanding and developing capacities for gender integration needs to be backed up by opportunities for action, authority, and resources.**

All policies need to be informed by a proper analysis of women's and men's knowledge, roles, and abilities, as well as the constraints and barriers they face, along with their coping strategies. In most countries the Gender Focal Persons are responsible for mainstreaming gender equality in policies, plans and monitoring; they need to have the necessary capacity, mandate, resources, and authority for policy responses that support in-depth gender analysis, planning, implementation and M&E.

Development partners (donors, I/NGOs, CSOs) are relatively better advanced at gender mainstreaming in programme policies, strategies, human resource (capacity, knowledge and skills), and budgets. Thus, capacity building of government counterparts in identifying the appropriate concepts, tools and methods for instituting and scaling up gender equality measures is critical. Training and capacity building should be conducted over a period of time covering the entire programme/project cycle, with periodic follow up and opportunities for the application of the knowledge and skills, that are backed by some level of authority and financial resources.

iv. **Changing mindsets, recognition and deployment of women's knowledge and capabilities is absolutely necessary.**

The important role that women play in the management of natural resources and in productive and reproductive activities at the household and community levels puts them in a position to make concrete and practical contributions. Women's knowledge and capabilities can and should be deployed at every stage from policy making to implementation and monitoring. It is high time that women are acknowledged and treated as 'actors' and 'agents' – not only as part of a vulnerable group or target recipients/beneficiaries.

v. **Space for women's participation and decision-making needs to be expanded.**

Increased participation of women in policy processes at different levels allows for the integration of their needs and priorities, the removal of barriers and constraints, and identification of opportunities across the planning and execution cycles of policies and projects. Having their voice in these processes will help to incorporate their skills and knowledge, creating mutual benefits and greater contributions across the SDGs.

vi. **There is a need for a nexus approach - sectoral coordination in policies, strategies, guidelines and budget with vertical and horizontal linkages.**

It is imperative that existing policies and strategies for climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food security, need to establish coherence among the institutions, and ensure inter-sectoral consistency since these areas are all closely interlinked. Moreover, sectoral guidelines for gender mainstreaming need to clearly influence the annual plans and budget. There is a need for stronger coherence between policies, strategies, plans and budgets. Establishing inter-sectoral mechanisms will ensure that strategies and plans are aligned, are complementary, do not duplicate resources but rather contribute towards the planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities that are critical. Climate change, biodiversity, ecosystems and food security are highly interlinked; but other sectors are also equally important such as health, education, infrastructure, etc. Hence a culture and practice of inter-sectoral planning, coordination and implementation in lieu of working in sectoral silos is very important.

Problem-driven, systematic planning for each strategy and programme, with clear policy targets and a specific interval of time (e.g., five years) and pathways to achieve them, need to be in place. Phased and regionally-differentiated implementation is essential beginning with pilots and

demonstrations to test out good practices for up-scaling, and at the same time taking into full account the differences among regions so that the practices are customized to local circumstances and thus achieve higher sustainability. It could possibly also be more productive to carry out overall strategic planning at the central government level and detailed planning at the local government level where better integration can be achieved.

vii. **Increased investments in gender responsive information, technologies, tools and methods is critical.**

Women's efficiency and productivity can be increased, if they have access to, and are equipped with information, technologies, tools and methods. Given the increasing feminization of agriculture and time poverty, women are in need of time saving, labor saving technologies. Policies need to acknowledge the gender gap and increase investment and focus on research, development and dissemination of gender responsive information, technologies, tools and methods.

viii. **Policy provisions and actions need to ensure building up the asset base of women.**

Livelihood assets (physical, financial, human, social and environmental) largely determine the extent to which people are affected by and can respond to climate change, degradation of ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and/or loss of food production system. Strengthening the economic empowerment of women and building their adaptive capacities need to incorporate interventions that increase women's productive and reproductive resources, enhance their assets including land, access to credit, entrepreneurial skills/capacities, leadership training and social capital. Interventions and incentive schemes that are implemented at household levels need to ensure that women's assets are built up in the long run for adaptation capacity and improved resilience.

ix. **Mechanisms for accountability in gender responsive performances need to be built and put in place.**

Building measures of accountability for adopting and implementing a GESI sensitive approach – within performance management systems and programme/projects – is highly recommended. Measures for monitoring and accountability need to be built into the performance review system, as well as in policy and programme implementation. As long as qualitative indicators are not included in the monitoring system (personnel and programs), changes in gender roles, relations and power relations cannot be measured and rewarded or punished.

x. **Strengthening GESI integrated monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks and systems for policies, institutions and interventions is imperative.**

A system for monitoring, evaluating and learning about the performance and impact of gender responsive measures in the policies, institutions and programs, is imperative for a transformation in gender relations, reducing discriminatory barriers and structures, and reducing the gender and other inequality gaps. This calls for disaggregated data by sex and other key socio-cultural, economic and geographical categories which address the status and conditions of key excluded groups. Within each country, a clear understanding and agreement on the key set of categories of people to be tracked, will help in creating uniformity across all sectors as well as track changes over time. Policies should provide indicators that requires the collection, analysis and use of gender disaggregated data.

Changes in gender relations need an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural values, norms and practices on how they are influencing changes in power relations and structures; and how policy and programmatic measures are influencing changes in agencies, self-confidence and self-esteem among marginalized groups including women across all groups. This

requires building capacity for qualitative data collection to complement the quantitative data and have a conducive environment to accept and use the data for refining policies and programs. This needs to be complemented with a culture and system for learning – understanding the disaggregated data, looking into it from an intersectional perspective, analyzing it in relation to the local and national context and finally, there needs to be clear provisions for the learnings and results to contribute towards evidence-based policy feedback, annual planning and review processes.

xi. **Tackling the deeper challenges of informal institutional mechanisms is critical.**

Changing informal institutions requires a new socialization process that is linked with socio-cultural values related to gender equality. But a “code of conduct” for GESI sensitive and responsive attitudes, behaviors and practices in all government institutions at all tiers, targeted towards changing discriminatory socio-cultural norms can become an important step. More male gender champions among higher level government officials can also help change mindsets. Thus, strategies for increasing awareness, changing mindsets, and establishing new, more equitable norms, need more investments, and should be backed by accountability measures that reward and punish subsequent behaviors of staff.

xii. **There is a need to prioritize vulnerable but important landscapes.**

Vulnerable geographic locations such as mountainous areas have their own specificities which need to be identified and addressed in policies and programs. Similarly, a landscape approach for policies, strategies and programs can help address the horizontal and/or vertical inter-linkages within the landscape in a coherent manner, with greater impact. Such an approach may also require working beyond political boundaries (e.g., trans-boundary projects/programs) especially where countries have shared ecosystems. This is an area

where more investment by the national governments and development partners are required, as well as more regional cooperation, dialogue and investments can bring in greater returns.

xiii. **Development partners need to continually focus on capacity development in gender equality processes and outcomes.**

Development partners (donors, I/NGOs) are relatively better advanced at gender mainstreaming in both institutional and programme policies, strategies, human resource (capacity, knowledge and skills), and budgets. Thus, capacity building of government counterparts and CSOs, in identifying the appropriate concepts, tools and methods for instituting and scaling up gender equality measures is critical. Training and capacity building should be conducted over a period of time covering the entire program/project cycle, with periodic follow up and check ins, and hands on practice in developing and using appropriate tools, guidelines, and methods.

6.5 Preparedness and Action for a Sustainable and Resilient Post COVID-19 Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic presents some opportunities for opening a window for sustainable transformation necessary for a more resilient and inclusive growth particularly for hard hit, marginalized mountain communities (ICIMOD, 2020; Pradhan, et al., 2021). Some of the considerations for building back better from COVID-19 with particular reference to gender equality may include the following:

- Targeted gender responsive measures are critical for designing post COVID-19 recovery actions that generate tangible benefits to women as well as help them recover from this pandemic and build resilience for other pandemics and/or disasters in future.
- Appropriate policies and guidelines need to guide all stakeholders on preparedness, relief and response after any disaster (natural or others) to build back communities and households. The impact of climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems degradations will have a huge impact on the livelihoods of a majority of the population in the mountain areas of Asia, thus all vulnerable and at-risk communities need to have a consolidated disaster risk management strategy and plan, where a gender and community sensitive approach is fully integrated.
- Additional investments/resource mobilization in programming needs to be allocated by the governments and international aid agencies, ensuring coordination and complementarity between the different sectors. Economic recovery and food and nutrition security needs to receive top priority. Increased government and inter-government investments will be needed particularly for mountains in inclusive and accessible health services and infrastructure, agricultural support, and sustainable and low carbon development (ICIMOD, 2020).

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACFS	Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards	FSN	China's Farmer's Seed Network
ACCA 21	Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21	FYP	Five Year Plan
ACFTU	All-China Federation of Trade Unions	GAQSIQ	General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (until 2018)
ACWF	All-China Women's Federation	GCCC	Gender and Climate Change Committee
ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy	GCCSP	Gender and Climate Change Strategic Plan
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nation	GDI	Gender Development Index
ASHA	Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ASPPC	Agriculture Strategic Plan on Climate Change	GEF	Global Environment Facility
ASPIRE	Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension	GFP	GESI Focal Persons
BC	Biodiversity Conservation	GHG	Green House Gas
BMU	Government of Germany	GII	Gender Inequality Index
CAAS	Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	GNH	Gross National Happiness
CAF	Chinese Academy of Forestry	GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
CARD	Council for Agricultural and Rural Development	GPSE	Gender, Poverty and Social Equity
CAS	Chinese Academy of Sciences	GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	GRBC	Gender Responsive Budget Committee
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation	GTGP	Grain to Green Program (also known as the Conversion of Cropland to Forest Program)
CCAP	Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy	HDI	Human Development Index
CCMD	Climate Change Management Division	HG	Home Garden
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women	HKH	Hindu Kush Himalayas
CEL	Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods	IEMP	International Ecosystem Management Partnership
CERN	Chinese Ecosystem Research Network	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
CF	Community Forestry	IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
CFUGs	Community Forest User Groups	INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
CGEOs	Chief Gender Executive Officers	INDC	Intended Nationally-Determined Contribution
CMA	China Meteorological Administration	IPs	Indigenous Peoples
CNY	Chinese yuan	IUCN	International Union for Nature Conservation
CO ₂	carbon dioxide	IWNT	Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019	LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan of Action
CPC	Communist Party of China	LFGs	Local Forest Groups
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference	LI-BIRD	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
CSBs	Community Seed Banks	MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
CSDGs	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals	MCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment (since 2018)
CWDF	China Women's Development Foundation	MEP	Ministry of Environmental Protection (until 2018)
DAG	Disadvantaged Groups	MII	Ministry of Industry and Information
DCC	Department of Climate Change	MLR	Ministry of Land Resources (until 2018)
DNP	Department of National Park	MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources (since 2018)
DWF	Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development	MOA	Ministry of Agriculture (until 2018)
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia	MoAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	MoAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forest
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forests User Group Nepal	MoALD	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
Five-Year Plan	Outline of the Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development	MOARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (since 2018)
		MoE	Ministry of Energy

MOE	Ministry of Education
MoEdu	Ministry of Education
MoEnv	Ministry of Environment
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFE	Ministry of Forests and Environment
MOHRSS	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
MoST	Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Science and Technology
MOST	Ministry of Science and Technology of China
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MPGCC	Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change
MPIBM	Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management
MSFP	Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Programme
MSNP	Multi Sectoral Nutritional Plan
MWR	Ministry of Water Resource
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Action
NARC	National Agriculture Research Council
NATCM	National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCCC	National Committee on Climate Change
NCCSP	Nepal Climate Change Support Programme
NCFAP	National Commission for Health and Family Planning (until 2018)
NCSC	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NCWC	National Commission for Women and Children
NCWF	National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family Development
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NEA	National Energy Administration
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NESDP	National Economic and Social Development Plan
NFC	National Food Committee
NFCP	Natural Forest Conservation Program
NFSRA	National Food and Strategic Reserves Administration
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NHC	National Health Commission (since 2018)

NKRA	National Key Result Area
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPC	National People's Congress
NPMPCSUB	National Policies, Measures and Plans on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Biodiversity
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRS	National Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Strategy
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NSFC	National Natural Sciences Foundation of China
NSFSN	National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition
NSSFC	National Social Science Fund of China
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
NWCCW	National Working Committee on Children and Women
ONEP	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
OWAFD	Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development
PGA	Participatory Governance Assessment
PHPA	Public Hearing and Public Auditing
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB)
PWBR	Participatory Well-being Ranking
R&D	Research and Development
REDD-IC	Reduction of Emission from Degradation and Deforestation-Implementation Centre
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RFD	Royal Forest Department
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
SAMR	State Administration for Market Regulation (since 2018)
SCIO	State Council Information Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFA	State Forestry Administration (until 2018)
SFB	Supporting Forests and Biodiversity
SFFM	Strategic Framework for Food Management
SFGA	State Forestry and Grassland Administration (since 2018)
SMF	Social Management Framework
SOA	State Oceanic Administration
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WDS	Women Development Strategy
WESTool	Watershed Environmental Services Tool
WFP	World Food Programme
WWUG	Women Workers' Unity Group

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Context: Gender, Mountains and the Sustainable Development Goals

Empowering women and promoting gender equality is critical in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is at the core of efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, improve education and health, combat climate change, and address environmental problems and other goals. In the areas of climate change, ecosystems, livelihoods and food systems, gender roles and relations are particularly of crucial relevance. Worldwide, women are at the frontline in agriculture and natural resource management. However, they often do not have equal rights to own, use and control land and resources. Likewise, women play a leading role in food security, income and household resources but the outcomes of agricultural investments, among others, for women and men differ in rural areas where gender inequalities are deeply entrenched and persistent. This poses major challenges to women's livelihoods and household food security. At the same time, climate change and environmental degradation have disproportionate impacts on women's livelihoods, health, food and nutrition security, access to water and energy, as well as coping capabilities (Goodrich, Mehta, & Bista, 2017).

This study aims to review how gender equality has been integrated in policies, institutions and interventions, to address multiple SDGs, particularly those related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security in selected mountain areas of Asia namely, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand.

1.1.1 Mountains: Crucial but Marginalized and Vulnerable Landscapes

Mountains cover a little over a fifth of the land surface of the Earth, and are home to nearly one billion people, which is 15 percent of the world population. They host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots – 25 percent of terrestrial biodiversity and 28 percent of earth's forests -

that are important for ecosystem management and livelihoods. They are also an origin of six of the 20 most important food crops globally including potatoes, maize, barley, sorghum, apples, and tomatoes. Mountains provide between 60 and 80 percent of all freshwater resources for the planet, with 40 percent of world's population relying on mountain water for drinking, irrigation and hydropower (WMF, 2018; FAO, 2015). The 'Roof of the World' - the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau – alone stores the most ice after the polar regions, and are the source of waters in rivers which help sustain life for over 1.3 billion people downstream.

Worldwide mountains are home to human cultural diversity where a variety of different languages, ethnic groups, religions and belief systems have thrived for centuries. Indigenous knowledge, practices and art from mountain communities have enriched life yet, they are fast disappearing. Throughout the world "sacred mountains" have served to inspire and have been a source of spiritual sustenance, pilgrimage and solace for all major religions. They have served as recreational areas to sustain the spirit of life, while creating economic benefits, in addition to the economic value of the existing timber, biodiversity, mineral resources, and niche products that are found in mountain areas.

Yet mountains are also "host" to more than half of the world's wars and insurgencies as they provide pockets of hard-to-reach geographies for conflicting parties to hide and operate from. Such remote and often inaccessible territories also provide opportunities for illicit crops to thrive. They have been epicenters for conflict over natural resources, transportation corridors, etc. and in many cases such conflicts have been one of the key reasons for the inordinate amount of poverty in mountain communities.

The major livelihood strategies for mountain communities are based on the natural capital i.e., biodiversity and land-based ecosystems including agriculture, forests and non-timber forest products. Thus, a healthy biodiversity

and well-functioning ecosystem goods and services are a crucial element of subsistent livelihoods of mountain communities. The existence and health of mountain ecosystem and communities is therefore critical for the existence of humanity across the globe.

Women have been at the forefront of mountain economy and livelihoods, since seasonal male migration has been an important livelihoods diversification strategy. Yet in the recent decades globally, outmigration has grown exponentially, and the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region has seen some of the highest rates, with mostly young men migrating for work and leaving women, children and the elderly to shoulder more responsibilities at home. Women have continued to be the major stewards of natural resource base, especially biodiversity and common property resources, and they have a major role in restoring ecosystem goods and services. Yet, they have very limited ownership and control over these resources, and thus suffer disproportionately from realizing the benefits.

Globalization, climate change, land degradation and other drivers of change are creating new challenges, dilemmas and opportunities for mountain women and men. Mountain communities are experiencing rapid depletion of natural resource base resulting in loss in agriculture production, biodiversity and ecosystems. Fatal landslides have increased by 125 percent from 2003 to 2017 (Froude & Petley, 2018). Melting of glaciers has almost doubled since 2005, affecting water storage worldwide. In the Asian sub-continent, countries are already facing water shortages and extreme weather, and have to increasingly contend with mass unemployment, hunger and disease.

In 2015 almost 39 percent of the mountain population in developing countries was considered *vulnerable to food insecurity*, a situation that was even worse when considering only rural mountain peoples (FAO, 2015). Mountain populations have steadily been experiencing deterioration in their living conditions with an increase in their vulnerability to hunger. Increasingly unpredictable and harsh climates and the difficult, often inaccessible terrain, combined with political and social marginality has contributed towards making

mountain peoples particularly vulnerable to food shortages. In the Asian mountains, nearly one third of the population lives below the poverty line and suffer from food insecurity. Far from being heard, geographically isolated and without having access to basic infrastructure, mountain people are disproportionately affected by poverty, food insecurity and basic livelihood assets and services, with a greater impact being borne by women and girls (ibid).

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women's livelihoods and overall gender equality. Yet on the other hand, many indigenous women in particular, possess specific knowledge, skills and assets that are important for effective mitigation and adaptation to climate change. However, much of this knowledge remains undocumented, with a likelihood of it being lost to future generations, until they are understood, valued and documented.

The implications of climate change are far and wide, not only in the areas of mountain economy and livelihoods, but also on the disruption of ecosystem services, and survival of the downstream population. The climate and other socio-economic changes may also have opened up new avenues for building resilience and sustainable livelihoods, which are yet to be explored and act upon.

1.1.2 Gender Responsive SDGs in the Context of Mountains

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), recognize gender equality as fundamental to achieving the SDGs. CBD is among the first Multilateral Environmental Agreements to highlight gender in the process and it is the first convention to have a Gender Action Plan, resulting in a positive impact on national biodiversity strategy and action plans (NBSAPs) globally to refer to women or gender. However, those gender references are mostly issues related to procedure at the international and national levels, while on-the-ground support on implementing activities for improving gender equality and equity are still lacking. Moreover, the Parties and stakeholders have frequently stated the importance of effectively addressing gender considerations in

the post-2020 framework and this is yet to be reflected (Thapa, Fu, & Zhang, 2020).

Out of the 17 goals set within the Agenda 2030, Box 1.1 highlights those SDGs and specific targets that are directly relevant for this study, though there are interconnections among many of the goals. These targets recognize

the importance of mountain ecosystem, biodiversity and building resilience in the mountain communities for poverty reduction and sustainable development. There are only three specific indicators that directly mention mountains, though many indicators within other goals are also of key interest and importance for mountain landscapes and communities.

Box 1.1: SDGs Directly Relevant for The Study Including Those that Focus on Mountains

Goal 1: End Poverty

Goal 2: End Hunger

Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives

Goal 4: Inclusive and Equitable Education

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 6: Sustainable Water and Sanitation

- **6.6 By 2030, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes**

Goal 7: Sustainable Energy

Goal 8: Economic Growth, Productive Employment and Decent Work

Goal 9: Resilient Infrastructure

Goal 10: Equity within and among Nations

Goal 11: Sustainable Inclusive, Safe, and Resilient Cities

Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Goal 13: Climate Change and its Impact

Goal 14: Sustainable Ocean, Seas, and Marine Resources

Goal 15: Sustainable Ecosystems (forests, desertification, land degradation, biodiversity)

- **15.1 By 2030, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements**
- **15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development**

Goal 16: Access to justice, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

Goal 17: Strengthen global partnership for sustainable development

Box 1.2: Why Gender Mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy aimed at increasing attention to the priorities, needs, contributions and constraints of both women and men in the policy and programmatic work of any sector, with the explicit objective to increase gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights. Mainstreaming aims to ensure that both women and men participate in decision-making and that their knowledge and contributions are recognized and fully utilized in policy-making and planning processes. By identifying and building on the positive management and leadership roles of women and men, and addressing the inequalities and constraints which impede women's full involvement and contributions, gender mainstreaming can also have a significant impact on the achievement of the overall goals and targets in the sector in which it is being implemented. Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, rather it is a means to end gender inequalities (UN Women, 2018, p 12).

Gender mainstreaming across all SDGs is critical (Box 1.2). Across the 'Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals' there are 54 gender-specific indicators that have been included. This in itself was a notable achievement, yet many hurdles remain (UN Women, 2018). Only six out of the 17 SDG goals are gender sensitive (SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 16); five goals are gender sparse (SDG 2, 19, 11, 13 and 17) and the remaining six are gender blind (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 15) (Sijapati-Basnett, 2018). Monitoring progress disaggregated by gender is difficult due to the insufficient integration of a gender perspective across all SDGs, gaps in gender data, quality concerns, and lack of trend data. Globally, only 23 percent of the available data for gender-specific indicators was from 2010 or later, and only 16 percent was available for two or more points in time (ibid). Three main challenges constraining monitoring of the SDGs from a gender equality perspective were identified: (i) uneven coverage of gender-specific indicators, with some goals lacking indicators to capture gender equality outcomes; (ii) gaps in gender data including data on women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting inequalities; and (iii) challenges in quality and comparability of available data across countries and time (ibid). Additionally, there is inadequate investment and funding for additional or quality data collection, and data collection methodologies present deep biases (e.g., in censuses, labor surveys) (Sijapati-Basnett, 2018).

The SDG Goal 5 specifically aims at gender equality and empowerment of women, while the other goals also recognize women as key contributors and therefore considers gender as a cross-cutting and a guiding principle in the implementation of SDGs. Yet, how gender equality, especially empowering women and girls, contribute towards responding to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and livelihoods improvements – key areas for this study - remain overall poorly understood and incompletely acknowledged (Molden, Verma, & Sharma, 2014; Goodrich, Mehta, & Bista, 2017).

Food security, biodiversity and ecosystems feature prominently across many of the SDGs and associated targets (CBD, 2016). However,

women's stake in forests (SDG 15) and in fisheries (SDG 14) receive no mention in the SDGs; there is also no mention of women farmers in relation to climate change (SDG 13). Neither of these SDGs (13 and 14) mention gender equality in access, thus missing key synergies between gender equality, conservation and food security (Agarwal, 2018).

It is clear that systemic and contextual gender factors such as women's education, health, skills, mobility, income, unpaid care work and gender-based violence is likely to affect the effectiveness of the SDGs implementation and outcomes (UN Women, n.d.). For example, women prepare up to 90 percent of meals in households around the world but in times of crises, they are the ones to eat less. Ending hunger and increasing food security (SDG 2) requires the world to increase food production and improve access to all and women contribute to food systems through crops, forests and fisheries. They comprise more than 50 percent of agriculture labor force in Asia (ibid), and the figure is more than fifty percent in countries like Nepal due to increased male outmigration (FAO, 2019). However, their potential contribution to food production, processing and distribution is often constrained by unequal access to land and other productive assets including technologies, inputs and markets. Low levels of ownership of land by women in many countries in Asia is driven by patriarchal norms; even when they own land, making use of it or selling it is still not up to them. Additionally, they have limited access to technology, information, inputs, (irrigation, fertilizers), credit, and tools.

Women also play a vital role in managing biological resources; biodiversity loss and degraded ecosystems can perpetuate gender inequalities by increasing the time spent by women and children in performing certain tasks, such as collecting valuable resources including fuel, food and water, and reducing time for education and income generating activities. Thus, here too, ensuring equal rights of women to land, inheritance and natural resources can provide incentive and enable women to access support services to promote sustainable agriculture and land management practices that contributes to biodiversity conservation (CBD, 2016).

In this context, SDG 5 needs to be an “anchor” to be taken in conjunction with other SDGs, since there are potentials and limitations to the targets within this goal. Targets related to access to land and property, and access to natural resources, are critical; access to land or securing land right enhances productivity since the growing feminization of agriculture due to male migration potentially gives women more decision-making power. Similarly, this also improves intra-household nutritional distribution since land ownership can increase women’s bargaining power (Agarwal, 2018). Access to natural resources such as fisheries and forests increases sources of nutritional diversity for women as they are also the main producers of small-scale fisheries. Gender equalities in asset ownership and increased access, for example, will also have positive effects on intra household food distribution, better child survival, nutrition and health. Thus SDG 5 (gender equality) needs to be teamed up with SDGs 1 and 2 (poverty and hunger).

These conditions will also apply to efforts towards climate change mitigation/adaptation (SDG 13), and restoring ecosystems and halting biodiversity loss (SDG 15). With climate change, food outputs are expected to lag; women will be expected to bear the burden of adaptation, shift to less labor intensive but less bio-diverse and nutritional crops, and bear the burden of increase in production and processing time due to changes in temperatures. Despite successive yet often under-resourced gender ‘mainstreaming’ efforts over time in policies and programmes, women in general, and mountain women in particular have not always had equitable access to development resources and opportunities. As a result, their potential contribution as an active agent in meeting SDGs is not yet realized. All of these factors make it imperative for the SDG 5 to create synergies with other SDGs to increase gender equality and impact.

1.1.3 The Importance of an Intersectional Lens

In the context of all the five case countries (Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand) the importance of addressing gender-based and other key identity-based forms of exclusion cannot be emphasized enough, given just how

deeply social behaviors and systems constrain the life chances of many groups of people. The groups that are most likely to be left behind are those that face “intersecting inequalities” -- those whose economic disadvantages intersect with socially and culturally defined identities, locational disadvantage and lack of political representation (Kabeer 2010; Arauco et al. 2014). Given that socio-cultural identities such as race, caste, and ethnicity are ascribed from birth and persist over generations, they have an enduring nature that is not easily addressed by constitutional or political changes alone. Reversing centuries of exclusion and discrimination requires sustained policy efforts as well as changes in social values and norms (ibid).

Thus, the intersection of gender with all other markers of difference – class, caste/ethnicity, disabilities, location, and political participation – requires using a gendered lens in all analytical frameworks, since gender-based disparities are known to be pervasive (Pradhan & Gurung 2020). Additionally, intersectional identities have an additive effect and can further compound discrimination and marginalization. The principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ requires identifying the vulnerable and marginalized categories of people, and designing appropriate responses and targeted interventions to ensure inclusion; this is a commitment that had been made globally and needs to be adhered to. The UN Women 2018 report on ‘Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ has also highlighted the importance of an intersectional perspective, “the first time that a high-profile global report has engaged seriously with feminist concerns with ‘intersectionality’ in a substantial way” (Sijapati-Basnett 2018, p2).

Each and every SDG touches the lives of women. It is important to internalize that women are not only ‘welfare recipients’ or ‘victims’ that require specific assistance and interventions (from a justice perspective), but are in fact strong agents, actors and contributors to achieve the SDGs. Women need to be seen not only as mothers, daughters, sisters, or partners but more importantly as farmers, stewards of ecosystems, entrepreneurs, teachers, health workers, politicians and community mobilizers

– actors and agents. This is an important perspective in recognizing the role of women in the implementation and the achievement of the SDGs.

1.1.4 The Far-Reaching Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Around the world, the corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had devastating impacts on individuals, families, communities and countries. The impact is exacerbated for women and girls across every sphere, notably as reduced food security, income and savings due to loss of jobs; reduced access to reproductive health services due to reallocation of resources and priorities; increased maternal mortality rates¹; increased unpaid care work due to the closure of schools and working spaces; and increased gender-based violence (United Nations, 2020). These overwhelming challenges have led to psychological stress for many individuals, creating further challenges in resource poor countries with limited recognition, capacities and services for addressing mental health issues. Many of these impacts are likely to have medium to long term consequences, setting back the pace of socio-economic improvements and achievements.

In mountain areas like the HKH, the pandemic has hit hard agriculture and tourism – key mountain-based economies – and has compounded the vulnerabilities of mountain communities to slide into chronic poverty, already impacted by climate change. All five countries studied here, rely heavily on ecosystem-based tourism (mountains, forests, or rivers) that provided employment for many, and women in all these countries play a very important role, formally or informally, in this livelihood option.

Studies have shown how the pandemic has negatively impacted the SDG achievements due to factors linked directly to the pandemic or the measures taken to control them² (Pradhan, et al., 2021; UNDESA, 2021). It has also had

a high impact on meaningful and inclusive forms of stakeholder engagement which is likely to set back the SDG progress especially for all vulnerable and marginalized groups, but especially older people, homeless and slum dwellers, migrants, women and girls, and people with disabilities³ (ibid). Care needs to be taken in understanding the long-term impact of the pandemic especially on vulnerable populations and how the conservation and sustainable management of natural resource can provide much needed support to such groups.

1.2 Study Objectives and Methodology

2.1.1 Study Objectives and Areas

The overall **objective of this study** is to: *Review and analyze the role of gender equality in addressing multiple SDGs, particularly climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security in selected mountain areas in Asia.*

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify and analyze existing policies, institutional mechanisms and, regional and country specific initiatives, partners/ stakeholders, that address and integrate gender equality within the areas of climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food security;
2. Identify gender-friendly strategies, tools, and technologies that countries have adopted, to promote sustainable development in the mountain areas of Asia; and
3. Provide recommendations to strengthen gender equality and women's participation in national and regional initiatives that are related to agriculture, biodiversity, ecosystem, and climate change policies, plans and interventions.

The study was led by Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), a pioneering research and development non-governmental agency in Nepal, that has over 25 years of experience in designing and

1 <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/27/a-200-percent-increase-in-maternal-mortality-since-the-lockdown-began>

2 The negative impacts on SDGs resulted from factors linked to the pandemic or the measures taken to control it. The key five impending factors are lockdowns, underemployment/unemployment, closure of institutions and facilities, diluted focus and funds for non-COVID-19 issues, and anticipated reduced support from development partners (Pradhan et al., 2021).

3 On the one hand, online participation has increased the engagement of certain sectors, but this is not true for vulnerable and marginalized groups, and they are at even greater risk of being 'left behind' if the focus were to shift considerably to online engagement (UNDESA, 2021)

implementing research and development programs in agriculture, climate change, ecosystems/biodiversity and livelihoods in Nepal and other South Asian countries. The study was commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme–International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP) through the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR-CAS).

This study covers five selected mountain countries in Asia namely, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal, and Thailand. All these case countries are being impacted by climate change with implications for sustainable development and livelihoods of its people, particularly in the mountain regions. The study also presents an overview of selected regional programs and initiatives taking place in the region.

All of the countries selected have mountain terrains that have valuable and diverse ecosystems, flora fauna biodiversity, and rich socio-cultural diversity. Yet though terrains are also marked by marginality, inaccessibility, vulnerability and fragile landscape that not only affect their immediate vicinity but can have tremendous impact on low lying regions affecting billions of people. They are home to a large majority of indigenous/tribal and rural populations, where traditionally women have been key resource managers. Yet these countries have also been identified as some of the most vulnerable in terms of the impacts of climate change as well as non-climate stressors; inadequate physical infrastructure, early warning systems and low capacity of farmers to adapt to the adverse effect of climate change exacerbate the risks associated with changing weather patterns in these countries, with huge repercussions to the rest of the region.

2.1.2 The Study Methodology

The study is primarily a desk review and stock-taking of the key elements to be assessed and documented. It is descriptive and qualitative in nature with country cases presenting the experiences from the “field”. The primary Study Team was based in Nepal, while international experts from the four case countries were based on their home grounds.

The study team used the following **methods and tools** to gather the information required for the study:

1. Desk review and stock-taking:
 - A comprehensive review of relevant policies, implementation guidelines, program/project reports, and relevant review reports from the five case countries.
 - At least one key expert was identified from each of the four case countries outside of Nepal, who contributed towards the case studies of their country, based on the information needs identified by the Study Team in Nepal.
2. Virtual interactions with key informants in the study countries
 - Additional country level experts were identified and virtual discussions were scheduled in order to gain country level insights on the challenges, opportunities and critical feedback on the state of gender integration in the study sectors that contributes towards sustainable development.
3. Virtual and/or direct consultations with experts within Nepal.
 - In-country consultations in Nepal were also organized in order to get inputs on country level insights, challenges, opportunities and critical feedback on the state of gender integration in the study sectors.

A list of the national and international experts who were consulted for this study is in Annex 1.

While conducting the desk review of policies, institutions and interventions within the study sectors - climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security - a combination of two specific **gender and mainstreaming guidelines and tools** were used to analyze the information from a gender perspective during the desk review - the “Gender Audit Score Card” (Moser, 2005) and the “gender mainstreaming checklist” in the SDGs (CAAF, 2017).

Moser (2005) proposes the following indicators for assessing gender mainstreaming, namely:

- a. Country level strategy for gender equality;

- b. Gender mainstreaming strategy in sectoral programmes - in objectives and objectively verifiable indicators, disaggregated data, gender sensitive budget, gender mainstreaming training, and specific gender indicators in output-to-purpose review and evaluations;
- c. Specific activities aimed at empowerment of women (support women's participation in decision making, women's organization and capacity building, designing and dissemination of gender responsive knowledge, tools, and methods. and activities related to working with men);
- d. Internal institutional responsibilities and associated capacity building; and
- e. Resources (manuals, toolkits, methods, shared responsibilities, evaluation, and international capacity strengthening).

Similarly, the assessment framework for gender mainstreaming in the SDGs has identified five key areas to be examined (CAAF, 2017), namely:

- a. Legal/policy framework to support gender equality;
- b. Institutional arrangements and mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming;
- c. Action planning (supporting the physical/legal framework) for gender equality and mainstreaming;
- d. Monitoring and reporting (with disaggregated data) on the implementation; and
- e. Budget and financing for implementation.

These tools and frameworks were applied during the review of the key elements of policies, institutions and interventions within the study sectors to assess how well (or not) gender equality measures have been integrated and how effective they have been implemented,

1.3 Gender Responsive Sustainable Development in The Mountains: A Framework for Analysis

The study uses an integration of two key conceptual frameworks:

- i. Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CEL): a nexus approach to address sustainable development; and

- ii. Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment Framework (GSEA) (World Bank & DFID, 2006) to identify domains of interventions for a holistic approach of gender equality.

The **Climate, Ecosystem, and Livelihoods (CEL) Framework**⁴ (Figure 1.1) is based on two fundamental premises: (i) the relationships among climate change, ecosystems and livelihoods are multifaceted, interdependent and interactive (Zhang, Liu, & Fu, 2018; Rana, et al., 2020) and (ii) solutions to the spiral of climate change impact, ecosystem degradation and on-going poverty depends upon how best one can address these issues (ibid). Hence, the primary priority of the work is the nexus of climate change, ecosystem services and livelihoods – i.e., a synergy of ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods in a changing climate. The secondary priority involves paired interactions between climate change and ecosystem services, climate change and sustainable livelihoods, and ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods. The SDGs targeted programmes are expected to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation and enhance interdisciplinary research that brings together natural science, economics and social science (ibid), and to help address the poverty and environmental problems of low-income countries while also assisting in achieving their commitment for the SDGs and climate targets.

For the purpose of this study, Figure 1.1 has been adapted from the original CEL Framework to integrate key elements to ensure the analysis and integration of gender equality within the framework. While there are a several different frameworks that support the integration of gender equality within policies, and programs, and at an individual and household levels, the study team uses the Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment Framework (Figure 1.2) and integrates key elements of this within the CEL Framework to support the gender-based review of the SDGs related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystems restoration and food security.

⁴ This section draws primarily from: Thapa, B., Fu, C., and Zhang, L. (Ed.). Rana, R.B., Malla, Y.B., Bhandari, B., Bishwakarma, P., Sherpa, L., Pudasaini, N., Paudel, I., Bhusal, A., and Shrestha, P. 2020. Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation for Resilient Livelihoods in the Rupa Lake Watershed of Nepal. UNEP-IEMP Case Studies on Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas of Nepal. Kathmandu, Nepal: UNEP-IEMP and LI-BIRD.

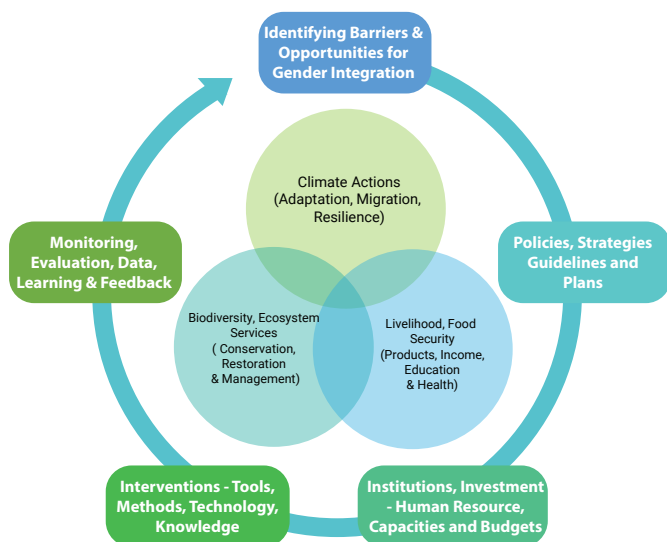


Figure 1.1: A Framework for Analyzing Gender Integration in the Nexus of Climate Change, Ecosystems and Livelihoods in the Mountains

The **Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment (GSEA)** framework examines traditional hierarchies that continue to structure access to political influence, and economic opportunities. It presents three *domains of change* at the core (Figure 1.2), which are inter-connected where changes (by the state, civil society and development organizations) can help improve the well-being of women, the poor and excluded groups by: (i) enhancing access to *livelihood assets and services* and improve livelihood security of women; (ii) building the ability to exercise *voice, influence and agency*, as well as the capability of mountain men and women to claim their entitlements, control resources and in decision-making; and (iii) having a say in framing “the rules of the game” or *influencing policies* that mediate and regulate people's participation in the life of the state and larger society as well as their access to livelihood opportunities and political influence. Changes in these domains has the potential to transform power relations, modify the institutional barriers, and increase the capacity of women and other marginalized groups (the poor, caste and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, people located in geographically remote areas) to exercise their rights, equalize access to opportunities, and improve their life conditions (World Bank & DFID, 2006)⁵.

⁵ It should be noted that “gender” equality in Nepal is still largely

Empowerment of individuals or groups of people builds their sense of agency, their ability to exercise their voice, and their capacity to act on their own behalf. This would also help them to realize the power they gain from collective action and would help them to increase their access to assets, services, and livelihood opportunities. This needs to be supported by system-level institutional reform and policy changes which removes inequities in the external social, economic and political environment; when this shift is instituted at all levels (micro, meso and macro) then individuals and groups have opportunities and safe environments to exercise their rights, their voice and improve their lives without discrimination and oppression.

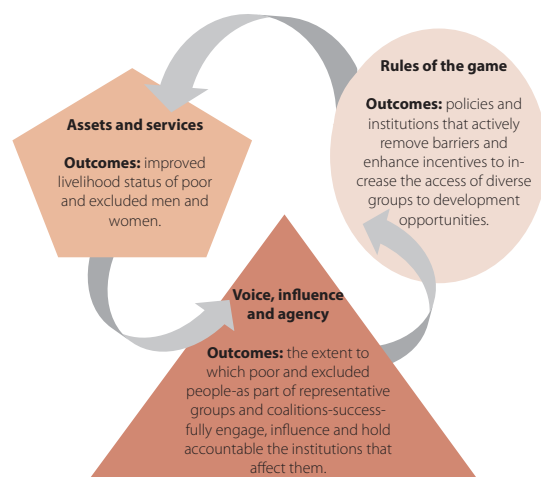


Figure 1.2: GSEA Conceptual Framework

Policies, institutions and programmes need to establish a fair balance in these three domains, as well as in terms of capacity, knowledge, policy and technologies. Additionally, it is important that horizontal and vertical coherence is achieved at all stages of programme cycle management (Figure 1.1). Thus, at each stage of the interlinked cycle within the “Gender Responsive CEL Framework” the following elements are envisioned:

focused upon heteronormative women-men relationships. The rights of the “other” or “third” gender (as the LGBTI citizens are identified) have been legally acknowledged yet they still struggle with issues of stigma, discrimination and socio-economic exclusion. This study however focuses more on the gender relations between men and women.

- Identifying barriers and opportunities for gender integration;
- Analysis of policies, strategies guidelines and plans from a gender responsive perspective;
- Investigating institutions and investments in relation to human resources, capacities and budgets;
- Understanding the systems for monitoring, evaluation, state of data, learning and feedback;
- Examining interventions – the gender responsive tools, methods, technology, and knowledge that exist and have been applied successfully.

Gender Integration in all Spheres of the Climate, Ecosystem and Livelihoods Intersections

To a large extent, there has been a growing understanding of the differential gender roles, responsibilities, knowledge and practices of men and women at the intersection of all three spheres of CEL. The structural barriers, institutional constraints and gender norms and values are what negatively affect women's access to and control over resources, and their ability to engage meaningfully in the policy formulation processes.

Women's considerable involvement in the agriculture and NRM sector highlights the need to address the gender gap in terms of access to resources, productivity, and vulnerability in the sector, especially so in the wake of climate change and increased feminization of agriculture (as is the case in Nepal). Competing gender norms simultaneously enable and constrain women's social practices; with growing out-migration of men, women's decision-making on

farming matters is increasing but they are still discouraged to engage in markets and public spheres (Holmelin, 2019). In most cases caste, ethnicity, class, and age influence women's ability to negotiate and alter local gender roles. On top of this the impact of climate change on biodiversity, ecosystems as well as agriculture, is already known to have a detrimental impact on women from poor, small land holding households in rural areas and more so in mountain communities, leading to growing food insecurity. Thus, a better understanding of how countries are addressing the gender factor within their sectoral policies, how they are developing strategies for coherence between the sectors, how institutional mechanisms are becoming more conducive to address the critical multisectoral issues, and how programs are supporting the development of approaches, tools and technologies to address gender inequalities and transform gender relations, will make a valuable contribution.

The Report Outline

This desk study report is divided into eight chapters. Following this overall introduction, chapter two presents an overview of some of the regional initiatives that are taking place that is working on integrating gender equality in the sectors that this study focuses on. The next five chapters present the country cases – Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand. The final chapter presents an overview of the key findings, lessons learnt, the challenges faced, and a set of recommendations for key stakeholders on integrating gender equality in the policies, institutions and interventions related in the sectors of climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security.

CHAPTER 2

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 The Regional Context

Mountains in Asia, and especially the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH), provide critical ecosystem services - such as water, energy, and food - that directly sustain the livelihoods of over 240 million people in the hills and mountains across eight countries sharing the region, and for the 1.65 billion people in the river basins downstream (Wester, Mishra, Mukherji, & Shrestha, 2019). Thus, their ecological, aesthetic and socio-economic significance extends to those living in the lowlands, where the region's diverse cultures, languages, religions and traditional knowledge systems thrive. The geological formation of the "Water Towers of Asia" are fragile and the ecosystems are degrading fast because of both natural and anthropogenic drivers of change. These changes provide opportunities as well as challenges for mountain communities in their efforts to sustainable development, especially in mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change, ecosystem restoration and improving livelihoods (ibid). Women are key actors in these landscapes; they are custodians of knowledge and practices of adapting to the changing climatic and demographic conditions like migration. Any efforts towards achieving sustainable development in the mountains require empowerment and active engagement of mountain women.

This chapter presents a brief overview of some of the trends in climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security in the Asian mountain region and offers examples of some of the regional initiatives that have been working towards integrating gender equality for sustainable development.

2.1.1 The Context of Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Services in the Region

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) has analyzed 24 ecosystem services globally and found 15 undergoing degradation or being

used unsustainably (MEA, 2005).⁶ The decline of ecosystem services affects disadvantaged people the most, especially women who regularly interact with the ecosystem to sustain their families. Such a decline poses barriers in achieving the SDGs, especially reducing poverty and hunger; it actually poses a threat to entire human security globally.

Mountains in Asia are rich in biodiversity and hosts highly diverse and complex ecosystems that provide goods and services to the millions living downstream, primarily in the form of forests, grasslands, wetlands, aquatic agroecosystem and their interfaces. The HKH alone hosts four out of 36 global biodiversity hotspots, and is also home for the discovery and growth of new species including that of plants, animals, fish, birds and mammals. Between 1998-2008 alone, 335 new species were discovered in the Eastern Himalayas (Jianchu, Badola, & Chhetri, 2019). Yet the region is also experiencing rapid biodiversity loss and habitat degradation; mountain regions have additional complexities of establishing and maintaining upstream and downstream linkages which are critical for the flow of ecosystem services. However, the region also has several good practices in biodiversity conservation and restoration of degraded habitats that have the potential to be scaled up. Thus, regional cooperation, with exchanges of knowledge and practices is an important step.

The sustainable use and management of biodiversity and ecosystem has environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions. Wang and Ning (2019) lay out how these drivers are accelerating changes and triggering both positive and negative impact in mountain ecosystems in Asia today (see Box 2.1). Moreover, there are four common issues

⁶ The MEA identifies four major ecosystem services that the mountain ecosystem provides for human security and survival: provisioning services such as food, water, timber, and fiber; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling (ibid).

related to the degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity in the region including in China, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan (Yi et al., 2017). These are: (i) ecological - the decline of species, loss of genetic resources, degradation of forests and grasslands, shrinkage of wetlands and erosion or loss of traditional knowledge; (ii) economic – the loss of economic capacity of forestry, agriculture and pastoralism, lowered resilience to natural disasters, loss of the aesthetic value of land, distortion of farming systems, and loss of income from biodiversity; (iii) social – the increasing disassociation of people from the land and from each other, erosion of the social fabric that holds communities together, excessive dependence of communities on biomass and lack of alternative livelihoods; and (iv) political and decision making - comprising top-down approaches of decision making restricting creativity and participation of affected

population and narrow regulatory strategies to induce behavioral changes resulting into increased risk of conflict in the region.

Across the countries, poverty, poor infrastructure (roads, electricity, water supply, education and health care services, communication and irrigation), and reliance on subsistence farming and forest products for farming, make mountain populations more vulnerable to climate change as the need for the capacity to adapt is changing very quickly and is beyond the capacity of the mountain communities. Furthermore, climate change, land use transition and migration due to environmental issues in the mountains also have impacts on social relations between nations, social groups and individual families as they increasingly struggle for access to essential resources.

Box 2.1: Key Drivers of Change, Their Pathways and Impacts Affecting the HKH Ecosystems

Environmental Drivers

- Land use and land cover changes leading to soil degradation and altering ecosystem services
- Over exploitation of natural resources such as forests, timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) leading to loss of biodiversity and related ecosystem services and increasing invasion of exotic plants like (*Lantana camara*, *Mikania micrantha*, *Chromolaena odorata* and *Eichhornia crassipes*) is harming forest and agricultural diversity
- Water and soil pollution threatening aquatic biodiversity and water security in major river basins (such as in Mekong, Yangtze and Yarlung Tsangpo rivers where there is solid waste deposition across the nations)
- Mountain hazards in the form of frequent occurrences of earthquakes (in Nepal, China, India) and related disasters of landslides, dam bursts and flooding
- Climate change leading to uncertainty in water supply and agricultural production
- Loss of locally adapted crops due to increasing/unidirectional promotion of improved/hybrid crop varieties leading to significant loss of local agro biodiversity in the mountain farming system

Economic Drivers

- Slow economic growth, constrained economic opportunities and high concentration of poverty in mountains compared to coastal and other parts of the country
- Rapid infrastructure development (road and transport networks, hydropower) leading to increased fragility
- Urbanization and peri-urban expansion leading to the decline of agriculture subsistence economy, rapid increase in tourism and market influences
- Access to information and communication systems -phones/internet/TV- has brought huge changes
- Socio-Cultural Drivers
- Changing demographic and socio-cultural indicators (low population density, decline in fertility, high age dependency, increased outmigration and displacement, feminization of work)
- Increasing integration to development interventions and low capacity of institutions

- Adapted from Wang & Ning, 2019

2.1.2 The Context of Food Security, Livelihoods and Poverty in the Asian Mountains

Food and nutrition security is closely related to and contributes towards the achievement of a number of SDGs, especially ending poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 & 2), ensuring healthy lives, access to water and sanitation (SDGs 3 & 6), promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, and action to address climate change (SDG 12 & 13). Additionally, it has a direct positive association for achieving gender equality (SDG 5), an important measure that is critical to achieve the SDGs as a whole.

Crop-livestock agriculture has been a major source of livelihoods for mountain populations and this depends heavily on communal natural resources like forests, rangelands and water. For a majority of communities, rainfed agriculture and mixed crop-livestock system is still the dominant form of livelihoods (Gioli, Thapa, & Khan, 2019). Yet several studies confirm that the mountain economy and livelihoods has undergone significant transformation (The Daskota Team, 2008; Benarjee, Gerlitz, & Hoermamm, 2011). Farmers across the HKH region have been gradually shifting from subsistence to high value agriculture due to growing awareness of high value niche crops (such as fruits, vegetables, spices, medicinal plants and NTFPs), improved connectivity, market penetration, and targeted livelihood improvement interventions and investments from government and non-government sectors (Gioli, Thapa, & Khan, 2019). Additionally, labor migration is stimulating the flow of financial

resources as well as ideas and capabilities. Seasonal migration of mostly young men from the mountains to adjacent towns, capital cities and even neighboring countries has been an important strategy to diversify livelihoods. Remittances and off farm income have been integral to shield against various economic, social and environmental risks in the region (Benarjee, Gerlitz, & Hoermamm, 2011).

Despite the changes, the percentage of people dependent on agriculture for food security and livelihoods is still high. Agriculture in the mountain region still comprises 200 million smallholders, employs millions in the farms, and a majority of those employed are women. It contributes 40 percent of the GDP in the region. But overgrazed pastures, soil erosion, forest degradation, reduced recharge of aquifers and population growth have led to a steady decline in the common pool natural resources (ibid). Global environmental change including climate change, loss of biodiversity and water sources exacerbates these challenges in the region. About 60 percent of agriculture in this region is rain-fed and therefore is vulnerable to changes in timing and frequency of precipitation. Rising temperature, extreme weather conditions and invasion of new diseases/pests have further increased the rate of declining biodiversity and food production in the region (Wang & Ning, 2019). The consequences of biodiversity loss are likely to be worst for the poor and marginalized who depend almost exclusively on natural resources.

Table 2.1: Mountain Poverty in Selected Countries, 2020.

Country	Total Population (in millions) ⁷		Incidence of Poverty (Percent below poverty line)	
	Countrywide	Mountain	Countrywide	Mountain
Bhutan	0.69	0.69	23	23
Cambodia ⁸	15.29	1.95	17.8	NA
China	1,331	51.18 ⁹	16.6	NA
Nepal	29.3	11.8 ¹⁰	18	43
Thailand ¹¹	68.91	0.93	6.24	NA

⁷ All figures from Gioli, Thapa, & Khan, 2019, unless otherwise cited.

⁸ Government of Cambodia, Census 2019 and ADB 2020 (<https://www.adb.org/countries/cambodia/poverty>).

⁹ Liu, Y., Deng, W. & Song, Xq. 2015. Relief degree of land surface and population distribution of mountainous areas in China. J. Mt. Sci. 12, 518–532. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11629-013-2937-5>

¹⁰ NPC. (2020). *The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20-2023/24)*. Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, Nepal.

¹¹ Data from: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. 2020. Poverty and Inequity Report 2019 (in Thai). The national poverty line is 2,763 Bhat/person/month or 87.81USD/person/month or 2.93 USD/person/day @ exchange rate of USD1=31.465 Bhat. Mountain Population: 925,825 people (0.93 million) *The Indigenous World 2020* (Thailand) https://iwgia.org/images/yearbook/2020/IWGIA_The_Indigenous_World_2020.pdf

Poverty incidence in the HKH is one-third compared to one-fourth for the national average (Gioli, Thapa, & Khan, 2019) indicating that mountain people are poorer compared to people elsewhere (see Table 2.1). Moreover, mountains are home to many indigenous people and ethnic minorities, and their poverty rates are often higher compared to other social groups. These rural mountain poor include pastoralists, herders, small farmers and forest dwellers. Remoteness and poor accessibility to basic facilities and markets, high dependence on and reducing access of natural resources and agricultural productivity, high dependency ratio, unequal gender and cultural norms and lack of empowerment have been identified as key determinants of poverty in the mountains (ibid). These mountain specific challenges often hinder the conversion of resources such as income into actual wellbeing outcomes including adequate nutrition and food security, education and health across the countries (Sen, 1999). Studies also identify the diversity, biological niches and adaptation mechanisms as important assets for the region that bring important opportunities across the country to address the challenges of poverty and insecurity (Jodha, 1997).

These 'mountain specificities'-the characteristics of mountain areas (in particular, six specificities - inaccessibility, fragility, marginality, diversity, niche and human adaptability) (Jodha, 1990) - significantly shape development and human life across the countries. Additionally, the growing environmental and demographic challenges have increased the region's vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition. An assessment conducted by Rasul and Saboor (2019) found that around one-third of the population in the HKH areas is food insecure and half is malnourished. Earlier studies have also revealed that severity of food insecurity in these areas is significantly higher than in plains (Hussain, Rasul, Mahapatra, & Tuladhar, 2016). Mountain people, particularly in the HKH region, are highly vulnerable to food insecurity because of their low productivity, subsistence economies, constraints of terrain and climate, poor infrastructure, limited access to markets, physical isolation, vulnerability to natural hazards and high cost of food production and transportation. The steady depletion of the natural resource base, particularly soil nutrients,

water and biomass, has resulted in a significant decline in food production; impacts of climate change have added to the insecure situation (ibid).

The discussion above suggests that development in Asian mountain and the practices of people in these areas are uniquely conditioned by distinct characteristics. While some of these specificities such as inaccessibility, fragility and marginality constrain development, the richness in biodiversity, traditional knowledge, ecological niches and adaptation mechanisms present development opportunities for mountain people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further deepened existing challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition in the region. In the HKH region it has reduced food availability, accessibility, dietary diversity and health services, with disruption to agriculture production activities, food and input supply chains, as well as trade and income generating activities (ICIMOD, 2020). Among the most affected are small holders and those working in informal sectors, who are mostly women. At the household level women continue to be the last and less to eat, with far reaching implications on their health and human capital development. The pandemic has reiterated the fact that both climate and health risks and vulnerability are systemic and interconnected. Thus, it is critical to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable against climatic, geophysical, economic and/or health-related risks (ibid).

2.1.3 Regional Context of Gender Equality

Women are active agents in the conservation, use and management of farms, biodiversity and ecosystem services, and are also the holders and practitioners of local knowledge and practices required for addressing the environmental issues outlined above. Yet a number of studies have shown that women are disproportionately affected by climate change, variability, and weather-related shocks including disasters (Goh, 2012; Rai-Paudyal, et al., 2019). This is primarily due to women's limited access to timely weather forecast information; limited options for crop and livelihood diversification; less mobility and access to services; lack of tenure rights; and low decision-making power to apply

adaptation measures; lack of independent sources of income; and limited access to credit for investments (Huyer, 2016; World Bank, FAO, & IFAD, 2015).

Globally, women are assigned different roles, responsibilities, rights and spaces by societal norms and practices; many of them have inbuilt biases in favor of men. Local contextual differences exist, where women within some hill and mountain ethnic groups in the region have relatively stronger positions within the household and the community (such as some of the hill ethnic groups in Nepal) or have matrilineal systems such as the Khasi and Garo in India, the Mosuo in China, and the Cham in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand).¹² Yet in most instances they too face limited access to and ownership of critical resources, unequal power relations, under representation, discriminatory attitudes and norms, and gender-based violence (Goodrich, Udas, & Larrington-Spencer, 2019).

The Global Gender Gap Report (2020) shows that overall, gender gap performance is improving throughout the globe, including that in Asia, but there is no disaggregated data for mountain women. The Global Gender Gap Performance (GGP) is a synthesis of performances across the four dimensions composing the index: (i) Economic Participation, (ii) Educational Attainment, (iii) Health and Survival and (iv) Political Empowerment¹³. There has been significant improvement in the past 15 years in narrowing the gender gap towards parity and equality, but there continues to be considerable gaps in gender parity in all four dimensions (see Figure 2.1). Across the countries the gender gap is widest in relation to political participation followed by economic participation. Compared to these dimensions the gender gap is closer and at a more significant stage in relation to educational attainment, and health and survival. However, the COVID-19

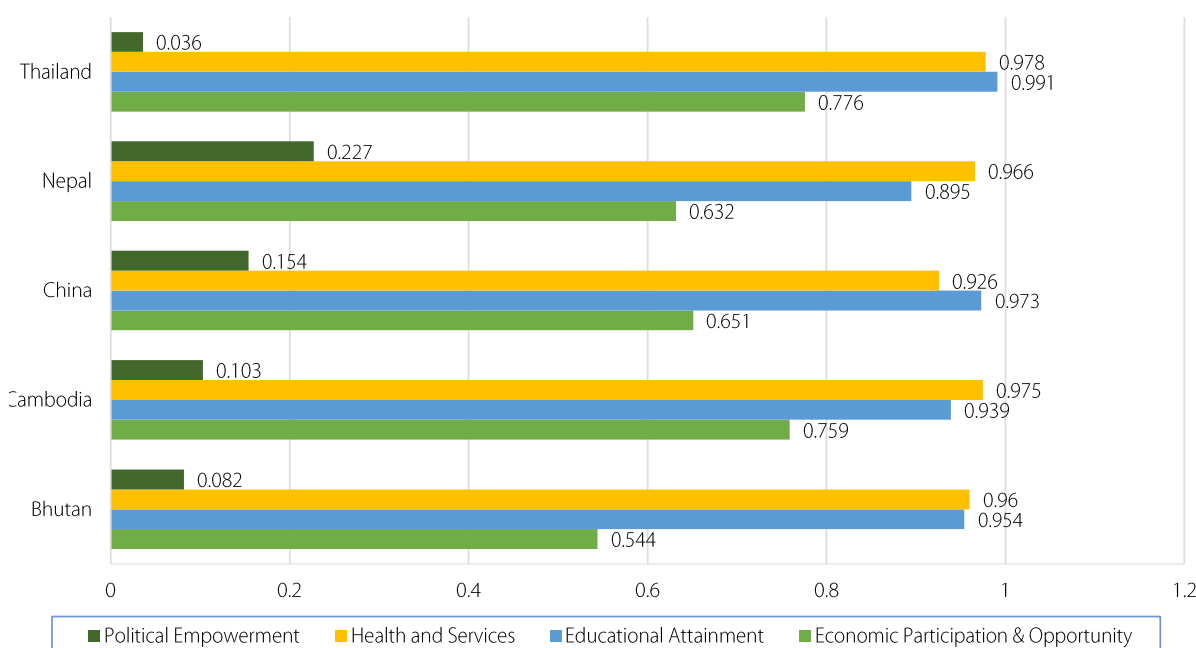


Figure 2.1: State of Gender Parity in Selected Asian Countries, 2020

¹² <https://www.dw.com/en/asias-matrilineal-societies-where-women-rule/g-37854025> (Accessed 2 June 2021)

¹³ Economic Participation and opportunities comprise data related to labour force participation, wage equality, estimated earned income, ratio of women as legislators, senior officers, managers and the ratio as professionals and technical workers; Educational Attainment comprise literacy rate and enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education; Health and Survival comprise sex ratio at birth and life expectancy and Political Participation comprise women in parliament, ministerial positions as well as number of years with female head of state.

pandemic has created some huge setbacks and the World Economic Forum predicts it will now take 135.6 years to reach gender equality - as the pandemic set the world back by a generation, delaying parity by about 36 years.¹⁴

Structural inequality and disparities between men and women create barriers for mountain women to effectively participate in conservation and management initiatives, and make them more vulnerable to economic, social and environmental shocks. Closing the gender gap across the region is important as gender relations have a powerful influence on how environments are used and managed, and hence on patterns of ecological change over time (Leach, Joeke, & Green, 1995). On the other hand, environmental trends and shocks also have an impact on gender relations; most of the time, there are direct implications such as forest or water degradation and depletion alters the gendered distribution of resources and encourages gender-based coping strategies. Policies and interventions aimed at addressing climate change and ecosystem restoration becomes effective when such a two-way relationship between gender relations and environmental change are understood, prioritized and addressed.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) has developed a regional roadmap for implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The objective is to foster cooperation and action at the regional level and facilitate processes to address the common issues. The roadmap has identified six thematic areas for regional cooperation and exchange, namely, Leaving No One Behind, Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change, Management of Natural Resources, Connectivity and Energy. Regional cooperation will be materialized through the generation and use of data/statistics, development of technologies, establishing policy coherence, financing, and partnerships across the region. Though the roadmap considers gender equality and women's empowerment as a central issue of the regional policy agenda, gender

integration is not adequately reflected in the road map, neither in the thematic focus nor as a means of implementation. The proposed actions for fostering regional cooperation are gender blind, even in climate change and natural resource management. It also explains the inadequate level of gender integration and lack of coherence in gender policies/strategies at regional level initiatives and interventions. Thus, a careful review of regional efforts in gender integration and mainstreaming will be useful to identify good practices and gaps.

2.2 Overview of Regional Strategies and Initiatives in Promoting Gender Equality

The Asia Region has a number of regional forums which bring together different countries for mutually reinforcing aims through cooperation and collaboration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation among its ten members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985, comprising eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The main objective of SAARC is to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life; to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials, among a number of other objectives as well.¹⁵ The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is an economic forum established in 1989 to facilitate economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region, going beyond just Asia.¹⁶

Apart from these government lead regional initiatives there are a number of programs/

¹⁵ <https://www.saarc-sec.org/>

¹⁶ APEC Member countries are: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, The Republic of the Philippines, The Russian Federation, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States of America and Viet Nam.

¹⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/01/wef-covid-worsened-the-gender-gap-it-will-take-135-years-to-close.html> (Downloaded on 15 May 2021)

projects that are being implemented in the region spanning two or more countries related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security. The study team conducted an internet search for regional initiatives, as well as consulted with a number of individuals from bilateral and multilateral organizations (see Annex 1). Since this was just a brief review, the study team had to rely on whatever information was readily available on the internet in relation to the projects. The following projects/initiative were identified from the desk review and consultations, and were briefly reviewed. More details of these selected initiatives can be referred to in Annex 2.

1. Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme
2. Capacity Building for Women's Leadership in Farmer Producer Organizations in Asia & the Pacific
3. Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CARE) for South Asia Project
4. Climate Services for Resilient Development in South Asia (CSRSD)
5. Developing Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices in South Asia
6. EmPower – Women for Climate Resilient Societies
7. Food Security and Agriculture Productivity (FSAPP)
8. Forest Landscape Restoration for Improved Livelihoods and Climate Resilience (FLOURISH)
9. Harnessing Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to Benefit Women
9. HI-AWARE Initiative (Himalayan Adaptation, Water and Resilience)
10. Improving Livelihoods and Enhancing Resilience of the Rural Poor in the Hindu Kush Himalayas to Environmental and Socio-economic Changes (AdaptHimal)
11. Resilient Mountain Solutions
12. South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI)
13. Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalaya – the Himalica Initiative
14. The Himalayan Climate Change Adaptation Programme (HICAP)
15. WAVES - Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality

Many of the regional initiatives were focused on Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam possibly due to the shared Lower Mekong River basin. Projects and action research conducted by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) was understandably focused on its eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Other countries covered by some projects were Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Maldives, India and Sri Lanka.

2.3 Integration of Gender Equality in Regional Initiatives

The strategies and approaches adopted by many of these projects were not clearly identified in the information that was available. Yet in many projects that were reviewed, **gender equality** was treated as a crosscutting issue. Nevertheless, some of the overall findings were as follows:

Review of Policies and Integration of Gender Equality in Policies: This was a key area of support in a number of different projects such as CARE for South Asia and others. Several projects aimed at conducting a review of the existing policies in the countries they were being implemented and particularly within the sectors that they were focusing on. For example, CARE for South Asia aims at supporting the preparation of Gender Responsive Climate Policies as well as the preparation of action plans that integrate gender equality. The EmPower project also aims to influence climate change policies in favor of women and gender equality through capacitating women led CSOs, strengthening statistics, and informing policies.

Capacity Building in Gender Mainstreaming: Many projects reviewed had a component of capacity building aimed at different stakeholders – government agencies, civil society organizations, local communities and farmer specifically, as well as local women's groups and cooperatives. Projects like EmPower and WAVES are focusing on developing the capacity of leadership of women from different areas – either at an individual level or in groups. While EmPower aims to strengthen gender equality and human rights in climate change and disaster risk actions, WAVES aims at influencing gender

equality in climate change, REDD+ and forestry, law enforcement, governance and trade policies and processes. Thus, both projects focus on the nexus of gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction as well as women's entrepreneurship. A key element of capacity building in relation to strengthening the **voice and leadership** of women i.e., enabling women's CSOs to understand, participate and influence climate change and DRR decision-making processes, and promoting women's leadership in governments and civil society for climate action and DRR.

The 'Capacity Building for Women's Leadership in Farmer Producer Organizations in Asia and the Pacific Region Project' focused on strengthening the capacities and competencies of rural women leaders in a sustainable way; building support from their male colleagues and counterparts for gender equality and women's leadership; and strengthening the competencies of key members of project stakeholders and representatives of beneficiaries to allow them to express themselves, choose their leaders appropriately and hold them accountable, and manage their own organizations effectively.

Other projects that have capacity building components focus on engaging women farmers or entrepreneurs for supporting their livelihoods. The EmPower project also focuses on access to and use of renewable energy for resilient livelihoods.

Gender Sensitive Climate-Smart Agriculture Practices:

Several projects have focused on supporting the development of climate-smart agricultural practices. Projects like 'Developing Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices in South Asia' aims at identifying adoptable and gender sensitive climate-smart agriculture practices. The project aims that to engage at least 40 percent women and other socially-disadvantaged groups in project activities through specific targeting, gender-responsive capacity building and demonstrations of the climate-smart agriculture portfolios. Promoting and mapping gender equity within the project is expected to contribute to the improved livelihoods, food security and environmental sustainability.

The Climate Services for Resilient Development in South Asia (CSRD) is also focusing on climate resilient farm management, indicated by increased use of climate services and climate information to inform farmers on how to better manage their production systems. It also aims to develop and validate models for agricultural climate services that can be replicated in other regions with similar farming systems and climate risks, while also fine-tuning weather and climate advisories to be most useful to farmers' decision-making.

Collection and Use of Disaggregated Data for Decision Making:

Some projects, like EmPower had a specific aim at strengthening the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and other diversity markers to better understand the gendered impacts of climate change and disasters and to use disaggregated data for policy decisions. The project aimed at building capacity of regional expert groups on gender statistics and climate change, as well as among national governments, through trainings.

The CSRD Project used a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative methods such as Focus Group Discussions to better understand the gendered preferences of farmers for climate and agricultural information, and to better understand the ways in which this information could be used to inform men's and women's decision making.

Focus on Mountains and Women's Empowerment:

Projects like the Himalica Initiative of ICIMOD had an explicit focus on rural mountain livelihoods and empowerment of women from different areas. Pilot interventions included the promotion and development of pro-poor value chains of mountain niche products and services; diversification of livelihood opportunities; and the promotion of ecologically sustainable tourism with direct community involvement and benefit. The initiative paid particular attention to addressing the challenges faced by women and strengthening and empowering their roles in adapting to and managing change. Similarly, AdaptHimal focused on reducing rural poverty in the Hindu Kush Himalayas and enhance the resilience of the poor, especially

women to social, economic and environmental change. The programme beneficiaries included: small and marginal farmers, particularly women; poor and vulnerable communities; emerging rural entrepreneurs in mountain environments; and tribal and ethnic groups. Piloted programs and then integrated it with local institutions to scale them up and mainstream them.

Inter-Related and Inter-Sectoral Action and Impact:

Projects like the HICAP recognized how the different components of the project were interrelated. Climate change impacts on water resources can have far-reaching implications for both ecosystem services and food security. This in turn can lead to increased vulnerability of mountain communities to drivers of climate change, thereby making actions on the adaptation front both urgent and necessary. Such actions will thus need to take into consideration multiple sectors with a coordinated effort.

Food Security and Nutrition: South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI) was created as a targeted step to advance the food and nutrition security agenda and promote intersectoral action in South Asian countries. The programme was a catalyst in driving the food and nutrition security agenda among countries in the region and enhancing sensitivity to nutrition issues in the World Bank's various activities in South Asia. SAFANSI-financed regional activities examined links between gender and malnutrition in a flagship report ("Gender-Inclusive Nutrition Activities in South Asia") - and ways to empower women and their networks to make pathways for FNS gender inclusive programs. The report highlighted that gender was too narrowly addressed in most FNS interventions that focused on mothers' knowledge, skills, and physical health, and overlooked social factors such as household and community support, resource control, and mental health. Additionally, adolescent girls are often ignored by existing programs despite high rates of under nutrition and risks associated with early pregnancy.

SAFANSI also worked with a regional network of women's group, the Business, Enterprise and Employment Support (BEES) Network for Women in South Asia, to improve family

income through dairy development, fisheries management and other entrepreneurial endeavors. These activities led to innovations in seed/food banks and ready-made meals, followed by another SAFANSI-financed project in the Chittagong Hills. The grant also supported the development and incorporation of gender-aware and culturally appropriate behavioral change communications messages to improve the effectiveness of food and nutrition security projects. The programme incorporated greater gender sensitivity in developing behavior change messages for nutrition and into the relevant agriculture policies and programming in the different countries.

Mainstreaming Gender: The IFAD supported project - Capacity Building for Women's Leadership in Farmer Producer Organizations in Asia and the Pacific Region - attempted to assist the performance and impact of IFAD projects in Lao PDR, Maldives and Sri Lanka, through the provision of a focus on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. This was performed through capacity building efforts for partners and stakeholders within the enabling environment, to heighten leadership skills, in civil society and Government. This kind of additional support made it feasible for the ongoing IFAD funded programs in those countries to have a better focus on gender equality and mainstreaming with additional funds and technical assistance.

Knowledge Sharing and Regional Engagement

One of the objectives of regional initiatives is to fostering sharing and cross learning across the countries. Some projects have this component explicit in project documents and actions, while for others, this is implicit. For example, CARE for South Asia adopts promoting knowledge products on gender responsive climate actions and south-south learning on gender issues for policy dialogue. The EmPower Project also aims to improve regional mechanisms, processes and knowledge on climate change and disaster risk reduction through partnerships with regional organizations and CSOs. The WAVE project has developed 31 leaders and their network on gender equality in climate change and forestry actions across seven countries. On the other hand, FLOURIS adopts stimulation of cross learning on forest landscape restoration as

one of the priority actions across the countries. Furthermore, CSRD aims to develop and validate models for agricultural climate services in South Asia that could be replicated in other regions.

Solidarity and Action for A Global Mountain Caucus

Studies have shown that the rise in temperature will be higher in the mountain regions, even if the global temperature rise is limited below 1.5 degrees by the end of the century.¹⁷ Thus, over several years Nepal has tried to draw the attention of the international community towards the adversities faced by mountainous countries. There have been several attempts to

form a 'mountain caucus' in order to highlight these critical conditions of mountain countries in relation to the impact of climate change but due to a lack of strong leadership on this issue and clarity on which countries would form such a caucus, this have not moved forward. Advocacy for increased action and investments on this critical issue is a regional agenda of importance to many mountain countries, especially those who are economically poor. At the 2021 Conference of Parties, Nepal intends to take the lead on the debate on mountain issues by promoting 'Himalayas for Humanity, and lobby for limiting the temperature increase below 1.5 degrees as per the Paris Agreement.¹⁸

¹⁷ <https://www.icimod.org/landmark-study-two-degree-temperature-rise-could-melt-half-of-glaciers-in-hindu-kush-himalaya-region-destabilizing-asias-rivers>

¹⁸ <https://tkpo.st/3uvfRci>

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT OF BHUTAN

3.1. Country Background

Bhutan is a Himalayan landlocked country. The Himalayan nation with an area of 38,394 square kms and has a mountainous landscape varying in elevation from 200 m in the southern foothills to 7,500m in the north. Bhutan's climate varies from subtropical lowlands stretching from southern foothills through temperate regions in the inner Himalayas, to the alpine meadows and glacial mountains in the north. Hence, Bhutan's diverse geographical zone contributes to rich biodiversity and ecosystems making it a biodiversity hotspot, with more than 11,000 species of flora and fauna.

According to the Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB) 2017, the total population was 727,145 with 52.3 percent males and 47.8 percent females (NSB, 2018). The rural and urban composition was 62.2 percent and 37.8 percent respectively. The population grew at the rate of 1.3 percent between 2005 and 2017. Bhutan is largely an agrarian economy with 64 percent of the labour force employed by the agriculture sector but only 2.75 percent of the geographic land area is cultivated. In 2017, the labour force participation rate for women stood at 49.6 percent and 73.6 percent for men in the country. Women continue to have relatively higher engagement in the agriculture sector. As per the Labour Force Survey 2006 around 72 percent of the employed women were in the agricultural and forestry sector compared to that of 55.7 percent employed men. However, the number has decreased to 61.7 percent for women and 41.8 percent for men in 2019 as per the Labour Force Survey 2019 indicating shifts in economic roles and economic growth in sectors (NSB, 2019).

Bhutan is administratively divided into 20 Dzongkhags and comprises 205 Gewogs, and has adopted a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy as a form of government since 2008. The first democratic election was held in 2008, with 72 members in the Parliament. The National Council (upper house) consists of 25 members (one elected from each Dzongkhag and 5 nominated by His Majesty the King of

Bhutan). The National Assembly comprises 47 members elected across 47 constituencies from 20 Dzongkhags. Since the first election, the proportion of women's representation in the parliament has increased from 13.95 in 2008 to 15.3 percent in 2018. Similarly, women's representation in the local government increased from 7.6 percent in 2011 to 11.4 percent in 2016 across the 205 Gewogs.

The Context of Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Ecosystems

Bhutan is a net sink of Green House Gas (GHG) given its large forest coverage and low GHG emission with lesser GHG emitting activities. The annual emissions were 2.1 million tons in 2011, and the estimated sequestration capacity was 6.3 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year. The average temperature of Bhutan is estimated to rise by 0.8-1°C by 2039, or even 1.8°C before the end of the 21st century. Bhutan currently has 71 percent forest coverage and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) is making continued efforts to conserve and protect the environment.

People have started experiencing changing climatic conditions such as changes in weather patterns and rainfall, resulting in natural disasters such as flooding and landslides, droughts and forest fires, storms and hail storms. In particular, the Glacial Lake Outburst (GLOF), triggered by the melting of ice and glaciers, has shown that the Hindu-Kush and Himalaya region will lose 1/3 of glaciers by the end of the century (Wester, Misra, Mukherji, & Shrestha, 2019). Furthermore, the conversion of forest land into other land use is becoming a challenge due to the socio-economic development and transformation. Around 9,426 ha of state reserved forest land was lost to construction of transmission lines, 5,462 ha to farm roads and 5,208 ha to long-term land lease (RGoB, 2016).

Furthermore, Bhutan has a rich and pristine biodiversity housing about 5,600 plant species (94 native plants and 105 endemic species), 700 species of birds, about 200 mammals, 61 species of amphibians and 124 species of reptiles, and 800-900 species of butterflies, including

endangered animal species. Bhutan is also a hub of diverse medicinal herbs with more than 300 species of aromatic and medicinal herbs.

Bhutan has six-agro ecological zones - alpine, cool temperate, warm temperate, dry subtropical, humid subtropical and wet subtropical. Forests in Bhutan are diverse and rich and they constitute the major ecosystem in the country. There is a wide range of forest types and rich vegetation due to its diverse altitudes. Forest covers make up 70.46 percent of the total land coverage and 26.23 to 51.44 percent as a protected area system. With the country's commitment towards conservation of the environment and ecosystems, Bhutan has a rich aquatic ecosystem with abundant water resources, rivers, lakes, marshland and hot springs. The main source of water is in the form of snow, ice/glaciers, lakes, rivers and streams. The average water flow is estimated at 2,325 m³/s (73,000 million m³/s per annum). Small, medium and large lakes are spread across the country.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan affirms that *"Every Bhutanese is a trustee of the Kingdom's natural resources and environment for the benefit of the present and future generations and it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to contribute to the protection of the natural environment, conservation of the rich biodiversity of Bhutan and prevention of all forms of ecological degradation including noise, visual and physical pollution through the adoption and support of environment friendly practices and policies"* (Article 5.1).¹⁹ Furthermore, Article 5.2 (c) mandates the *"government to secure ecologically balanced sustainable development while promoting justifiable economic and social development"*.

Bhutan became a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1995 to guide the country towards sustainable development and the effective management of biodiversity. Bhutan also ratified the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2003 to ensure global food security and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the

use of plant genetic resources. In 2011, Bhutan signed the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

The Context of Food Security

The Royal Government of Bhutan is making continuous efforts towards attaining food security and sufficiency in the country through increasing food production. The initiative aims to meet consumption needs, particularly staple food crops, without having to import food. The average domestic production of cereal was 68 percent of the total requirements from 2014 to 2016. Bhutan imports rice, cereals and dairy products such as milk powder, cheese and butter. In 2017, Bhutan imported 90,000 mt of rice. Almost 50 percent of total food consumption is imported in Bhutan. Only 2.6 percent of the land is arable. Despite the food's low self-sufficiency, almost 60 percent of the population is employed in the agriculture sector. In the 12th FYP²⁰, the Government of Bhutan aims to achieve national food security and self-sufficiency with the focus on commercialization of the agriculture value chain.

In 2017, the poverty rate in Bhutan was 8.2 percent which is a decrease from 12 percent in 2012 with higher poverty in rural areas (11.9 percent) compared to urban areas (0.8 percent). Furthermore, the analysis report states that 1.5 percent of the population belongs to households with per capita below the food poverty line²¹ which is a decrease from 2.8 percent in 2012.

Over the years, the nutrition and health status of women and children in the country has improved with reduced wasting and overweight with 4 and 9 percent respectively. The maternal mortality rates have reduced to 86 live births out of 100,000 births in 2012 which is a reduction from 255 in 2000 (National Healthy Survey, 2012). Studies showed that 44 percent of 6 to 59 months old children, over 35 percent of non-pregnant women and 31 percent of adolescent girls are deficient in micronutrients in which anemia is the proxy indicator (WFP,

¹⁹ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. (<https://www.nab.gov.bt/assets/templates/images/constitution-of-bhutan-2008.pdf> Downloaded 18 May 2021).

²⁰ Twelfth Five Year Plan, 2018-2021 (<https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/12FYP-Volume-II-Central-Plans.pdf>)

²¹ The poverty line is the sum of estimated food and non-food requirements. Bhutan Poverty Analysis Report, 2017

2021)²². The overall life expectancy has increased from 66.3 in 2005 to 71.7 for women and 68.8 for men in 2017.

The Situation of Gender Equality

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan has provisions which demands for the fundamental right to each citizen of their securities (article 7(1)) and “the state responsibilities under the Principle State Policy (article 9 (17 &18)) where the state shall endeavor the appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitutions, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres”. These provide for the basis of legal frameworks towards supporting and achieving gender equality in the country. Bhutan became party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1980. CEDAW Article 14 provides for the equal participation of women and men in climate related sectors to benefit and ensure equal contributions in developmental activities. The laws and policies guarantee equal rights for both men and women to participate in the political, civil, economic and social life at all levels. In the National Assembly, women constituted 15.45 percent of the total (47 members) during the 2018 elections. The recent (2018) National Council elections elected two female members from the Dzongkhags and His Majesty the King appointed two imminent female members. Therefore, the total proportion of female members in the National Council accounts to 16 percent (4 out of 25 seats). In the Local Government (LG) elections, females constituted 11.61 percent of the total members. Disaggregated by position held at the LG, female constitutes 0.98 percent as Gups, 11.71 percent as Mangmi, 13.03 percent as Tshogpa, 36 percent as Thromde Tshogpa and 18.75 percent as Dzongkhag Thromde Thumi (Election Commission of Bhutan, 2018).

In 2020, the unemployment rate for women is 3.3 percent as compared to 2.2 percent of men. Furthermore, the labour force participation of women is 61.2 percent, which is 10.6 percent lower than that of men at 71.8 percent. Studies

have shown that women continue to have a relatively higher engagement in the agriculture sector (61.7 percent). A recent report shows that the gender gap has narrowed at the tertiary level, however, the gender parity in STEM subjects continues to remain a challenge. The female literacy rate has increased from 48.7 percent in 2005 to 63.9 percent in 2017. Similarly, in the health front, institutional delivery has increased from 40.0 percent in 2005 to 93.4 percent in 2017.

A recent study on the prevalence of violence against women and girls revealed that 1 in 3 ever-partnered women aged between 15-65 years experienced one or other forms of partner violence in the last 12 months, and 44.5 percent in their lifetime. The study also showed that the acceptance rate of violence stands at 53.4 percent in which the women and girls aged between 15-64 years continue to believe that their partners are justified to abuse them under certain circumstances (NCWC, 2017). Likewise, the socio-cultural perceptions on the stigmatization and stereotypical beliefs on gender power relations remains to be a challenge in achieving gender equality.

Sustainable Development, Gross National Happiness and Gender Mainstreaming

Bhutan’s rich natural reserve and ecosystem is the result of the sustainable development framework of Gross National Happiness (GNH), a framework coined by His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk, the Fourth King of Bhutan. “His Majesty firmly believed that happiness is an indicator, and a sign of progressive development for the Bhutanese people. He also believed in the legitimacy of public discussion in defining Bhutan’s development goals” (GNH Center)²³. The GNH framework evolved from a noble aspiration, which has been turned into a quantifiable tool of development and has been implemented well before the inception of the SDGs. This overarching philosophy cascades into four pillars, domains and indicators: (i) Good Governance, (ii) Sustainable Socio-economic Development, (iii) Preservation and Promotion of Culture, and (iv) Environmental Conservation. The fourth pillar of GNH “Environmental Conservation” ensures sustainable development

²² World Food Programme. December 2020. (https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000122621/download/?_ga=2.191896490.1436024843.1622106603-1887468517.1622106603)

²³ Gross National Happiness Center (<http://www.gnhcentrebbhutan.org>)

while conserving the environment with the global industrial revolution. The four pillars are further elaborated into nine domains, articulating different elements of GNH: (i) Living standards, (ii) Education, (iii) Health, (iv) Environment, (v) Community Vitality, (vi) Time-use, (vii) Psychological well-being, (viii) Good Governance, and (ix) Cultural Resilience and Promotion.

Since the inception of the first five-year plan in 1961, the developmental outcome has been positive and smooth, including the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Sectoral outcomes of the country's development have increased over the period of time. The country's GDP and per capita has also increased since the first five-year plan. The economic growth rate increased from 3.5 percent in 2018 to 5.46 percent in 2019 and it is projected to grow further. Bhutan is due to graduate from the Least Developed Country status in fulfilling two of the three graduation criteria (viz. human asset index and per capita income).

Gender Mainstreaming in the 12th Five Year Plan

Gender Mainstreaming and women's empowerment is one of the key areas under the five-year plans of the government in Bhutan. The National Key Result Area (NKRA) 13 of the 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) (2013-2018) stresses on a "gender friendly environment for women's

participation" and in the 12th FYP (2018-2023), the National Key Result Area 10 aims towards "gender equality promoted and women and girls empowered (GNHC, 2018). Under this NKRA 10, two strategies are identified: (a) implement specific support measures that are gender friendly; and (b) mainstream gender into policies, plans and programmes, underlining gender as a cross-cutting theme with relevant interventions for mainstreaming. The programmes identified include: (i) enhancing gender equality and strengthening child wellbeing and protection; and (ii) promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The NKRA-10 indicators identified include: percentage of women's representation in Parliament; ratio of gender parity index in tertiary education; and percentage of female employment rate (ibid).

The 12th FYP (2018-2023) formulation, execution and implementation are underpinned by the principles of coordination, consolidation and collaboration to achieve greater gains. The NKRA and Key Performance Indicators under the 12th FYP has a high degree of alignment with the SDGs. The 17 NKRA are closely aligned to the SDGs and their targets and indicators are integrated into the 12th FYP (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Alignment between the National Key Results Areas of Bhutan and the SDGs²⁴

National Key Result Area	17 SDGs	9 Domains of GNH
Healthy Ecosystem	[11] Sustainable Cities and Communities [15] Life on Land	Ecological Diversity and Resilience Good Governance
Carbon Neutrality, Climate & Disaster Resilient	[7] Affordable and Clean Energy [9] Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure [13] Climate Action	Ecological Diversity and Resilience Good Governance
Food & Nutrition Security	[2] Zero Hunger	Living Standards
Gender Equality	[4] Quality Education [5] Gender Equality [8] Decent Work and Economic Growth	Good Governance
Sustainable Human Settlements	[6] Clean Water and Sanitation [11] Sustainable Cities and Communities	Community Vitality Living Standard
Sustainable Water	[6] Clean Water and Sanitation	Living Standard Health Ecological Diversity and Resilience

²⁴ Sustainable Development Goals: (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19369Bhutan_NSDGR_Bhutan_2018.pdf)

The National Commission for Women and Children in Bhutan was established in 2004 under the Ministry of Health to enhance the Royal Government's efforts towards protection and promotion of the rights of women and children in the country. The commission was later upgraded to an autonomous agency under the RGoB in 2008. The commission has the responsibility to establish sustainable and systematic measures to mainstream gender and children's wellbeing and protection perspectives into plans, policies and programs. Since the inception of the gender mainstreaming and

women's empowerment initiative in the country, a significant achievement in gender equality is seen in politics, economics and social fronts. Yet there are considerable challenges as well. Starting with a gender imbalance at many decision-making levels (such as the parliament), there is also minimal integration of women and gender equality concerns in other sectors. Additionally, challenges to change the mindset and advocate on mainstreaming gender still prevails across all sectors and in particular the sectors that this study is addressing (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Opportunities and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming in Bhutan

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To implement policies from a gender perspective. – To train officials in all sectors on gender mainstreaming and implementing from a gender perspective. – Implementing recommendations from various analytical reports. – In depth research and development in four sectors. – Collection of sex disaggregated data and information. – Promotion of equal gender representation at climate decision making bodies. – Education and media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Capacities and knowledge in understanding gender mainstreaming and climate and related sectors nexus. – Lack of in-depth research from gender perspectives in sectors related to climate change, biodiversity, ecosystems and food security. – Lack of sex disaggregated data in climate programs and actions.

3.2 State of Gender Integration in Policies

The following section provides an overview of the policies related to climate change (CC), biodiversity conservation (BC), ecosystem restoration (ER) and food security (FS) in Bhutan and how gender equality has been integrated. Most of the policies in these sectors are gender sensitive. Every policy is screened by the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) which is an apex agency looking after the policy and planning in the country. Inclusive and holistic development are at the core of all development plans and policies, and most of them have gender equality related indicators.

3.2.1 Key Policy Documents

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan (2008)²⁵ includes a strong statement on equal rights and enjoyment of life by all citizens, as well as equal rights of all citizens regardless of sex. The constitution is a mother law in promoting the wellbeing of its citizens. Article 5 of the constitution stresses on the promotion and conservation of the natural environment and rich biodiversity of Bhutan as well as prevention of ecological degradation. The Constitution affirms that every individual is responsible for sustainable development of the country. Articles 7 and 8 focus on fundamental rights and duties of all citizens.

²⁵ The Constitution of Bhutan, (<https://www.nab.gov.bt/assets/templates/images/constitution-of-bhutan-2008.pdf>)

Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness (1999)²⁶ focuses on the development of the country based on the concept of GNH emphasizing the equitable sharing of development benefits and inclusive participation.

3.2.2 Sectoral Policies and State of Gender Integration

Policies Related to Climate Change

National Environmental Protection Act (2007)²⁷ sets out important principles that frame its climate change management and fundamental rights and responsibilities in conserving the environment and “participatory approach” Chapter II.

National Climate Change Policy²⁸ outlines the cross-cutting nature of climate change and its impact across the community and the climate sectors. The objectives of the policy are to: (1) pursue carbon neutral development (mitigation); (2) build resilience to CC (adaptation); (3) ensure means of implementation; and (4) ensure effective and coordinated actions, including mainstreaming gender. Within the objectives, clear provisions have been made for the integration of climate change actions across all sectors and levels. Gender is highlighted as key component while implementing the policy statements under the climate action (NCWC,2020).

Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, Bhutan, 2015²⁹:

The Royal Government of Bhutan submitted its INDC to UNFCCC in 2015. The INDC distinguished nine different mitigation strategies:

- Sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity to sustain environmental services;
- Promotion of a low carbon transport system;
- Minimize GHG emissions through

application of zero waste concept and sustainable waste management practices;

- Promotion of a green and self-reliant economy towards carbon neutral and sustainable development;
- Promotion of clean renewable energy generation;
- Promotion climate-smart livestock farming practices to contribute to poverty alleviation and self-sufficiency;
- Promotion of climate smart agriculture to contribute towards achieving food and nutrition security;
- Energy demand side management by promoting energy efficiency in appliances, buildings and industrial processes and technologies;
- Integration of low emission strategies in urban and rural settlements through green buildings, sustainable construction methods and climate smart cities.

In the area of climate change adaptation, the following priority needs have been identified in the INDC:

- Increase resilience to the impacts of CC on water security through Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)³⁰ approaches;
- Promotion climate resilient agriculture to contribute towards achieving food and nutrition security;
- Sustainable forest management and conservation biodiversity to ensure sustained environment services;
- Strengthening of resilience to CC induced hazards;
- Minimizing climate-related health risks;
- Climate proof transport infrastructure against landslides and flash floods;
- Promotion climate resilient livestock farming practices, contributing towards poverty alleviation and self-sufficiency;
- Enhancement of climate information services for vulnerability and adaptation assessment and planning;
- Promotion of clean renewable and climate resilient energy generation;
- Promotion of climate resilient and low emission strategies in urban and rural settlements.

26 Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness (1999), (<https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/Bhutan%20Vision%202020%20II.pdf>)

27 National Environmental Protection Act (2007), (http://www.nec.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/NEPA_ENG.pdf)

28 National Climate Change Policy, (<https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Climate-Change-Policy.pdf>)

29 Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, Bhutan, 2015 (<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Bhutan/1/Bhutan-INDC-20150930.pdf>)

30 Integrated Water Resource Management (http://www.nec.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/IWRMP_Final1.pdf)

Bhutan National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA, 2006, 2012)³¹

The objectives of the Bhutan NAPA are: (i) to identify urgent and immediate projects and activities that can help communities adapt to the adverse effects of climate change; (ii) to seek synergies and combinations with existing MEAs and developmental activities with an emphasis on the impacts of climate change; and (iii) to integrate climate change risks into the national planning process. Gender equality has been considered as a Guiding Principle by the NAPA. The NAPA process promoted equal participation of both men and women right from the formation of the NAPA Taskforce and gender equality was also emphasized during regional consultations.

Second and Third National Communications to UNFCCC:

The Second National Communication³² from Bhutan to the UNFCCC outlines efforts and actions carried out, and recommendations to address emission and adverse impacts of climate change and gives key recommendations to improve climate change actions in Bhutan. In the Third National Communication³³, within the section of vulnerability and adaptation assessment, a component on gender and social differentiation has been highlighted. It highlights the need to integrate gender considerations into plans, projects and programs to ensure gender friendly technologies and applications as adaptation options to reduce risk and vulnerability of climate change to women and men in the country.

National Environment Strategy, 2020

³⁴adopts gender responsive development as a cross-cutting principle, and outlines strategies to balance conservation and development as well as implementation of existing legislations.

National Waste Management Strategy, 2019³⁵ acknowledges that women play a significant

role in waste management in the country. Gender stereotypes between men and women in the waste management sector are predominant with preference for men for the physically challenging jobs while women are mostly employed as waste pickers and cleaners (NEC, 2019). Including women in decision-making related to waste management is essential since they play a major role in waste management starting from the household level. Thus, the strategy makes it clear that a gender perspective should be incorporated right from the planning phase through implementing waste management ventures, and studies need to take account of gender-disaggregated analysis on waste recycling, reuse and value addition (ibid).

National Energy Efficiency Policy of Bhutan

³⁶outlines provision to promote and develop renewable energy especially focusing on sustainable energy supply and options for the country. The energy savings in the country shall be targeted towards enhancing disposable income for households which is expected to cause trickle down effects on women headed households.

Policies Related to Biodiversity Conservation

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan 2014³⁷

outlines the strategies and programs to conserve natural resources and ecosystems in the country. The strategy highlights the importance of the contributions and access of women and children to the biodiversity in the country.

National Action Plan, Biodiversity Persistence and Climate Change, 2011³⁸

outlines the actions “to enable persistence of biodiversity to adapt to climate change, reduce vulnerability from its impacts, and promote sustainable utilization of biodiversity to engender socio-economic development of the country.” (RGoB, 2011)

31 National Adaptation Program of Action (<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/btn01.pdf>)

32 Second National Communication, Bhutan (https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/SNC_Bhutan.pdf)

33 Third National Communication (<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TNC%20of%20Bhutan%202020.pdf>)

34 National Environment Strategy (http://www.nec.gov.bt/necs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NES-English_web.pdf)

35 National-Waste-Management-Strategy (<http://www.nec.gov.bt/necs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/National-Waste-Management-Strategy-2019.pdf>)

36 National Energy Efficiency Policy of Bhutan (<https://www.moea.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Final-EEC-Policy.pdf>)

37 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan 2014, (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/bt/bt-nbsap-v4-en.pdf>)

38 National Action Plan, Biodiversity Persistence and Climate Change, (http://www.nbc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/National-Paper-on-Biodiversity-and-Climate-Change-_Bhutan1.pdf)

Policies Related to Ecosystem Restoration

National Forest Policy 2017³⁹ outlines provisions towards sustainable management of forest resources and biodiversity. The policy broadly captures the sustainable approach towards inclusivity of all dimensions of society in forest conservation process. The policy enables equal “Benefit Sharing” by men and women; amongst the community members; from the community forest initiatives which would immensely benefit a large number of women who are mostly residing in rural areas and engaged in the agriculture sector.

National Strategy for Community Forestry, 2010⁴⁰ outlines strategic directions for community forest development which aims to contribute towards rural livelihoods, poverty reduction and improved forest conditions. Equal participation and gender representation during the capacity building and related training sessions on the management and planning for the community forest is highlighted as the main approach in implementing the strategy.

Policies Related to Food Security

Food and Nutrition Security Policy of Bhutan (2014)⁴¹ has the Vision – “All people living in Bhutan at all times have physical, economic and social access to safe and adequate nutritious food for a healthy and active life contributing to realization of Gross National Happiness”. The guiding principle of the policy states that “Food and nutrition security programs must be gender sensitive and socially inclusive of the interest of poor and vulnerable communities and individuals”.

Agriculture Extension Strategy (2019-2028)⁴²: The importance of gender mainstreaming and gender friendly agriculture tools and equipment is stressed in both of these

strategies, and these are highly relevant to food security as well.

National Framework for Organic Farming in Bhutan (2006)⁴³ outlines situations and recommendations for organic production in the country. It provides strategies and direction for policy and programme implementation. The framework also tries to address issues related to gender equality and women empowerment. Organic Farming offers an opportunity to contribute towards achievements in six of the eight targets: (1) Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, (2) Promote gender equality and empower women, (3) Reduce child mortality (4) Improve maternal health, (5) Ensure environmental sustainability and (6) Develop a global partnership for development.

Policies Related to Gender Equality

National Gender Equality Policy provides an overarching guidance for the gender mainstreaming actions. The policy comprises of gender dimensions into social, economic and political fronts.

The National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG) (2008-2013)⁴⁴ promotes gender mainstreaming across all policies, programs and projects, and promotes strategies and actions on gender mainstreaming initiatives, capacity building, collection and use of gender-disaggregated data, and gender-related information.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Bhutan became a party to CEDAW in 1980 and ratified the convention in 1981. As a Party, Bhutan has reported to the CEDAW Committee periodically, and is receiving recommendations and observations from the Committee for further implementation. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and Agenda 2030 with its Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), are important guiding frameworks along with GNH for Bhutan's development.

39 National Forestry Policy, (<https://bhutan.eregulations.org/media/FNCRR%202017.pdf>)

40 National Strategy for Community Forestry, (<http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/bhu167090.pdf>)

41 Food and Nutrition Security Policy of Bhutan (2014), (https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/FNS_Policy_Bhutan_Changed.pdf)

42 Agriculture Extension Strategy (2019-2028) (<http://www.doa.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Agriculture-Extension-Strategy-2019-2028.pdf>)

43 National Framework for Organic Farming in Bhutan (2006), (http://www.organicpasifika.com/pasifikapolicytoolkit/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/08/Bhutan_Organic_framework.pdf?ff88f8f8f)

44 National Plan of Action for Gender, (<http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/bhu168702.pdf>)

3.3. Gender Dimensions Within the Institutional Context

3.3.1 Major Institutions

The key government and non-governmental institutions related to the four study sectors are as follows:

Ministry of Agriculture and Forest (MoAF)⁴⁵ of Bhutan has a vision “to ensure sustainable social and economic well-being of the Bhutanese people through adequate access to food and natural resources” Due to the wide outreach, a Gender Focal Point is appointed in each of the Departments and Divisions under the MoAF. They are responsible for initiating gender mainstreaming efforts /activities and advocate on gender related aspects in their respective departments/divisions. Due to the large number of civil servants, there is a need for sensitization on gender issues/aspects and integrating gender equality into their daily work.

Department of Forests and Park Services is responsible “to conserve and manage Bhutan’s forest resources and biodiversity to ensure social, economic and environmental well-being, and to maintain a minimum of 60 percent of the land under forest cover for all times to come”.

Department of Livestock is responsible “to increase livestock productivity by ensuring prompt delivery of appropriate technologies and services through commodity-based approach.”

Department of Agriculture is responsible for “achieving food and nutrition security, agricultural transformation through innovative and sustainable technologies, diversified and competitive economic/ production options, inclusive and sustainable policies and programs.”

National Biodiversity Centre was designated as the National Focal Point for Nagoya Protocol with the mission “to ensure that biological resources effectively are conserved, sustainably used and benefits equitably shared for enhancement of livelihood, food security and environmental well-being of the country.”

National Environment Commission is the nodal agency for conservation and protection of the natural environment in the country. Gender Focal Points have been appointed but their capacity to integrate gender dimensions into climate actions is limited.

National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) is the nodal agency for promoting the rights of women and children in the country through gender and child responsive interventions. There is a network of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) who undertake initiatives on gender mainstreaming in their sectors. The “Gender Expert Group” serves as a technical group to provide technical backstopping on gender mainstreaming. Gender Focal Points are appointed in ministries and other agencies to carry out gender mainstreaming initiatives. The GFP will be responsible for mainstreaming gender in her/his/ agencies/ organizations including Local Governments at the organizational, policy and operations levels. In this way policies and programs will be gender-informed and their potential to benefit women and men, girls and boys of Bhutan will be enhanced. However, the institutionalization of the GFPs and ensuring accountability still remains a challenge. This requires advocacy and awareness raising on gender issues at local levels. The high turnover rate of GFPs across the agencies and Dzongkhags has challenged proper institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in their agencies/districts. GFPs who served for two to three years are well versed on gender issues and gender mainstreaming. However, with the high turnover rate, new GFPs keep coming in. Thus, it becomes difficult to gain progress on the initiative on gender mainstreaming from basic level to advanced level.

A Gender Expert Group is instituted under the NCWC to provide technical backstopping to the NCWC in carrying out gender initiatives. The GEG is expected to support the NCWC secretariat in mainstreaming gender into laws, policies through review and formulation, mainstreaming gender into plans and policies and to ensure that laws, policies and plans are implemented and monitored.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (www.moaf.gov.bt)

Gross National Happiness Commission is responsible “To steer national socio-economic development guided by the principles of GNH.” A Gender Focal Point is appointed in the agency to undertake gender mainstreaming work.

National Statistics Bureau is the apex agency for statistics to enable informed and evidence-based policies and planning. A Gender Focal Point appointed in the agency to undertake gender mainstreaming work.

Ministry of Finance, Department of National Budget is the coordinating agency of Gender responsive Planning and Budgeting. Institutionalized Gender Responsive planning and budgeting through budget call circular. Gender is mainstreamed into the budgeting system; however, the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting couldn't progress.

Ministry of Economic Affairs, Department of Industries addresses issues related to emission from industries and related climate actions.

Department of Renewable Energy is responsible for renewable energy development. A GFP has been appointed to undertake the initiatives on gender mainstreaming in renewal energy programs, but the focal persons lack full capacity to mainstream gender.

Royal Society for Protection of Nature is an NGO responsible to inspire personal responsibility and participation to achieve an environmentally sustainable society, for education and awareness on climate actions.

3.3.2 Main Implementing Partners

Other agencies that work in the key study sectors are Greener Way, Clean City, Druk Waste, Clean Bhutan, etc. In general, the officials in these agencies are constrained by the lack of / limited gender knowledge especially gender mainstreaming and gender analysis, implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting. Gender mainstreaming requires deep diving into the programs and impact level. However, it is also recognized that in some cases, the proper expertise may be unavailable to identify the key links and operationalize them on the ground.

Greener Way and Clean City: With the motto of “Let's learn to manage our waste more responsibly”, the Greener Way aims to efficiently manage waste in Thimphu in an environment-friendly manner. While the Greener way has initiated its operation in south Thimphu, clean city has been operating mostly in north Thimphu. Clean city promotes “Reduce, Recycle, Refuse, Reuse, Rethink and be Responsible” for our waste. These two private firms collaborate and coordinate with Thimphu Thromde and NEC for waste collection and management.

Druk Waste: Druk waste operates in Paro Dzongkhag in coordination with the Municipality and the Dzongkhag administration for waste collection in order to promote clean environment.

Clean Bhutan⁴⁶ is a Non-Governmental Organization under the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. Established in 2014, its mission is “To change the mindset of every Bhutanese to be responsible citizens and practice sustainable consumption lifestyle by using available resources most efficiently”

The gender mainstreaming and climate actions are the collective initiative of both government and non-government, civil society organizations. The agencies work closely in implementing the policies and plans related to gender and climate change. Stakeholder involvement is one of the key steps while formulation of any policies, programs and plans. Furthermore, all relevant stakeholders are equally participating in advocacy programs and capacity building programs on climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem restorations and gender. CSOs and private sectors are the key stakeholders during the formulation, planning and programming of gender mainstreaming work which is carried out mainly to ensure participation and aspects from across the sectors. Gender Focal Points are appointed in each of the above-mentioned ministries. The Gender Focal Points are responsible for gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that gender consideration is made into their plans, policies and programs

46 Clean Bhutan (https://cleanbhutan.org/?page_id=57)

3.4. Gender Integration in the context of Interventions

3.4.1 Key Projects/Interventions

Among a number of different development programs being implemented in Bhutan, a few have been selected which have attempted to integrate a gender sensitive approach.

- i. **Food Security and Agriculture Productivity Project (FSAPP)⁴⁷:** This project has a full time Gender Expert (50 percent time of RDC Staff) to oversee the gender aspects of the project. Gender sensitization is included in the project document. Gender equality indicators are included in the project implementation plan, for example, the number of farmers who are members of association groups including producer groups, cooperatives, etc.
- ii. **Community Forestry (CF) Development Program:** Within the by-laws of the CF management plans, as part of PRA tools, gender sensitive approaches are used. Governance training is conducted frequently to the CF members to ensure an equal platform for both men and women to be CF Leaders.
- iii. **Living Landscapes - Securing High Conservation Values in South-Western Bhutan, IKI, Germany:** A gender lens is used in the programme design and implementation. A comprehensive gender action plan has been developed which takes into consideration the need for integration of gender into its programs. For example, the need for a certain percentage of participation from women and girls. The programme allocates adequate resources for gender-related components; it includes a gender analysis and action plan (e.g., gender sensitization training for programme stakeholders, and technical and leadership training based on women's needs, etc.). A separate set of indicators in the action plan will assist the programme to assess the progress toward gender mainstreaming. One of the major activities

under the gender action plan is to create awareness and build capacity on gender mainstreaming.

- iv. **Non-wood Forest Product Development Programs (NWFP):** Women led self-help groups have been promoted to encourage entrepreneurs for taking up NWFP based enterprises.⁴⁸ The projects mainly aim to enhance the skills of women in home-based manufacturing from natural resources such as Amla pickle and candy making, and cane and bamboo handicraft items. The programs will generally benefit women in rural areas and enhance income generating platforms to those participants.

3.4.2 Relevant Analytical Approaches within the Interventions/Programs

Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines⁴⁹: This is a set of guidelines developed by National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and it contains approaches and procedures for gender mainstreaming in each sector, with checklists for planning and implementation, law and policy development. The guideline aims to ensure sectoral benefit from gender integration in their projects and plans. The key purpose of the guideline is to: (i) establish a common approach to gender mainstreaming in sectors; (ii) to provide a basic step by step approach to gender mainstreaming; and (iii) to support optimal utilization of resources and services equally for both male and female citizens of Bhutan.

Mainstreaming Reference Group⁵⁰:

Mainstreaming Reference Groups (MRG) are an approach to mainstream crosscutting issues such as gender, environment, climate-change, disaster and poverty, into all aspects of plans, policies and programs at local government level. The MRG comprises of sectoral heads in districts. It basically serves as the entry point for integrating gender into the sectoral plans and

47 Food Security and Agriculture Productivity Project (<http://www.doa.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FSAPP-OM-August-2018-final.pdf>)

48 Non-wood Forest Product (www.moaf.gov.bt)

49 Gender Mainstreaming Guideline (<https://www.ncwc.gov.bt/publications/Gender%20Mainstreaming%20guideline.pdf>)

50 Mainstreaming Reference Group, (https://www.unpei.org/files/pdf/mainstreaming%20gecdp%20into%20development%20policies_%20plans%20and%20programmes%20in%20bhutan.pdf)

projects. MRG was formed in ensuring strategic integration of gender considerations into diverse sectors at local government level. It is the intermediate level which serves as a bridge between the policy makers and implementers at local level.

Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting in Bhutan⁵¹:

Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) is an initiative to incorporate gender perspectives in public finance management and budget allocation systems. GRPB⁵² is a means to strengthen the implementation of actions from a gender perspective. The GRPB Working Group is chaired by the Director of the Department National Budget. Other members of the working group include representatives of key sectors; NCWC, GNHC, DLG, one representative each from a CSO. The GRPB initiative was piloted in three ministries - Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forest in 2016. The annual budget call notification clearly directs the three pilot agencies to include narrative policy statements and budget on gender.

Gross National Happiness (GNH) Policy

Screening Tools⁵³: The GNH screening tool is used to screen all policies submitted by the respective sectors. Gender is one of the indicators during policy screening.

3.4.3 Framework of Monitoring and Evaluation

The plans and development programs are monitored by Gross National Happiness Commission through monitoring its NKRA and KPIs. The programs are monitored through a results-based monitoring matrix as per the FYP of the country. Agencies also submit mid-term review and terminal review reports to the Gross National Happiness Commission indicating the progress of their activities under the FYP by highlighting challenges and gaps as well.

The Annual Performance Agreement⁵⁴ is prepared and implemented by respective agencies. These agreements aim to institutionalize a systematic planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ministries/agencies priority activities in line with the Five-Year Plan. Agencies prepare and submit quarterly reporting, mid-term reporting and annual reporting of APA. Gender is one of the components of all monitoring and evaluation. Gender mainstreaming is emphasized as one of the NKRA during the FYPs.

51 Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting, (<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/10.%20Bhutan.pdf>)

52 Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Framework, (https://www.ncwc.gov.bt/publications/GRPB_Strategic_Framework1594271609.pdf)

53 GNH Policy Screening Tools (<https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/policy-formulation/>)

54 Annual Performance Agreement (http://www.gpms.gov.bt/?page_id=422)

GOOD PRACTICE ON INSTITUTIONS (BHUTAN)

A Structured Network of Gender Focal Points Contributes towards Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Focal Points (GFPs) refer to staff within an organization with responsibility to mainstream gender into sectoral plans and programs including implementation of gender mainstreaming strategy and building capacity. GFPs support gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting staff and professionals at every stage from policy formulation to needs assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects in different sectors.

The appointment of GFP in ministries and organizations is observed as a common practice across the region for gender integration. But Bhutan presents a rather unique example of creating a network of GFPs at different layers enabling a bottom-up approach and establishing micro-macro linkages (see Fig 3.1). In Bhutan, GFPs are appointed in all sectoral ministries and other agencies including at the local governments. Each department within the different agencies, appoints a GFP who interact with field offices, staff and professionals, and bring the issues to the ministry level network of GFPs. This group consolidates department level issues, provides backstopping and recommendations on gender mainstreaming within the ministry. Each ministry has a lead GFP who represents the ministry at the network of GFPs at National Commission of Women and Children (NCWC).

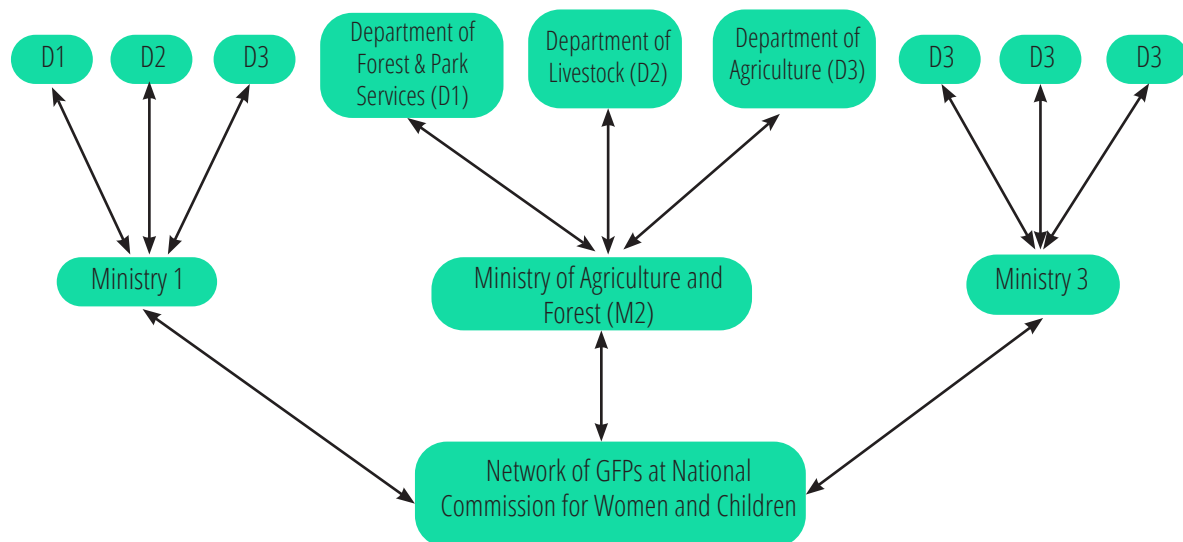


Figure 3.1: Network of Gender Focal Points in Bhutan for Gender Mainstreaming

The NCWC is an autonomous agency under the Royal Government of Bhutan, responsible for promoting the rights of women and children in the country through gender and child responsive interventions. It establishes sustainable and systematic measures to mainstream gender and children's wellbeing and protection perspectives into plans, policies and programs. The Gender Expert Group instituted under the NCWC provides the technical backstopping necessary to carry out gender responsive initiatives. This Expert Group is expected to support the NCWC Secretariat in mainstreaming gender into laws, policies through review and formulation, mainstreaming gender into plans and policies and to ensure that laws, policies and plans are implemented and monitored.

The way GFPs are structured and networked in Bhutan provides two important opportunities. Firstly, the department level GFPs are linked at the ministry and commission level and can facilitate a bottom-up approach in the collection/ consolidation of gender issues that need to be addressed. Secondly, linking the department and ministry level GFPs to the nodal agency of Gender Equality (i.e., the NCWC) empowers the GFPs with exposure, linkage and influence, and enables them to establish micro macro linkages for evidence-based policy making. Despite such a rigorous structure, the GFPs lack adequate capacity for gender analysis, mainstreaming, resources, and the turnover among the GFPs is also found to be a challenge. Thus, GFPs need to be empowered with financial resources to enable effective institutionalization of the GFP system and its functions.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTEXT OF CAMBODIA

4.1. Country Background

The **Kingdom of Cambodia** covers an area of 181,035 km and is located in mainland Southeast Asia, sharing her borders with Thailand, and Vietnam. Cambodia's main geographical features are the low-lying Central Plain that are surrounded by mountains.⁵⁵ Cambodia's low mountain ranges-representing the walls of the bowl. The country is fringed to the north by the Dangrek Mountain plateau⁵⁶, bordering Thailand and Laos, to the north-east by the Annamese Mountains, in the south-west by the Cardamom Mountains and in the South by the Elephant Mountains. The highest peak is Aural Mountain, sitting at 1,810 metres (5,938 ft) above sea level.

Plateau and Mountains: This area covers 68,061 km in north-east of Cambodia. Many indigenous groups inhabit the mountainous and plateau areas. The country comprises a multi-ethnic society, home to 24 indigenous groups which are spread across 15 provinces⁵⁷, with the highest numbers in Rattankiri, Mondolkiri and Kratie provinces⁵⁸. They comprise about 1.4 percent⁵⁹ of the national population (around 400,000 individuals) over approximately 25 percent of the national territory.⁶⁰ Most of Cambodia's protected forests are in these areas.

55 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Cambodia

56 The Dangrek Mountain - meaning 'carrying-pole mountains' in Khmer - is a range forming a natural border between Cambodia and Thailand. The Annamese is a major range of eastern Indochina, extending approximately 1,100 km through Laos, Vietnam, and a small area in northeast Cambodia. The Cardamom Mountain range lies in the south west of Cambodia and Eastern Thailand, the majority of which lies in Cambodia. The Dâmrei Mountains (literally the "Elephant Mountains") refer to a mountain range situated in south-western Cambodia, traversing around 110 km north-south as a succession of the Cardamom Mountains, dropping abruptly to the sea near the town of Kampot province in Cambodia. Aural Mountain ("Phnom Aural" in Khmer) is the tallest peak in Cambodia, in the eastern part of the Cardamom Mountains. To protect the biodiversity of the mountains, Phnom Aural Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1993.

57 <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/ethnic-minorities-and-indigenous-people/>

58 Administration divisions in Cambodia comprise - National, Province, District, Commune, and Villages.

59 This figure is contested by Cambodian indigenous organizations as too low. A dialogue is open on these issues with the institutions which should aid in the design of a census process that will catch more in-depth ethnic diversity in the country.

60 <https://www.iwgia.org/en/cambodia/3599-iw-2020-cambodia.html>

The area includes Kampong Speu, Kratie, Stung Treng, Preah Vihear, Rattanakiri, and Mondulkiri provinces.⁶¹

Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Food Security Context of Cambodia

Climate Change (CC): Cambodia is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change. The Global Risk Index (1999-2018) placed Cambodia at 12th place among the most vulnerable countries.⁶² The World Risk Index (2019), calculated as a product of exposure and vulnerability, categorized Cambodia as among the 'very high' impacted countries⁶³. Climate change may reduce the country's annual average GDP growth by 6.6 percent and absolute GDP by 0.4 percent in 2020, by 2.5 percent in 2030, and up to 9.8 percent in 2050. This may delay reaching upper middle-income status by one year.⁶⁴

The country is particularly vulnerable to floods, droughts, windstorms, and seawater intrusion.⁶⁵ Vulnerability to climate change is linked to the country's characteristics as a post-civil war, least developed country, with nearly 80 percent of the population living in rural areas. Weak adaptive capacity, poor infrastructure, and limited institutions exacerbate the country's vulnerability to climate change.⁶⁶ Different social groups experience climate vulnerability differently, and women, children, the disabled, the elderly and other socially marginalized groups are often hit harder. Based on the Climate Change Vulnerability Mapping for Southeast Asia, the plateau and mountain areas of Mondolkiri, Rattankiri and Kampong Speu were the most vulnerable among the provinces

61 https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/sites/default/files/2019-10/Indigenous%20and%20Traditional%20Practices_March%202019_En.pdf

62 Source: Eckstein et al. (2019)

63 Source: Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft (2019)

64 Addressing climate change impacts on the economic growth in Cambodia (2019).

65 https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Cambodia%20First/20201231_NDC_Update_Cambodia.pdf

66 <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/cambodia/vulnerability>

in Cambodia, where Mondolkiri and Rattankiri are home to the majority of indigenous groups.⁶⁷ Based on the results from the 2019 Indigenous Women's Voice, Livelihood and Climate Change Adaptation study in Mondolkiri province, the indigenous people, especially women have had a direct experience with extreme climate hazards including drought, flood and lightning strikes that happened in 2011, 2017 and 2018. Their cash crops - rice, cassava, cashew nuts, and vegetables - were damaged and livestock were destroyed. Consequently, they experienced severe food insecurity for many years later. It was also found that in the face of climate disasters, many men and women from the indigenous groups have had limited capacity to respond to the climate disasters.⁶⁸

Gender in Climate Change: Consequently, women and men in Cambodia will not experience climate change impact in the same way. Women in rural areas have primary domestic responsibilities to secure water, food and energy for cooking and other household activities. Therefore, the effects of climate change, including drought, flood, uncertain rainfall and deforestation, make it harder for them to secure these resources especially poor women. Compared to men, women face historical disadvantages, including limited access to decision-making and economic assets that compound the challenges of the impact of climate change.⁶⁹ In addition, gender is also likely to affect poverty levels; households headed by women are more likely to be vulnerable to poverty as women have limited economic opportunities and access to resources due to social hierarchies (ibid). The government is taking steps to mainstream gender equality in climate change policies and programs (more of which will be discussed later) and has also signed up to a number of international treaties and commitments (Boxes 4.1 & 4.2)

Biodiversity Conservation (BC): Cambodia is one of 35 Global Biodiversity Hotspots that provide habitats for thousands of plant and wildlife species, many of which are on the

67 https://www.preventionweb.net/files/7865_12324196651MappingReport1.pdf

68 https://drive.google.com/file/d/10gMZMtOR-Jp56ElgRjEfyd-vC_6BdnWgy/view

69 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2008) Gender perspectives on climate change. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/issuespapers/Gender%20and%20climate%20change%20paper%20final.pdf>

Box 4.1: Mainstreaming Gender into Climate Change

The concept of gender mainstreaming was first proposed in the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. The idea has been promoted in the United Nations development community and was formally featured in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, as cited in the document that resulted from the conference - the Beijing Platform for Action (UN 2002). The Paris Declaration made the global position clearer by defining who (institutions) should do what (programs and projects) and how (way forward). Cambodia is one of the signatories of all the global initiatives. Therefore, the concept of gender mainstreaming into climate change adaptation investments is fully aligned with the global and Cambodian national policy and strategic documents.

Source: Mainstreaming Gender into Agriculture CCA Investments, Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry, Cambodia, April 2018)

IUCN Red List of threatened and endangered species. The country has the largest remaining extensive intact block of a unique landscape of exceptional global importance for biodiversity conservation in Southeast Asia and contains 5 of the 9 important Biodiversity Corridors in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region.⁷⁰

The national biodiversity status assessment was undertaken in 2016 to describe the status and trends of Cambodia's biodiversity (Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, 2016). The assessment highlighted significant gaps in data and coordination, as well as the strength for future assessments. The inventory indicated a diversity of 162 mammal species across both terrestrial and marine systems, 601 bird species with seven on the new global Evolutionally Distinct and Globally Endangered list, 1,357 fish species across both fresh and salt water systems, 173 reptile species, 72 amphibian species, 671 invertebrates, and 3,113 plant species. The observed trend in diminishing fish species diversity is a result of unsustainable harvest and this drop-in fish species diversity is likely to become exacerbated by the increased

70 Capacity-building workshop for selected sub-regions of Asia on the restoration of forests and other ecosystems to support the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Bangkok, Thailand, 2016

damming of the Mekong and its tributaries. The general trend shows an increasing understanding of species diversity, where the most significant gaps in knowledge centre around amphibian and plant species. Ongoing studies also identify potential extinctions (ibid).

Ecosystems Restoration (ER): In relation to ecosystem diversity, an overall trend indicates a shift toward increased human use of ecosystems, that is increasing agricultural, commercial and extractive use. Based on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016) ecosystems in Cambodia refers to agricultural land, forest coverage, inland water and coastal ecosystems (Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, 2016). The Ministry of Environment has started to highlight ecosystems and their services, but more work is needed especially regarding vulnerable ecosystems.

Cambodia's forest cover declined from 49.48 percent in 2014 to 48.14 percent in 2016 due to clearance for agriculture, settlement expansion, infrastructure development, illegal logging, and unsustainable harvesting of wood fuel. This deforestation is closely linked to other key environmental issues such as land degradation, soil erosion, extinction of wildlife and general loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which resulted in reduced resilience to disasters and climate change. Coastal development, marine-based pollution, sedimentation, overfishing and destructive fishing are the major pressures impacting coral reefs in Cambodia, including in the Koh Rong Marine National Park, with a threat index considered high for 90 percent of the reefs and very high for 10 percent (Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, 2016). Loss of fertility in agroecosystem and decline in food crop productivity are increasing in areas where shifting cultivation is practiced with more and more reduced regenerative fallow periods and in areas where certain monocultures are practiced.⁷¹

Gender disparities in Cambodia's forest conservation and biodiversity sectors can be largely attributed to social norms that perceive forestry as a male profession. Women's rights and responsibilities in forest management and protection are often seen as secondary

⁷¹ For example: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4580e.pdf>

Box 4.2: International Conventions, Protocols and Commitments of the Royal Government of Cambodia related to Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Change

1. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
2. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification, which includes the Mandate on Gender
3. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL),
4. The Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, etc.
5. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which includes the Lima Work Program on Gender
6. Kyoto Protocol in 2002 and the Paris Agreement in 2017

Source: USAID Cambodia Green Future Action 2019 and Cambodia Initial National Communication to UNFCCC (2002)

to those of men, as women rely on forests primarily for subsistence, where 80 percent of rural women are involved in collecting and selling non-timber forest products.⁷² These challenges prevent women from participating in forestry and biodiversity conservation planning and management meetings, resulting in low female representation in forest-related decision-making processes. The social attitudes and cultural norms in Cambodia believe that women biologically lack the physical strength necessary for participating in forest protection, and that it is dangerous for women to go to the forest because they risk to be raped by illegal loggers or others.⁷³

Indigenous groups in northeastern mountainous areas had self-governing structures, dwelling within a specific territory where they farmed, fished, hunted and collected various products from the forest which they practiced shifting cultivation. Their lives completely relied on the natural resources such as forest and its biodiversity. However, the land available for communities is now surrounded by large plantations granted as

⁷² FA 2008; MoWA 2009

⁷³ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WJCQ.pdf

Economic Land Concessions to companies or private individuals. The indigenous farming system has been forcibly transformed into a mix of permanent crops (prevalently cashew nuts), combined with a few upland farms wherever this is still possible. Land is becoming scarcer and natural resources are being depleted, undermining the traditional livelihoods and coping mechanisms of the indigenous groups.⁷⁴ Food Security Context

Food Security (FS): Cambodia has made substantial improvements in food security and nutrition (FSN) over the past two decades, yet food security and under-nutrition remain important public health concerns in the country. In the 2020 Global Hunger Index⁷⁵, Cambodia ranks 76th out of the 107 countries with a score of 20.6, indicating that the country has a level of hunger that is “serious”. An estimated 2.3 million Cambodians (14.6 percent) still face severe food insecurity, even though households spend over 70 percent of their income on food and the dietary quality is poor (ibid). Specifically, indigenous groups who are living the mountainous areas are among the poorest and most marginalized segments of Cambodian society.

Nearly one-third (32 percent) of children under five are stunted, 24 percent are underweight, and 10 percent are wasted.⁷⁶ Child malnutrition reveals an equity gap in Cambodia: stunting is more common in rural areas (34 percent) than urban areas (24 percent) and wasting is also more common in rural areas, among children whose mothers are thin (BMI < 18.5 kg) and among children whose mothers have no education.⁷⁷ Poverty also plays a major role in how malnutrition impacts the population with children from households in the lowest wealth quintile more likely to be malnourished than children from households that are wealthier. Mortality rates of children in mountain areas are twice that of the national average.⁷⁸

Gender in Food Security: Women in Cambodia play a major role in all components of food security - food production, marketing, household income/budgeting or as care takers – and yet their role is negatively impacted by issues such as high illiteracy, lack of education and knowledge, and poor health and nutritional status (e.g., very high maternal mortality rates and iron-deficiency anaemia prevalence of 65 percent among pregnant women).⁷⁹

The government places a high priority on food security and nutrition, and considers this an important multi-sectoral issue for human resource development. “The Government acknowledges that food security and nutrition are individual fundamental rights in Cambodia society as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of which Cambodia is a signatory.”⁸⁰

Situation of Gender Equality in Cambodia

In Cambodia, men are traditionally portrayed as strong, rational and powerful, and women as gentle, emotional, weak, and humble. The moral codes of Chbab Srey (code of conduct for women) and Chbab Pros (code of conduct for men) underpin these stereotypes setting out the ideal of masculinity and femininity. However, gender norms and roles are not static. Change in the attitudes and informal rules that influence social expectations of women and men are underway, with for example, educational and professional opportunities opening up for women. Women who are from the high-status economic backgrounds have more opportunities than women who are from poor families. Overall, Cambodian women exercise considerable autonomy and independence. They can own assets, manage financial transactions, and contribute to household decision making. Both men and women can inherit property, and the gender division of labour can be complementary and flexible, with men and women performing a range of productive and household tasks.⁸¹

74 <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4004en/ca4004en.pdf>

75 Global Hunger Index, March 2019

76 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) 2014, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR312/FR312.pdf>

77 Cambodia Nutrition Profile, USAID, March 2018

78 <https://www.care-cambodia.org/emw-background>

79 <http://foodsecurity.gov.kh/pages/content/food-security-nutrition-data>

80 <http://www.fao.org/cambodia/news/rss/detail-events/en/c/884930/>

81 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/33752/files/cambodia-country-gender-analysis.pdf>

In practice, however, traditional norms and low levels of education and literacy still limit the choices and options that girls and women have. Women still have a higher burden of childcare and domestic responsibilities that lowers their time for productive engagement and often their motivation to take on leadership positions in the workplace. Women from poor and rural households tend to be overrepresented in domestic work, home-based work, as street vendors, and smallholder farmers.

In Cambodia, the vulnerability of the women and men are based on multiple factors such as other forms of social identity and influence including poverty-wealth, geographical location-remoteness, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and migration status in addition to gender identities. The intersection of gender with other socio-economic factors imposes individuals and groups to multiple layers of social exclusion and vulnerability.⁸² For example, women from indigenous groups in mountain areas like Mondolkiri and Rattanakiri provinces are the most vulnerable; indigenous women are seldom only housewives, as they have multiple productive roles as farmers, gatherers, fishers and agricultural labourers.⁸³ Indigenous girls also get married earlier compared to the Khmer - 10.5 percent of indigenous girls aged 15 years or less get married earlier compared to only 1.5 percent of Khmer, and 55 percent are married between 15–19 years compared to 39.7 percent Khmer girls.⁸⁴

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a strategy to be prioritized in the interest of poverty alleviation, good governance, social development and economic growth. Notable, the RGC has begun to pay greater attention to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, laying out specific measures in policy frameworks. The Constitution of Cambodia, adopted in 1993, states that, "men and women have equal rights before the law and enjoy equal participation in political, economic, social and cultural life (Article 35); equality in employment and equal pay for equal work;" and it explicitly prohibits "all forms of

discrimination against women (Article 45)." The government is also a signatory to a number of international commitments related to gender equality and women's empowerment (Box 4.3). Additionally, on September 2015, Cambodia adopted the SDGs 2016-2030 to the national context and fully localized a set of targets for the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030 (CSDGs)⁸⁵. For SDG5 on gender equality, among the 9 targets and 14 indicators of global SDG 5, the Cambodian government has accepted **7 targets and 12 indicators** into the CSDG framework.⁸⁶

Box 4.3: International Commitments of Cambodia Adhering to Gender Equality

1. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 22 September 1992, and ratified it as a state party on 15 October 1992. Cambodia signed the Optional Protocol on 11 November 2001 and ratified it on 13 October 2010.
2. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992 (CRC).
3. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP)
4. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)
5. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children
6. UN Security Council Resolution (SRC), 1325, 1920, 1888 related to women, peace and security
7. The Beijing Platform for Action for the Promotion of the Status of Women (BPfA) and has produced progress reports since 1995. With respect to the roles and functions of national machineries for gender equality and the advancement of women.

Source: National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2019-2023, Royal Government of Cambodia

Similar to the other CSDGs, the localization from global SDG 5 into Cambodia's national context was conducted with a rapid integrated assessment against the existing national strategy (Cambodia's National Strategic Development

82 <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/956591524206863227/Final-Cambodia-HEQIP-Gender-Assessment-7April2018.pdf>

83 <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4004en/ca4004en.pdf>

84 https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/cambodia/session_32_-_january_2019/js1_upr32_khm_e_main.pdf

85 <http://mop.gov.kh/DocumentEN/CSDG%20Frame-work-2016-2030%20English.pdf>

86 Royal Government of Cambodia 2019, "Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals Framework 2016-2030". Accessed on March 2019.

Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023)⁸⁷, and other relevant sector plans such as the Neary Rattanak V Five Year Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (*Five Year Strategic Plan for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment*)⁸⁸ and the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, and the third National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (NAPVAW) 2019–2023⁸⁹ for the readiness of CSDGs 5 to protect and fulfil women's rights. To achieve the SDG5 the RGC has also joined regional commitments through the Association of Southeast Asia Nation (ASEAN) to protect the rights of women (Box 4.4).

In the Socio-Economic Policy Agenda (The Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV)⁹⁰ of the current government, human resource development of the first rectangular is given the highest priority. It includes mainstreaming of gender equity in policy framework and national development plan which will lessen the gender gap in education, widen women entrepreneurship initiative, reduce domestic violence and sexual abuse against women and children and uplift social morality. The RGC commits to implement those strategies to promote Gender Equality in Cambodia which the evidence of Cambodian progress in reducing the gender gap was substantiated by its ranking by the World Economic Forum: from 112 (2016) to 89 (2020) out of the 153 countries on the list.⁹¹ Below are the key achievements of Cambodia on promoting gender equality.

Education: Gender gaps in both primary and lower-secondary education levels are being eliminated. Girls have greater access to study at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in both formal and informal education. As a result, the number of female students has increased in higher educational institutions, women now making up 49.4 percent of the students at associate degree level, 49.7 percent at bachelor

Box 4.4: Key Commitments of the Government of Cambodia through ASEAN

- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in ASEAN 2004.
- ASEAN Declaration against Trafficking in Persons particularly women and children, adopted in 2004.
- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Elimination of Violence Against Children 2013.
- ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- ASEAN Consensus on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Migrant workers.
- ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Nov 2015.

Source: National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2019-2023, Royal Government of Cambodia

degree level, 23.4 percent at master degree level and 5.8 percent at doctoral degree level. In particular, the number of female students who chose to study subjects associated with the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects) has increased to 17.26 percent. These advancements in girls' and women's access to education improves their employment opportunities and, in turn, their capacity to support families and reduce economic vulnerability.⁹²

Empower women in wage employment:

Cambodia has the highest rate of female participation in the labour force in the East Asia region, at 81 percent. In 2017, the women's share of the agricultural workforce was 40 percent; within the service sector, 35 percent; and, in the industry sector, 24 percent. Over the last decade, female participation in the agricultural sector has declined, while female contribution to the industry and service sector has increased. The number of female entrepreneurs has soared and these individuals have engaged in the commercial sector and in the exportation of products to international markets. At the time

87 <http://www.mop.gov.kh/DocumentEN/NSDP%202019-2023%20in%20English.pdf>

88 <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Neary-Rattanak-V-final-Eng.pdf>

89 https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NAP_2019-2023_English.pdf

90 <http://cnv.org.kh/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Rectangular-Strategy-Phase-IV-of-the-Royal-Government-of-Cambodia-of-the-Sixth-Legislature-of-the-National-Assembly-2018-2023.pdf>

91 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

92 National Policy on Gender Equality 2019

of writing, 65 percent of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) led by women are formally registered. Women's engagement in vulnerable work has significantly declined (from 70 percent in 2012 to 54.8 percent in 2017).⁹³

Women in leadership: There has been a significant increase over the past decade. As of 2018, about 25 percent of members of the National Assembly and 19 percent of members of the Senate are women. In the executive branch, 3 Ministers, 45 Secretaries of State, and 69 Under Secretaries of State are women, representing 14.5 percent compared to 7.4 percent in 1998. The number of women in the civil service has increased through incentives and appointments. Women represented 41 percent of civil servants in 2017 showing a steady increase of approximately 1 percentage point a year. There is a higher proportion of women at sub-national level (from 40 percent in 2014 to 43 percent in 2017) than at national level (from 27 percent in 2014 to 31 percent in 2017). The proportion of women in Commune/Sangkat councils reached 16.75 percent.⁹⁴

Challenges: Cambodian women are progressively enjoying more freedoms and claiming their rights through education, increased employment opportunities and broader economic development. However, social norms related to gender relations continue to constrain development of women's potential and hinder their empowerment in economic, social, public and political life.

Women and girls continue to be subjected to physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence, cutting across all divisions of income, culture, and class. Women experience violence in the home, in the workplace and in the community. The most common types of violence against females in Cambodia have been identified as domestic violence (intimate partner), and sexual violence. The 2015 National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences study found that approximately one in five women aged 15-64 (21 percent) who had ever been in a relationship reported having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime.

⁹³ National Policy on Gender Equality 2019

⁹⁴ Cambodia SDGs Review 2019

The incidence was higher for emotional abuse, with 32 percent of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-64 reporting experiencing emotional abuse by an intimate partner in their life.⁹⁵ Notably, women in rural areas experience physical violence at higher rates than urban women.⁹⁶

LGBTG+ individuals and women with disabilities appear to be at even higher risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV). Women with disabilities in Cambodia experience similar rates of intimate partner violence, but higher rates of controlling behaviour from partners; and significantly higher levels of all forms of violence (emotional, physical and sexual) from family members compared to other women. Barriers to disclosure and access to services are worsened by the fact that many women with disabilities have less financial autonomy and less power in their lives than other women.⁹⁷ For women in indigenous communities, the study found that indigenous women also report experiencing all types of violence and report challenges in accessing justice, safe shelter, counselling services, legal supports and other services.⁹⁸

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, women are noting a decline in their incomes and employment and increased time spent on unpaid care and domestic works. While the major concerns remain loss of income and livelihood, women are also preoccupied with rising expenses, inability to repay loans, ongoing water scarcity among others (UNEP, 2020).⁹⁹

4.2. State of Gender Integration in Policies

The Legal Environmental Framework

For Cambodia, biodiversity conservation, ecosystems restoration and climate change adaptation and mitigation are under the legal environmental framework. The current legal and policy framework for environmental

⁹⁵ National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia, 2015

⁹⁶ Ministry of Women's Affairs (2014), Cambodia Violence Against Children Survey, Phnom Penh

⁹⁷ https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NAP_2019-2023_English.pdf

⁹⁸ Mauney (2025). Gender-based Violence in Ethnic Minority Communities in Rattanak Kiri, Care International Cambodia.

⁹⁹ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/em-power%20covid%20snapshot-%20cambodia_24july.pdf

governance is made up of many policies, legal documents and plans and this section presents some of the most relevant ones.

4.2.1 Sectoral Policies and the State of Gender Integration

Policies Related to Climate Change

Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014–2023: The RGC recognizes that the rural poor of Cambodia, the majority of whom are women, are most vulnerable to climate change impacts due to their high dependence on agriculture and natural resources. The CCCSP recognizes the importance of addressing gender issues in climate change, and thus has a separate analysis section on gender and climate change, which recognizes rural women to be the most vulnerable. Additionally, gender integration was comprehensively addressed in the Strategic Objective 2 of the CCCSP which clearly mentions, *“Reduce sectoral, regional, gender vulnerability and health risks to climate change impacts”*. One of the interventions within this objective is to *“Prioritize women’s needs in climate change adaptation and mitigation actions”*. However, the gender analysis in the CCCSP is inadequate; it does not clearly identify the differential impacts of climate change on women and men, and does not recognize that their vulnerabilities, needs, priorities, and capacities can also be different.

Climate Change and Gender: All agencies and line ministries are mandated to develop their own climate change plans in Cambodia. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) has developed a **Gender and Climate Change Strategic Plan (GCCSP) 2013–2023**¹⁰⁰ formulated with the goal of contributing to the Climate Change Response Policy. This is not a stand-alone strategy but is integrated as a crosscutting issue into the CCCSP and the Climate Change Strategic Plans of different sectors and line ministries. One of the Strategic Objective identifies the need to “Promote gender equality in processes and policy implementation related to climate change, green growth and disaster risk management within line ministries and institutions at national and sub-national levels, to reduce the impacts on women and

vulnerable women, and to contribute to and benefit from green growth”. The GCCSP is very comprehensive and has an in-depth analysis on how gender matters to Cambodia’s climate change vulnerability, adaptation, and mitigation capacities.

Based on the GCCSP, the **Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) 2018–2030**¹⁰¹ has been developed. This Plan has identified the need to improve capacities in adaptation planning and investments at all levels, especially at the subnational levels. Importantly, the plan calls for a *“focus on in-depth research, learning and sharing the progress made, analyse the needs and gaps, and recommend the robust approaches for combating new forms of climate vulnerability and address disaster risks”*.

Policies Related to Biodiversity Conservation

The RGC has developed the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2016–2020**¹⁰² in which Cambodia’s vision for biodiversity is that by *“2050, Cambodia’s biodiversity and its ecosystem services are valued, conserved, restored where necessary, wisely used and managed so as to ensure equitable economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all in the country”*. The NBSAP has integrated gender dimensions in both the analysis as well as in plans for implementation, recognising *“The specific needs of women, local communities and indigenous ethnic minorities, elderly persons, children, and the poor and vulnerable to Maintain or strengthen measures that have a positive impact on biodiversity and thus enhance the benefits to all in Cambodia from biodiversity and associated ecosystem services for an equitable economic prosperity and improved quality of life”*. Furthermore, it also acknowledges the effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, in particular women, is of primary importance for the successful development and implementation of policies and programmes for customary sustainable use of biological diversity.¹⁰³

101 <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/KP-7-English-Women-4th-Sept-2020.pdf>

102 https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/National_biodiversity_strategy_and_action_plan_2016.pdf

103 <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-gender-training-materials-seap-en.pdf>

Policies Related to Ecosystems Restoration

In Cambodia, there is no specific strategy nor action plans related to Ecosystems Restoration (ER). The NBSAP includes elements of ER in which women have been explicitly mentioned in the 14 – Ecosystem Services. In 2016, a rapid integrated assessment of Cambodia's national development plans and policies was conducted to assess how well the country was prepared to implement SDG 15 and other goals. It found that most targets were covered but the country would need to develop further strategies to meet SDG target 15.4 (ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems).¹⁰⁴

The RGC has also developed the **National Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Strategy (NRS) 2017–2021**.¹⁰⁵ The NRS aims to reduce annual deforestation by half compared to the rate during the Forest Reference Level period of 2006–2014, which was approximately 1.5 percent per year. The REDD+ Gender Group is formally structured under REDD+ Technical Working Groups as part of the national REDD+ institutional arrangements. The NRS also integrates gender elements into one of its guiding principles and in the guidelines for monitoring and evaluation.

Thus overall, gender concerns have been mainstreamed very well in the climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, and REDD+ institutional arrangements. In addition, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) has motivated women to participate in and to work in implementation of environmental protection where gender has been mainstreamed into the Environment Sector (2016–2020), and National Resource Protected Area Strategic Management Plan.¹⁰⁶

Policies Related to Food Security

The RGC has developed the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (2nd NSFSN) 2019–2023¹⁰⁷. The mission of the NSFSN is *“All Cambodian people have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, at all times, to meet their dietary needs and preferences and optimize the utilization of this food for a healthy and productive life”*. The design of the strategy is to deal with both undernutrition, overweight, and obesity issues for women and children. In addition, while empowerment of women is a key issue for the strategy, it is important that gender includes consideration of the needs of men and women, girls and boys in an inclusive and transformative framework. Gender has been assigned as one of the cross-cutting issues for the strategy. One of the objectives of the strategy is, *“to improve nutrient absorption and reduce disease among children, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescents through increased access to safely managed drinking water, improved hygiene and sanitation behaviours and facilities at household level”*.

The new national gender mainstreaming approach, mandates gender plans to be formulated by sector ministries. The **Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework 2016–2020**, developed by the Gender and Children Working Group within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF), is a key driving document for gender and food security. The gender analysis informing the plan recognizes the problems faced by rural women, confronted with the rapid process of modernization of agriculture that risks leaving them behind, and acknowledges the significance of migration from rural households that often leaves women alone to take care of farms. The Framework highlights, among the main obstacles faced by rural women, low education and literacy rates, under-representation in community-based organizations and rural services, and lack of access to resources necessary for economic empowerment.¹⁰⁸

104 https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/cambodia/docs/RIA_Cambodia_Analysis_07Oct2016.pdf

105 <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-gender-training-materials-seap-en.pdf>

106 https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Panel1_Integrating_gender_into_environmental_policies_Cambodia_2-4Sep2019.pdf

107 <https://mega.nz/folder/MUV12aoY#ZrwgsQdrPvL8Uf2OeoZ-boA>

108 <http://www.fao.org/3/i5489e/i5489e.pdf>

4.2.2 State of Policy Guidelines and Gender Integration

There are limited guidelines available to support the implementation of plans and policies at national and sub-national level in the four sectors. The development partners have supported the government to translate the strategic plans into programs/projects design for implementation. To monitor the progresses and achievements of the strategic plan, strategic final reviews have been conducted before moving to new strategy development.

However, there is a bit of progress for gender mainstreaming into climate change. UN Women is in the process of supporting the RGC to develop guidelines for gender mainstreaming into climate change and disaster risk reduction. In addition, the **Gender and Climate Change Committee** (GCCC) of the MoWA, under an ADB project, has developed a Guidance Manual for Mainstreaming Gender into Adaptation Investments. The guidelines have five manuals to demonstrate how to mainstream gender concerns into climate change adaptation investment programs for agriculture.¹⁰⁹ In addition, the RGC also developed guidance on mainstreaming climate resilience and disaster risk reduction into sub-national development and investment planning.

No guidelines have been developed to support the implementation of NRS for **REDD+**. Based on the NRS, the MoE has implemented Proclamations (Prakas)¹¹⁰ to provide Rules and Procedures for registration of REDD+ projects into the National REDD+ Project Database. The Proclamations includes the Conditions of Eligibility of upcoming REDD+ projects that are implemented in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Similarly, no specific guidelines have been developed to support the implementation of the NBSAP as yet.

In relation to **food security**, following the endorsement of the NSFSN 2019-2023,

109 https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/sites/default/files/2019-06/Guidance%20Manual%20for%20Policy%20Makers%20and%20Practitioners_agriculture.pdf

110 Proclamations (Prakas): A proclamation is a ministerial or inter-ministerial decision signed by the relevant Minister(s). A proclamation must conform to the Constitution and to the law or sub-decree to which it refers.

guidelines for implementation at sub-national level and detailed action plans for each of the joint priorities of the strategy will be developed. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the guidelines are not available yet.

4.2.3 Key Policy Issues and Challenges

Gender and Climate Change: Gender has been well mainstreamed into climate change, with many strategies and action plans (CCCSAP, GCCAP, and MPGCC). The mid-term review found that the CCCSP recognizes the importance of addressing **gender** issues in climate change.¹¹¹ But analysis related to gender and CC in the CCCSP is inadequate and does not clearly identify the differential impacts of climate change on women and men and does not recognize that their needs, priorities, and capacities can also be different. The analysis only captures the situational vulnerability of women and men and ignores the historical/traditional inequalities women face, which become exacerbated due to the impacts of climate change. Further the analysis does not recognize the critical roles of women as actors of change but see women only as vulnerable groups. Hence, although awareness of the importance of mainstreaming CC and gender into the CCCSP and sectoral plans were high among key government stakeholders, it seems they did not have the required knowledge, skills and methods to actually do so.

The RGC's Rectangular Strategies recognize the need to mainstream gender in CC policies and demonstrate the ways forward. However, a lack of gender mainstreaming in various provinces and insufficiency of budget and materials for disseminating policies/laws related to equity between male and female workers both in the labour market and in vocational training are two of the key gaps (NSDP 2014-2018).

Gender and Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Services: Overall, Cambodia made significant progress on all the targets and exceeded expectations in establishing new protected areas (terrestrial and marine), and corridors to ensure that the protected area system is well connected. The country

111 https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/sites/default/files/2019-08/CCCSP%20MTR_Final%20Evaluation%20Report_final_cleared.pdf

is still experiencing a lot of loss of forest ecosystems, but the rate of loss has declined comparatively to previous years.¹¹² There has been an overall slow progress partly due to insufficient human, financial and institutional capacities. But knowledge about the value of biodiversity is being gathered, awareness about the contribution of biodiversity to human well-being and the country's economy is being raised, and biodiversity is being further integrated into policies and programmes dealing with sustainable development and poverty reduction in the country. Gender was mainstreamed into the NBSAP but it was not found in the Sixth National Report to the CBD as of June 2019,¹¹³ which only mentioned traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous ethnic minorities and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; the role, impact and contribution of women were not included at all.

Gender and Food Security: There is a growing recognition of women's disproportional vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition, and the need to address this.¹¹⁴ Aspects of the gender dimension are reflected in the NSFSN taking a lead from the NSDP, which recognizes that despite progress made in the previous decade, the nutritional status of children and women has remained more static, with a significant portion of the population living just above the poverty line (FAO, 2016; WFP, 2017e; IDS, 2014). Nevertheless, gaps also remain in the gender alignment of NSFSN policies' approach to gender, and the strategy needs to be more clearly linked to international and national frameworks and commitments on gender quality including CEDAW, and SDG 5, while also referring to key aspects of the National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment V (NSFSN Mid-term Review 2017). The 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023, mentioned that *"all relevant sectors should consider issues of gender and youth, environment and equity in their policies and strategic plans in all areas relating to FSN"*. However, there is no operational plan on how to implement it in place yet.

112 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/kh-nr-06-en.pdf>

113 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/kh-nr-06-en.pdf>

114 https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000074210/download/?_ga=2.70472400.1797673592.1617350618-418898758.1605237849

4.3 State of Gender Integration in Institutions

4.3.1 Major Institutions

In Cambodia, many government agencies and non-governmental organizations are working on gender integration and sustainable development within FS, BC, ER and CC.

National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD)¹¹⁵: NCSD is a policy-making body established in May 2015 to promote sustainable development and to ensure economic, environmental, social and cultural balance within the Kingdom of Cambodia, providing overall management and leadership within the four sectors. The NCSD was consolidated from four bodies, namely, the National Council of Green Growth, the National Climate Change Committee, the National Biosafety Secretariat and the National Biodiversity Steering Committee. NCSD has a role in monitoring and reporting on Cambodia's implementation of its international commitments in areas of sustainable development. Under the structure of NCSD, there are a number of departments who are directly responsible for each sector such as:

Department of Climate Change (DCC) under the Ministry of Environment, as a part of the General Secretariat of the NCSD, is at the forefront of Cambodia's efforts to implement the country's response to climate change, serving also as the national focal point to the UNFCCC.

Department of Biodiversity Conservation (DBC): The DBC is the national focal point for the implementation of the CBD. Its mission is to coordinate the development, and enhancing implementation of legal instruments, policies, strategies and action plans on BC. Ecosystem Restoration is under the leadership of this department and it is part of the strategic plan of biodiversity.

Within the **climate change sector**, there are an increasing number of actors - government and communities, CSOs, private sector, academia and development partners - who, with the support of the DCC, are getting involved and taking action on the ground. Large donors

115 <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/ncsd/about-ncsd>

like the ADB (Strategic Program for Climate Resilience); EU, Sida and UNDP (Cambodia Climate Change Alliance, CCCA; Reducing the Strengthening Rural Livelihoods), international NGOs (Action Aid, Forum Seed, etc.), and local NGOs are working together to prepare Cambodia for a climate resilient sustainable future.

The Cambodia Climate Change Network (CCCN), is an NGO established in August 2009 through the initiation of several INGOs, such as Oxfam and Save Cambodia's Wildlife. It is driven by the will to bring about a more collective civil society approach to address the challenges and opportunities of CC.

Specific to Food Security Sector: The Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) was established on 31 December 1998 by Royal Decree. Following the First National Seminar on Food Security and Nutrition held in April 1999, the RGC made CARD the coordinating body for food security and nutrition activities.¹¹⁶ CARD has its own structures and mandates, however, there is no assigned staff responsible for promoting gender mainstreaming and implementation into the Food Security Sector.

Beside the government structure, there are many key development partners who are working to support the food security sector in Cambodia including FAO, GTZ, WFP, etc. To promote information sharing and enhance coordination of strategies of a wide range of government, CSOs, and donor agencies working in the field of Food Security and Nutrition, the Food Security Forum (FS Forum) was established in February 2003 by CARD in cooperation with WFP in Cambodia.

Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment: The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) has a mandate for guiding/leading the promotion for gender equality and monitoring the implementation of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. It also formulated and updated the National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Besides MoWA, there is the Cambodia National Council for

Women, with a high level of commitment - the Queen is the Honorary Chair, the Prime Minister is the Honorary Deputy Chair, MoWA is Executive Chair and vice minister level representatives from relevant ministries are members.¹¹⁷ CNCW has a mandate to provide leadership, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality in Cambodia while MoWA has managed the Gender and Climate Change Committee and Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups.

There are many agencies who are providing support to MoWA to promote gender equality in the country including UN Women, Forum SYD, UN-Habitat, ADB, and other key I/NGO partners. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)¹¹⁸ is a local NGO in Cambodia who is the secretariat of three networks:

- **Gender and Development Network (GADNet)** is a group of 62 representatives from I/NGOs and government institutions that are advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Cambodian Men's Network** comprises 600 male members from different social strata working to eliminate violence against women and promote women's empowerment by working with men at all levels in the country. This group had collaborated with the regional men's network to share experiences and capacity building on gender sensitivities and masculinity.
- **Committee to Promote Women in Politics** is a women's movement working at the national level to advocate and lobby with political parties to promote women's leadership and to conduct research.

4.3.2 Implementing Agencies, Capacity and Budgetary Provisions

National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) - Department of Climate Change:

MoWA is a member of NCSD who is involved in advocating for, and addressing issues of women, girls and gender in the development and implementation of the policies on green growth, CC and BC. However, there is no responsible working group/department for the

¹¹⁶ <http://www.foodsecurity.gov.kh/pages/content/card-back-ground>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/4.%20Cambodia.pdf>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.gadc.org.kh/what-we-do/network/>

promotion of integration of gender equality into CC and BC under the direct leadership of NCSd. The NCSd has technical expertise, knowledge and experience created through diversification schemes as under the CCCA trust fund, the Strategic Programme for Climate Resilience (SPCR), and other relevant projects by development partners. However, the capacity of sub-national administrations (District level officials and councillors, and Commune councillors) is quite weak; they only have basic ability to identify climate-related challenges and to propose and implement simple, appropriate responses. Furthermore, understanding of gender mainstreaming into CC, the nature of global climate change, and the expected long-term consequences, is quite limited. This limited understanding has led CC gender responses initiatives not being prioritized at the sub-national development and planning process.¹¹⁹

Climate Change Budget: The government has dedicated around one percent of GDP in public expenditure to respond to climate change, whereas in 2015 it was 1.2 percent of GDP based on the regular public expenditure review. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has included climate change as a consideration in the national budget guideline and played an important role in mobilization and management of external and domestic resources for climate change response.¹²⁰

For external resources to support the implementation of CCCSP, Cambodia has sought financial support from bilateral (Australia, China, EU/EC, France, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, USA, Sweden, etc.) and multilateral partners (ADB, UN Agencies, GEF, IFAD, Global Fund, World Bank, etc.). Furthermore, the country has prepared itself to get direct access to emerging global climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund and other financial mechanisms under the Paris Agreement. However, the budget allocation for implementing gender mainstreaming into CC investments remains unknown.

119 https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/sites/default/files/2019-08/CCCSP%20MTR_Final%20Evaluation%20Report_final_cleared.pdf
120 <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/dcc/climate-finance>

National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSd), Department of Biodiversity: The NCSd recognizes the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity in national and subnational development and poverty reduction strategies. However, it is also recognized that in some cases, the proper expertise may be unavailable to identify the key links and operationalize them on the ground. At the subnational level, there may be a need to first adjust the NBSAP to suit the needs at the provincial and local/community level.

It is not possible to assess exactly how much of the national budget was allocated to biodiversity. Increases in the budgets of ministries dealing with biodiversity can be used as indicators of possible budget allocations to biodiversity plans and programmes. The MoE and the MAFF are the main government ministries dealing with the management of biodiversity. In recent years, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has also stepped up its activities to integrate biodiversity in school curriculums, in line with the government's strategic goal to develop a *"quality, equitable and inclusive education system."* In 2019, MoE, MAFF and MoEYS budgets have almost tripled with increases of 3.3, 2.9 and 2.7 times the respective 2014 budgets. This is a clear indication that Cambodia has already exceeded its 2020 target of increasing its national budget allocation for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use by 20 percent. In addition to the national budget, Cambodia has been applying to the financial mechanism and mobilizing partners to fund some of the actions listed in the NBSAP.¹²¹

CARD-FSN Coordination: Because of the cross-cutting nature of nutrition and food security issues, CARD faces some challenges to increase the effectiveness and reach of the strategy by ensuring better linkages with line ministries and sub-national government. This requires information sharing and informing decision making and additional capacity building at all levels. In order for sub-national authorities to discharge their responsibilities, they need linkages to the national coordination mechanisms, and national authorities need to work through these linkages to influence

121 <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/resources/document/sixth-national-report-convention-biological-diversity-cbcjune-2019en>

coordination, and programme and policy coherence, dialogue and support from CARD.¹²²

There was no clear information on how CARD seeks funding to implement the NSFSN. However, the mid-term review of NSFSN mentioned that the development of financing arrangements for implementing the NSSPF will require dialogue between RGC stakeholders and relevant development partners. For example, those institutions mandated to provide a range of social services for vulnerable groups - Ministries of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Labour and Vocational Training, and MoWA - have not been adequately resourced to achieve their policy objectives. All of these challenges represent an increased demand for financing, from the RGC budget and from development assistance and private investment.

Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA): At the sub-national levels, the Women and Children's Consultative Committees at provincial and district level, and the Committees for Women and Children are important actors in the implementation of social policies, dialogue

implementation of social policies, dialogue and negotiation. However, the commune, district and provincial Women and Children Committees are mainly consultative bodies; they lack decision making power. Their interventions are focused on health and education services for women and children, with limited budgets.

The Ministry of Economic and Finance (MEF) allocated the national budget to the line ministries for gender responsive activities for the major sectors in 2016-2017. MEF has guided the line ministries to prepare the action plan and the progressive report to reflect the output of gender mainstreaming in the sector.¹²³ Based on the Budget Plan 2020, MoWA has allocated budget in four areas: (1) Women's economic empowerment, (2) Legal protection for women and children, (3) Mainstreaming gender into national policies for all sectors, and (4) Institutional and provincial management. For the **gender responsive budget** in the four sectors, it should be included in the line ministries for all responsible four sectors.

4.3.3. Achievements and Challenges

Table 4.1 presents some of the achievements and challenges that key institutions have faced in gender integration in policies and programs.

Table 4.1: Major achievements and challenges that selected institutions face in gender integration.

Major Achievements	Challenges
NCSN, Department of Climate Change	
<p>The NCSN has developed many legislations, policy documents and plans to support the sustainable development in Cambodia, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2023 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 National Green Growth Strategic Plan 2013-2030 National Policy on Green Growth Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014-2023 Sectoral CC Action Plans 2014/5-2018 Environment and National Resource Code (Draft) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite recent improvements, for example with the climate change vulnerability index for communes and the 2019 GHG inventory, the sex-disaggregated data availability remains a challenge, and capacities of sectors to analyze vulnerabilities and track climate change adaptation and mitigation need to be strengthened (RGC, SDG review, 2019). Better evidence and research on how climate change impacts various vulnerable groups' especially indigenous women is required to improve the design and targeting of climate change programs (RGC, SDG review, 2019).

122 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/mid-term-and-strategic-review-national-strategy-food-security-and-nutrition-2014-2018>

123 <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/initiatives/stepitup/commitments-speeches/cambodia-stepitup-commitment-followup-20170228-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3840>

NCSD, Department of Biodiversity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NCSD has the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020. Cambodia has participated in a number of initiatives as one of the pilot countries. One such initiative is the UNESCO 'Learning about Biodiversity: Multiple-perspective Approaches'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the findings from the National Capacity Self-Assessment, the responsible departments still need to continue to strengthen its human resource capacity for research, gender mainstreaming into biodiversity and ecosystem, information management, communication and at the science-policy interface. There are plans in particular for developing capacities for the synergistic implementation of the three Rio conventions.¹²⁴
MoWA - Gender and Climate Change Committee (GCCC)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MoWA's GCCC has developed the capacity of relevant civil servants at the national and sub-national levels, with the result that 357 officials (53 percent women) have been trained in gender mainstreaming in climate change programs. National guidelines on gender mainstreaming in investment for adaptation to climate change in five inter-sectors have been prioritized (agriculture, rural development, health, water resources, public works and transport). Developed Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) 2018-2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information, gender disaggregated data and qualitative studies on the impacts of climate change on women, children, and vulnerable groups. Insufficient resources for the implementation of new activities related to gender mainstreaming into resilience and adaption to reduce risks of disaster and climate change.¹²⁵
MoWA - Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality has been mainstreamed in the key RGC's reform programs such as the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development and its implementation plans. (Cambodia SDG5 review, 2020) Significant progress has been made in strengthening gender mainstreaming in machineries and institutions including the Technical Working Group on Gender (TWG-G) which is part of a national coordination forum between the government and development partners within the process of gender mainstreaming action groups (GMAGs) at different ministries. In 2018, 28 out of 30 ministries had prepared and implemented strategic segregation strategies by sector.¹²⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient accountability of ministries and other government institutions on promoting gender equality, and updating and institutionalizing the gender mainstreaming action plan. As a result, capacity building and implementation mechanisms, functions for gender mainstreaming at all levels, and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation framework are a challenge.¹²⁷
Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) - FSN Coordination	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted the Mid-Term and Strategic Review of the NSFSN 2014-2018 and developed the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023. CARD is facilitating the Food Security Network meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARD and relevant line ministries and agencies lack sufficient resources to coordinate, implement, and monitor the NSFSN and other strategies. It will be important for RGC, DPs, and CSOs to identify shared investment priorities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of FSN investments. There is limited coordination at the policy and for monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability and transparency of operations at the program/ scheme level.¹²⁸

124 <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/resources/document/sixth-national-report-convention-biological-diversity-cbcjune-2019en>

125 <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/KP-7-English-Women-4th-Sept-2020.pdf>

126 <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Neary-Rattanak-V-final-Eng.pdf>

127 <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/KP-7-English-Women-4th-Sept-2020.pdf>

128 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/mid-term-and-strategic-review-national-strategy-food-security-and-nutrition-2014-2018>

4.4. Gender Integration in the Context of Intervention

This section presents only selected interventions implemented by government and non-government agencies in relation to gender mainstreaming into CC, BC, ER and FS sectors for identifying the best practices, lessons learnt and tools. It is not presented the whole of CC, BC, ER, and FS projects/programmes interventions in Cambodia. Therefore, the program/project interventions presented are those that have just ended.

4.4.1 Key Projects/Interventions

Following are a selection of projects/programmes in the study sectors which have attempted to integrate gender equality. For more programmes refer to Annex 4.

Climate Change

Reducing the vulnerability of Cambodian rural livelihoods through enhanced sub-national climate change planning and execution of priority actions (SRL)

This project has been designed to reduce the vulnerability of rural Cambodians, especially land-poor, landless and/or women-headed households. This will be achieved through investments in small-scale water management infrastructure, technical assistance to resilient agricultural practices, and capacity building support, especially targeting poor women, for improved food production in home gardens. Importantly, these services will be delivered by sub-national administrations (communes, districts and provinces) with a view to strengthen their overall capacity to plan, design and deliver public services for resilience building. The objective of the project, therefore, is to improve sub-national administration systems affecting investments in rural livelihoods through climate sensitive planning, budgeting and execution.

Donors: LDCF (GEF), UNDP and Government parallel and **Duration:** 2015-2019

Total Allocated Resource: USD 20,427, 500¹²⁹

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project

The goal of the USAID SFB project was to

¹²⁹ <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/dcc/project/reducing-vulnerability-cambodian-rural-livelihoods-through-enhanced-sub-national>

improve conservation and governance of the two most extensive yet threatened forest landscapes in the country, the Eastern Plains and Prey Lang landscapes, to decrease the rate of deforestation, mitigate climate change, and conserve biodiversity by building the capacity of forest community members to improve forest management decisions and by building the capacity of government officers to support these efforts.

Donor: USAID and **Duration:** 2012-2018¹³⁰

REDD+ Pilot Projects Strengthening Implementation of Partnership Forestry (PF) in Samroang Commune Project

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to reduce forest loss and degradation through strengthening implementation of sustainable forest management while promoting environmentally sustainable livelihoods and protection of forest resources in Samroang Commune.

Duration: 2019-2020 and **Budget:** USD 90,000¹³¹

Flooded forest rehabilitation and management to sustain landscape management of the Tonle Sap Great Lake¹³²

The overall objective of the project is to promote an integrated and sustainable flooded forest rehabilitation and management in the Tonle Sap Great Lake which attains simultaneously related to biodiversity, food security/fisheries/agriculture/livelihoods, and climate change.

Duration: 2019-2020 and **Budget:** USD 65,755

Food Security United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Grant Food for Education Programme¹³³

This McGovern-Dole programme is continuation of the previous phase (2013-2016), which was itself a continuation of support from 2010. The programme provides one school meal per day to pre-primary and primary school students

¹³⁰ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/SFB_Final_Report.pdf

¹³¹ <http://www.cambodia-redd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LoA-FA-Pilot-Project.pdf>

¹³² <http://www.cambodia-redd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LoA-FA-Pilot-Project.pdf>

¹³³ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/cambodia-usda-mcgovern-dole-grant-food-education-programme-2017-2019-evaluation>

in three provinces of Cambodia: Battambang (BTB), Siem Reap (SRP) and Kampong Thom (KTM). The programme also provides food scholarships (take home rations - THR) to girls and boys from vulnerable households as an incentive to keep them in school.

Implemented: World Food Programme (WFP) and partners in Cambodia. **Duration:** FY 2017-2019

4.4.2 Relevant Tools, Analytical Approaches and Technologies

Based on the desk review of all relevant projects within CC, BC, ER and FS, most of project interventions were **gender aware** where the project promoted equal participation between men and women to participate in the project activities. There were only few projects which really implemented gender transformative approach in the sectors of CC, BC, ER and FS.

“Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems to Support Climate-Resilient Development in Cambodia Project”¹³⁴, jointly implemented by UNDP and Action Aid International presents a good example on how gender has been mainstreamed into CC. The project trained 23 ‘Women Champions’ in gender equality, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Receiving training alongside local authorities, the women became disaster-risk reduction focal points for their communities and produced action plans for early warning, including advocacy resulting in construction of a canal to mitigate the impacts of drought, training on gender equality and waste management, and disaster information dissemination. The women were also involved in other activities to reduce their community’s vulnerability to disasters, such as a mangrove-planting campaign in Kampot province, and solar-water pump research and installation.

The project M&E had a system to track sex-disaggregated data for participants in the trainings/ workshops/events. One of the main communication series produced under the project was ‘Climate Change Champion Profiles’, which depict short stories of Cambodians doing exceptional actions and demonstrating

leadership in adaptation to climate change. Of the 27 profiles produced representing 29 individuals, 12 women were exemplified (41 percent).¹³⁵

The project has developed a **Women’s Resilience Index** (WRI) for Cambodia.¹³⁶ The WRI identifies areas that need to be strengthened in both policy and practice, and where women can advocate for positive change to build their individual and community resilience at the local level. It compares women’s and men’s resilience to disaster risks along four pillars of resilience: economic, infrastructure, social and institutional.

For biodiversity and ecosystem projects, most of the projects were promoting women’s participation in the project activities as the early stage of gender awareness only. For example, the Supporting Forests and Biodiversity (SFB) Project, 2012-2018¹³⁷ which was funded by USAID, focused on forests and biodiversity sectors, especially CC adaptation, and gender was mainstreamed into all activities. Opportunities were provided for both men and women to participate in, obtain, and share practical experiences in the activities supported by the project, as well as planning and implementing community forestry development activities, where the project worked closely with local and competent authorities.

The SFB project promoted gender equality and women’s empowerment by ensuring that under-represented groups, specifically indigenous people, women, and youth, were incorporated into all stages of each activity. The project set a goal of at least 30 percent of participants from under-represented groups in project activities to promote gender equality in all aspects of the project, overcome existing barriers to improving women’s participation, and mainstream a gendered perspective into all stages of the project.

For the purpose of gender mainstreaming the

134 https://www.adaptation-undp.org/sites/default/files/resources/booklet_21cm_x_21cm_v10_0.pdf

135 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cambodia_cIEWS_project_gender_learning_report_final_september_2020.pdf

136 https://cambodia.actionaid.org/sites/cambodia/files/publications/Cambodia_WRI_English_Version_0.pdf

137 https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/SFB_Final_Report.pdf

project developed a gender strategy, action plan, checklists, brochure and gender support materials, based on the specific needs of each target audience. Women were empowered through capacity-building activities, such as training and awareness raising events, to master skills and to enable them to participate in decision making activities related to community forests. Among the 13,125 people actively engaged in the forest management activities at the national level, 42.4 percent were women. SFB Project also engaged women and indigenous people in trainings on community CC adaptation and using the **Watershed Environmental Services Tool (WESTool)**¹³⁸ to identify CC adaptation priorities. Of all participants trained in CC adaptation, 42.7 percent were women and 25.3 percent were from non-Khmer, indigenous groups. The WESTool allows all general users, including women, to explore how ecosystem services, land uses and socioeconomic factors interact across Cambodia's landscapes. By combining advanced science with intuitive maps and tools, the WESTool offers valuable information at the local, regional and national scale to support decision-makers and land managers who wish to understand and balance the value of forests with development goals.

Within the food security area, most of the projects identified women as the target beneficiaries, since they play a very important role for food security. The Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE) 2015-2021¹³⁹ aimed at testing climate-resilient innovations for smallholder farmers, with 3 objectives: (i) sustainably increase agricultural productivities and incomes; (ii) adapt and build resilience to climate change; and (iii) reduce or remove GHG emission where possible.

One of the target beneficiaries were the smallholders learning group (ID poor-Identification of poor households and women headed HHs). The project organized training in the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy Framework in agriculture, and orientations of the roles/responsibilities to implement the policy and the method for enhancing women economic empowerment. A 'Gender Roles and Women Economic Empower in Agriculture Guidelines' has been developed and integrated into the Farmer Field School Guidelines of FAO.¹⁴⁰ Table 4.2 presents a few tools and approaches for gender mainstreaming with potential for scaling up.

Table 4.2: Selected tools and approaches for gender mainstreaming with potential for scaling up, Cambodia.

Sector	Tools	Scaled up
Climate Change	Women's Resilience Index for Cambodia	The WRI was developed through household interviews with 696 households from the project target areas in 2019. The WRI can be scaled up by interviewing more respondents to represent the countrywide perspective. The results from WRI survey can be used for advocacy on women in CC in Cambodia. The index is available with the Action Aid International Cambodia.
Biodiversity and ecosystems	The Watershed Environmental Services Tool (WESTool)	The WESTool was developed for general users and can be used for women only as well. But it is a very technical tool which the women in rural areas will find hard to understand.
Food Security	The Gender Roles and Women's Economic Empower in Agriculture Guidelines	The Gender Roles and Women's Economic Empower in Agriculture Guidelines can be scaled up countrywide for promoting gender into the food security/agriculture sector as the ASPIRE project is also a national government project.

138 <https://winrock.org/westool/>

139 <http://aspirekh.org/home-4-2-2/>

140 <http://aspirekh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ASPIRE-Semi-Annual-Report-2017-Volume-II.pdf>

For the women in economic empowerment, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and SHE Investments have developed KOTRA- Riel bookkeeping app. This is the first tool designed to support Cambodian women entrepreneurs to manage cash flows and access formal financial services. KOTRA-Riel creates a simple, user-friendly experience that allows those who are not technically savvy to track business earning and expenses at the click of a button.¹⁴¹

4.4.3 Gender Integration into Monitoring and Evaluation

Climate Change: The Cambodian Climate Change M&E Framework tracks both national institutional readiness indicators (measuring the capacity of national institutions to manage climate risks) and the impact indicators covering adaptation and mitigation (measuring how successful climate interventions are in reducing vulnerability and lowering carbon emissions). These indicators have been updated regularly, and discussed and validated at Climate Change Technical Working Group meetings. Data on the evolution of these indicators can be found on the data portal.¹⁴²

During the last five years, the RGC has made significant progress in mainstreaming the national climate change M&E framework into national development M&E instruments, ensuring alignment amongst the different M&E frameworks. In the CCCSP, gender is mentioned as one of the principles that underpin the M&E framework. This framework will address gender equality, gender-sensitive performance in climate change responses and gender mainstreaming in climate change responses. However, on the data portal data on the vulnerability of different geographic provinces and the numbers of families affected by climate hazards is available but no sex disaggregated data is available (ibid).

¹⁴¹ <https://www.unescap.org/news/united-nations-and-she-investments-launch-mobile-bookkeeping-app-women-entrepreneurs>

¹⁴² <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/dcc/data-portal>

Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Services:

There are basically two categories of indicators for monitoring progress in implementing the NBSAP and associated targets. The first category of indicators includes input, process, and output indicators referred to as performance indicators. Such indicators are calculated from data that are routinely collected, maintained and analysed by the various line ministries and agencies. The second category of indicators includes outcome and impact indicators. Women have been explicitly mentioned as a target under the indicator 14-Ecosystem Services.

REDD+: The NRS Action Plan, a results framework, and M&E plan will be developed to monitor the implementation of the NRS. The results M&E framework will be nested within the national CC M&E framework that has to report to the UNFCCC. This is gender sensitive and will also have indicators that allow for sustained focus to track delivery of results and benefits to vulnerable communities, indigenous peoples, and women. Collection of gender disaggregated data will be prioritized.

Food Security: The NSFSN M&E Framework only mentions the annual reporting format that each task force needs to fill in for regular assessments of progress. Gender and youth, environment and equity are cross-cutting issues in the NSFSN thus, they are mentioned in the annual reporting format. However, there is no information on how the sex disaggregated data will be monitored.

4.5. Overall Conclusions

In conclusion, the RGC is committed to promote gender responsive social norms through the implementation of national laws, policies, plans and programs at all levels. The MoWA, with partnerships and support from relevant ministries, institutions and partners, has contributed to foster gender equality in key strategic policies in Cambodia. The gender mainstreaming is the part of regular development agenda in the CSDG, policies/strategic plans of CC, BC, ER and FS and other sectors of RGC. However, there are still gaps on how to translate the policies/strategic plans into the implementation at the national and

sub-national levels, the budget allocation to implement the gender mainstreaming activities in the CC, BC, ER and FS sectors is still limited. On the other hand, the implementation of those mainstreaming strategic plans is mainly done through the external project supports from development partners in Cambodia.¹⁴³

For SDG5 on gender equality of Cambodia, there are two indicators related to the gender mainstreaming: (1) number of institutions with a system to track and allocate the budget to promote gender equality and empowerment women, (2) number of line ministries, and agencies that have developed and implemented Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plans which are really good so that the country continues

to implement and monitors it accordingly. However, there are no disaggregated data to monitor the implementation of SDGs 13 (Climate Action), SDG2 (zero hunger for food security), and SDG15 (protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss for BC and ER) yet. Without this mainstreaming of gender into the sector SDGs targets, the responsible ministries completely rely on the MoWA for promoting gender mainstreaming into the line ministries. Moreover, the limited gender responsive budgets in the four sectors hinder the progress and achievements of gender mainstreaming targets.

¹⁴³ <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/KP-7-English-Women-4th-Sept-2020.pdf>

CHAPTER 5

THE CONTEXT OF CHINA

5.1. Country Background

China is situated in East Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific, with a total land area of about 9.6 million square kilometers (Mkm²). China borders 14 countries on land, and is adjacent to 8 countries on sea. Its administrative divisions at the provincial level constitute 23 provinces (including Taiwan), five autonomous regions, four municipalities directly under the central government, and two special administrative regions (MEE, 2018a).

China has achieved sustainable economic growth since 1978 when it moved from a closed, centrally planned system to a more market-oriented one. China's reforms started with the phaseout of collectivized agriculture, which was followed by the steady liberalization of prices, fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, growth of the private sector, stock markets and a modern banking system, and opening to foreign trade and investment (Mkwara, 2018). The efficiency gains of these steps led to a more than tenfold increase in GDP since 1978. China's economy has been one of the world's fastest growing economies in recent history, with real growth per annum averaging nearly 10 percent between 1980 and 2012 and slightly more than six percent between 2013 and 2019 (World Bank, 2020).

With economic development, China has become the world's second largest economy since 2010, and has risen to become the largest goods trading nation since 2013. In 2018, China led the world in GHG emissions, which at roughly 13.5 Gt (1 Gt = 1x10⁹ metric tons) CO₂ equivalents, were approximately 25 percent of the global total (Olivier and Peters, 2018). The current population of China in 2021 is 1.44 billion, a 5.38 percent increase from 2010 (0.53 percent/year) (NBS, 2021). It has gradually transformed from the high-speed growth stage to the high-quality development stage, and has achieved notable results in promoting employment, eliminating poverty, improving people's livelihoods, protecting environment and so on.

Mountains, Biodiversity and Ecosystems in China

China's terrains vary significantly. The five basic terrains, namely plateau, hill, mountain, basin, and plain are all distributed, among which mountains, plateaus and hills account for about 67 percent of the total land area, and basins and plains for 33 percent (MEE, 2018a). Land resources are unevenly distributed. Croplands mostly concentrate in basins and plains, while grasslands are mainly distributed in plateaus in the northern and western China, and forests mainly concentrate in mountains and hills in the Northeast, Southwest and South China. The mountainous regions in China are not only primary sources of natural resources, such as forests, minerals and grassland, and as popular tourist destinations, but also serve as the sources of major rivers, including the Yellow River, the Yangtze River and the Pearl River. Mountain ecosystems are highly vulnerable to disturbance and are slow to adapt to environmental changes (Chen, 2009). The mountainous areas in China need effective protection because of their important ecological functions and fragile ecosystems (Liu et al., 2015).

China is one of the twelve countries in the world with richest biodiversity, and is the country with richest biodiversity in the Northern Hemisphere. Its flora and fauna are extremely rich. Inter alia, China is home to nearly 35,000 species of higher plants and approximately 7,516 species of vertebrates. China's richness of vascular plants and mammals is characterized by highness in the south and lowness in the north of the country, highness in mountains and lowness in plains. Of the 34-world biological 'hot spots' (areas of greater biological endemism in the biosphere), one is the mountains of Southwest China. However, China's biodiversity is increasingly under threat with agricultural conversion. Land use change, driven by agricultural expansion, is creating fragmentation and loss of forests, grasslands, wetlands and other habitats. Several other factors have been regarded leading to habitat degradation and biodiversity loss including construction of major transportation and hydropower projects, pollution, climate change, and overexploitation of natural resources.

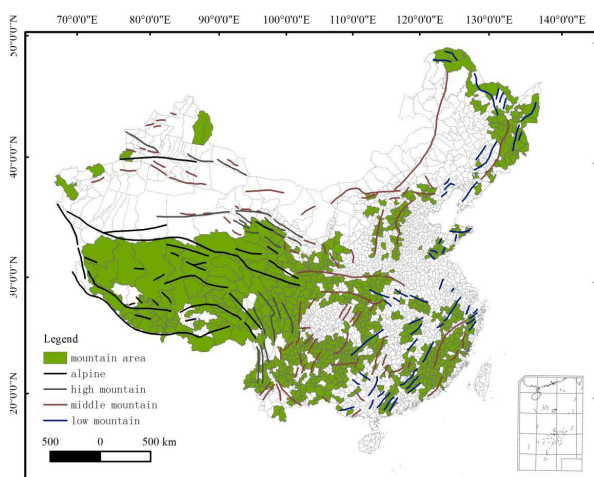


Figure 5.1: The mountainous areas of China (Liu et al., 2015)

China has attached great importance to the protection of biodiversity, including the diversity of species and ecosystems. Forest resources have increased steadily since 1989, water quality has remained stable, and desertification is less extensive than it was, as a result of various conservation initiatives (Yu et al., 2012). Up to the end of 2016, China has created 2,750 nature reserves of different levels and in different types, accounting for 14.9 percent of China's land area (MEE, 2018a).

The Impact of Climate Change in China

With a huge population, complex climate and vulnerable eco-environment, China is among those countries that are most severely affected by the adverse impacts of climate change (NDRC, 2015). According to China's *Third National Assessment Report on Climate Change*—released in November 2015 (Wang et al., 2019) - the average temperatures in China have increased 0.9°–1.5°C (1.6°–2.7°F) in the past century, which is more than the global average. Trends can be also discerned in precipitation, sunshine, wind speed and extreme climate events (e.g., droughts, heavy rains and heat waves) (MEE, 2018a). As a result, climate change has had and continues to have significant impacts, most of which to date have been negative, on China's ecological environment, society and economy. For example, the Third National Assessment Report found that climate change could extend growing seasons for some crops in northern China but warned that climate change would bring less reliable rains, the spread of dangerous pests and shorter growing seasons for many crops. Future climate change

is expected to have broad impacts in China, with agriculture, water resources, ecosystems, coastal and offshore ecosystems, and human health being particularly vulnerable.

The Context of Agriculture and Food Security in China

China has the largest population in the world today, and it is expected to continue growing in the next few years. This will pose significant implications to food demands of the country – 720 million tons of annual grain production will need to be met by 2030, an approximate 10 percent increase from 2018. However, land and water scarcity coupled with climate change and population pressures are among the major challenges to sustainability of the agriculture and food systems. For example, China's per capita water resources (2000 m³ as of 2014) is one third of the world level. Moreover, widespread unsustainable agricultural practices, such as overuse of chemical fertilizer and pesticides, inefficient irrigation, groundwater overexploitation, overgrazing and overfishing, have exerted a large environmental footprint on China's agriculture sector and a key threat to biodiversity loss. Therefore, sustainable agriculture and food security is a top priority for China (He, 2019).

So far, China has achieved food security through self-reliant agricultural production, self-sufficient food supply, the strictest farmland protection, supply-side structural reform and innovation in rural systems and mechanisms. Total grain production in China reached 669.49 million tons in 2020, up by 1.4 percent from 2016, staying above the level of 650 million tons for six consecutive years. Per capita share of grain is steadily above the world level of 400 kilograms; staple food production is completely self-sufficient; over 95 percent of cereal demand is met with domestic production. Output of meat, eggs, dairy and aquatic products has been increasing steadily. The per capita income of rural residents reached USD 17,131 (PPP) in 2020, with a real annual growth rate of six percent on average during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2015–2020). Building on these achievements, at the end of 2020, China won its fight against poverty as scheduled, ending poverty for the 98.99 million rural residents living below the current poverty line (MOFA, 2021).

The Situation of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in China¹⁴⁴

China has a total population of more than 1.4 billion, of which women account for about half. Therefore, the promotion of gender equality and the overall development of women is not only of great significance for China's development, it also has a special influence on the efforts for global equality, development and peace. It has always been a basic state policy of China to promote equality between men and women. Since New China was founded in 1949, especially since the adoption of the reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, and along with the continuous growth of China's economy and the overall progress of its society, women are being given more guarantees of enjoyment of equal rights and opportunities with men and the development of women is being given unprecedented opportunities.

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The Conference adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a programmatic document guiding efforts to promote global gender equality, put forward 12 key areas of concern for women's development, agreed on strategic objectives and a policy framework for promoting gender equality and safeguarding women's rights, and provided guidelines for action to promote gender equality in all countries of the world. The Conference, the largest ever held by the United Nations, was an important milestone in the promotion of gender equality and women's development, and had a profound impact on the global cause of promoting women's development. The outcome of the Beijing conference remains the most comprehensive and transformative global agenda for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

In 2015, on the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference, China co-hosted with UN Women the Global Summit of Women, which was attended by some 80 heads of state and government to reaffirm their commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the summit and put forward four

proposals on promoting gender equality and the all-round development of women. Over the past 25 years, the Chinese government has honored its commitments, upheld the spirit of the Beijing Conference, adhered to the basic national policy on gender equality for social development and progress, continuously improved the legal system and working mechanisms for the protection of women's rights and interests, and promoted women's development in China with world-renowned achievements.

China has created opportunities for women and girls in terms of employment and education. The labor force participation rate of women in China has long stayed above 60 percent, ranking first in the world. In 2018, the number of female employees reached 340 million, and women accounted for 43.5 percent of all employed persons in society. Women take 48.8 percent professional and technical jobs, 33.4 percent R&D jobs, including 54.9 percent medical and scientific R&D jobs. The percentage of female entrepreneurs in the new economy has been rising, with women accounting for 55 percent of entrepreneurs in the Internet sector. Women are actively involved in economic decision-making and management. For example, they take a quarter of leading positions in companies, up from only 10 percent in 1995. During 2012-2020, China has lifted approximately 41 million women out of poverty by creating opportunities for income generation and jobs.

Major progress has been made in education parity for girls and young women, with 99.9 percent of primary-school-age girls enrolled in schools, and women accounting for over half of the higher education receivers, while taking up 52.5 percent of the regular undergraduate and associate bachelor students. As across the world, where women have led the way in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese women have been at the national front line as medical workers, as well as those leading logistical chain management, community workers promoting risk awareness and prevention of COVID-19, caretakers of the elderly and children at home, or developing vaccines and leading large-scale public health response¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁴ "25 years of gender equality in China", 2 October 2020, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-10-02/25-years-of-gender-equality-in-China-Uf3mlZovWE/index.html>

¹⁴⁵ "UN Women chief lauds China's achievements in women's rights, calls for more efforts", 27 September 2020, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2020-09/27/content_76755219.htm

It must be noted that China still faces challenges that need to be addressed to the full realization of the development goals for women outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. At present, discrimination against women in the job market still exists, while the level of women's participation and influence in decision-making and management still needs to be raised. Under the difficult circumstances posed by the pandemic, China can play a crucial role to continue supporting women's leadership and participation in the recovery process, to ensure that women's needs and concerns are reflected in the relevant policies such as employment, social protection, food security and social infrastructure. A key step China can take is to harness innovation and technology for women, especially rural and young women. This will support their access to online jobs, markets and digital platforms and cultivate an ecosystem of new women-run businesses, as in rural areas, women account for about 70 percent of the total agricultural labor force.

5.2 State of Gender Integration in Policies

The following section provides an overview of the policies related to climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, agriculture and food security, and gender equality in China. Inclusive and holistic development is at the core of all development plans and policies.

5.2.1 Key Policy Documents

China's legal and policy framework is led by the Constitution, composed of department laws and administrative regulations, and supported by top-level policy designs such as the *Outline of the Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development* (Five-Year Plan), the *Report of the National Congress of the Communist Party of China* (CPC), the *No.1 Central Document*, and the *State Council's Government Work Report*.

The current **Constitution**, since its adoption and promulgation in 1982 and through five amendments (in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004 and 2018), has always maintained the provisions of Article 26, Paragraph 1 of Chapter 1 – “the state protects and improves the living surroundings and ecological environment, and prevents and controls pollution and other public hazards”.

The Five-Year Plans are primarily centralized and integrated national economic programmes. The first plan was from 1953 to 1957 and the most recent one, the 14th plan, is from 2021 to 2025. Developed by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, the **14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025)** has set 20 main objectives for economic and social development during this period, mainly covering five aspects: economic development, innovation driven, people's well-being, green ecology and security¹⁴⁶.

The No.1 Central Document is the first policy document released by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council at the beginning of every year. It conventionally focuses on agricultural and rural issues and is regarded as a key policy document that outlines goals for the upcoming year. From 2004 to 2019, this document has consecutively focused on issues of “agriculture, rural areas and farmers”. Several concepts have been put forward, for example, construction of “new countryside” in 2006, development of “modern agriculture” in 2012, as well as the more recent Rural Revitalization Strategy proposed at the 19th National Congress of the CPC in 2017. In the **2021 No. 1 Central Document**, China stresses the efforts to comprehensively advance rural vitalization and accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas in an all-round way¹⁴⁷.

China has embraced sustainable development through a variety of national level strategies. The most significant one is the adoption of “ecological civilization”, which emphasizes harmony between human and nature, and in this regard, it represents the sum of material, spiritual and institutional achievements in the process of protecting and building a better ecological environment. In 2012, at the 18th National Congress of the CPC, a strategic decision of promoting ecological civilization had been made. The vision for eco-civilization is required to be integrated into all aspects of economic, political, cultural and social developments. In 2015, *Opinions on Accelerating the Formation of Ecological*

¹⁴⁶ “China unveils final version of 14th Five-Year Plan, long-range goals”, 13 March 2021 <https://peoplesdaily.pdnews.cn/china/china-unveils-final-version-of-14th-five-year-plan-long-range-goals-201957.html>

¹⁴⁷ “China to fully advance rural vitalization, facilitate modernization of agriculture, rural areas”, 21 February 2021, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202102/21/WS6032472ca31024ad0baa01c.html>

Civilization was released, emphasizing the importance of, 1) optimization of the territorial spatial-layout, 2) efficient utilization of natural resources, 3) improvement the quality of eco-environment, and 4) institution development¹⁴⁸. The same year, *Overall Scheme of Eco-civilization Institutional System Reform* came out, in which eco-compensation mechanism played a role¹⁴⁹. Later on, promoting eco-civilization was written in the *2018 Constitutional Amendment*.

5.2.2 Sectoral Policies and State of Gender Integration

Climate Change Policies

China attaches great importance to addressing climate change, making it a significant national strategy for its social and economic development and promoting green and low-carbon development as important components of the ecological civilization process. In the early 1990s, China participated in global negotiations to establish UNFCCC. In the negotiations, China gave high priority to text on “common but differentiated responsibilities”—the principle that all countries are responsible for taking action to prevent climate change but that responsibilities vary based on a country’s level of development. China signed the UNFCCC on 11 June 1992 and deposited Instruments of Accession on 5 January 1993. China also signed the Kyoto Protocol in May 1998 and ratified it in August 2002, and more recently, signed the *Paris Agreement* in April 2016 and ratified it on 3 September 2016¹⁵⁰. Over the past years, the Chinese government has issued a series of policies and measures to combat global climate change.

In 2006, the Chinese government released its first National Assessment Report on Climate Change (Ding et al., 2007), based on work by more than 20 ministries and government agencies. In June 2007, the Chinese government issued the *National Climate Change Program*, and on 29 October 2008, the Information Office of the State Council published a white paper entitled *China’s Policies and Actions*

for Addressing Climate Change. Since then, an annual white paper has been published to give introduce China’s policies and progress in addressing climate change (MEE, 2018b).

In November 2009, China announced internationally that by 2020 it will lower carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP (i.e., carbon intensity) by 40 to 45 percent from the 2005 level, increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to about 15 percent, and increase the forested area by 40 million hectares and the forest stock volume by 1.3 billion cubic meters compared to the 2005 levels¹⁵¹. In this connection, China has enacted and implemented:

- *Comprehensive Work Plan for Energy Conservation and Emission Reduction for the 12th Five Year Plan Period* (September 2011),
- *Work Plan for Controlling Greenhouse Gas Emissions during the 12th Five-Year Plan Period* (December 2011),
- *12th Five Year Plan for Energy Conservation and Emission Reduction* (August 2012),
- *2014-2015 Action Plan for Energy Conservation, Emission Reduction and Low-Carbon Development* (May 2014),
- *National Plan on Climate Change (2014-2020)* (September 2014), and
- *Work Plan for Controlling Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the 13th Five-Year Plan* (Oct. 2016).

China has also accelerated the implementation of the *National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation* (issued in November 2013, see Box 5.1) and improved its capacity to respond to extreme climatic events and making positive progress in key areas of climate change adaptation. Support in terms of science and technology are further enhanced by implementing *China’s Science and Technology Actions on Climate Change* (issued in June 2007). China has also devised a mass of policy measures to integrate climate change within policies and strategies of key sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, water resources and public health, as well as in the coastal and eco-fragile areas.

148 http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-05/05/content_2857363.htm

149 http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/2015-09/21/content_2936327.htm

150 “Status of the Paris Agreement”, as at 27 June 2021, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtsg_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=_en

151 “China announces targets on carbon emission cuts”, 26 November 2009, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/copenhagen/t629655.htm>

Box 5.1: China's National Strategy for Climate Adaptation (2013-2020)

China's *National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation* was released by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) together with eight other ministries and bureaus on 18 November 2013¹⁵². It aims to significantly enhance the country's capacity to respond to extreme climatic events and thereby build resilience in key sectors ranging from human health to infrastructure. The whole country is divided into three types of adaptation regions—urbanized, agricultural, and ecological—to undertake specific adaptation tasks. For example, in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, one of the five major ecological regions, the tasks include assessment of the plateau's grassland-carrying capacity, grassland enclosure and recovery, glacier monitoring, wetland management, and development of highland valley agriculture.

Parallel to domestic efforts, the Chinese government has been unwavering in its support for international cooperation and the *Paris Agreement*. In June 2015, China submitted its INDC to the UNFCCC Secretariat and pledged to achieve the peaking of carbon dioxide emissions around 2030, making best efforts to peak early. It also pledged that by 2030, it would, (1) lower carbon intensity by 60–65 percent from 2005 levels, (2) increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 20 percent, and (3) increase the forest stock volume by around 4.5 billion cubic meters from the 2005 level (NDRC, 2015).

China is moving to explore the path toward carbon neutrality goal. By the end of 2019, the country's carbon intensity had decreased by 48.1 percent compared with the 2005 levels, with its share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption reaching 15.3 percent, meeting the targets set for 2020¹⁵³. In September 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at the general debate of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly that China would peak carbon dioxide emissions “by 2030” and achieve carbon neutrality “by 2060”¹⁵⁴. On 12

December 2020, at the 2020 Climate Ambition Summit, Xi proposed updated NDC targets with additional targets that aim to increase renewable capacity¹⁵⁵:

- Peak carbon dioxide emissions “before 2030” and achieve carbon neutrality “before 2060”;
- Lower carbon intensity by “over 65 percent” in 2030 compared to 2005 levels;
- Share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to “around 25 percent” in 2030;
- Increase forest stock volume by around 6 billion cubic metres in 2030;
- Increase the installed capacity of wind and solar power to over 1.2 billion KW by 2030.

In accordance with the targets announced by Xi, it has been set for the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025) that carbon intensity will be lowered “by 18 percent” and share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption will be increased to “around 20 percent”. Specific plans to tackle climate change for the next five years are being drawn up by the Chinese government.

Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration Policies

China has attached great importance to ecological conservation and environmental protection. President Xi Jinping has proposed the vision that “*lucid waters and lush mountains are as good as mountains of gold and silver*”. In 2017, this vision was written into the report of the 19th CPC National Congress and the revised CPC Constitution as a guiding principle for coordinated development and conservation. During the *13th Five-Year Plan* period, historic, transformational and overarching changes took place in China's ecological conservation, in both concept and practice, and laid a solid foundation for new progress in the 14th Five-Year Plan period, and for fundamentally improving the environment and basically realizing the goal of building a *Beautiful China* by 2035.

152 http://www.gov.cn/zwqk/2013-12/09/content_2544880.htm

153 “China moves to explore path toward carbon neutrality goal”, 20 October 2020, http://en.qstheory.cn/2020-10/20/c_551457.htm

154 “Xi: China aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060”, 23 September 2020, <http://chinaplus.cri.cn/recommend-ed/1661/549569>

155 “Building on Past Achievements and Launching a New Journey for Global Climate Actions, Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China at the Climate Ambition Summit”, 12 December 2020, http://en.qstheory.cn/2020-12/14/c_573223.htm

To protect and conserve its biodiversity and ecosystems, China has been a party to the CBD since 1993 and implemented its first National Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan in 1994. To strengthen its biodiversity conservation efforts, on 17 September 2010, the Government of China updated and launched the *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2030*. The new strategy contains three goals, eight strategic tasks, 10 priority domains, 30 priority actions, 35 priority areas for conservation and 39 priority projects for implementation¹⁵⁶. The principles enshrined in this strategy are fourfold, namely “conservation being a first priority, sustainable use, public participation and benefit-sharing”. In policy and legal terms, the implementation of CBD and several other international conventions, such as CITES, Ramsar, UNFCCC and UNCCD, is a means for China to translate biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration into national targets.

Since 2015, China has adopted a series of policies related to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, which provide top-level design and overall arrangements for ecological civilization development. These policies include¹⁵⁷:

- *Recommendations for Accelerating Ecological Civilization Development*;
- *Master Proposals for Institutional Reforms for Ecological Civilization*;
- *Proposals for Pilot Work in Formulating Natural Resources Assets Balance Sheet*;
- *Rules for Accountability of Party and Government Officials for Environmental Damages*;
- *Proposals for Pilot Work in Off-job Auditing of Natural Resources Assets of Party and Government Officials*;
- *Proposals for Reforms in Compensation Mechanisms for Environmental/Ecological Damages*;
- *Recommendations on Improving Ecological Compensation Mechanisms*;
- *Recommendations on Strengthen Red-line Control over Resources, Environment and Ecology*;

- *Recommendations on Drawing and Strictly Following Ecological Red Lines* (February 2017);
- *Recommendations on Setting up Standardized Experiment Zones for Ecological Civilization Development*;
- *Master Proposals for Establishing National Parks System*;
- *Proposals for Mechanisms for Wetland Conservation and Restoration*;
- *Recommendations on Appointing River Head*;
- *Recommendations on Strengthening Biological Conservation in the Yangtze River*;
- *Recommendations on Accelerating the Establishment of a Sound, Green, Low-carbon and Circular Economic System* (February 2021);
- *Recommendations on Establishing a Mechanism for Realizing the Value of Ecosystem Products* (April 2021).

In addition, China has revised a number of laws and regulations such as *Environmental Protection Law*, *Wild Animals Protection Law*, *Forest Law*, *Grassland Law and Regulation on Nature Reserves*. China has also promulgated a number of new laws and regulations such as *Regulation on Taihu Basin Management*, *Regulation on Prevention and Control of Pollution from Livestock Farming*, and *Rules for Adjustment of National-level Protected Areas*. Some local governments have also developed a series of regulations. For example, provinces or municipalities such as Beijing, Yunnan, Jiangxi, Henan, Anhui, Fujian, Guizhou, Hebei and Jiangsu have developed their provincial regulations for protected areas and wetland conservation. A total of 18 provinces across the country have developed their *provincial biodiversity strategies and action plans*. All this has resulted in the further improvement of legal and regulatory systems for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.

In line with these commitments and ecological civilization, The State Council has approved the implementation of a series of plans and programmes which have enhanced biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, including:

¹⁵⁶ “China - Main Details”, <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/default.shtml?country=cn>

¹⁵⁷ China's Sixth National Report to CBD, submitted on 29 December 2018 <https://chm.cbd.int/database/record?documentID=241353>

- National Programme for Conservation and Use of Biological Resources (2011-2030);
- National Programme of Action for Conservation of Aquatic Biological Resources (2006-2020);
- National Plan for Water Area Zoning of Important Rivers and Lakes (2011-2030);
- National Plan for Zoning of Marine Areas (2011-2020);
- National 12th Five-year Plan for Implementation of Wetland Conservation Projects (2011-2015);
- National Plan for Island Conservation (2011-2020);
- National Plan for Conservation and Use of Livestock Genetic Resources (2015-2020);
- Strategy and Planning for Traditional Chinese Medicine Development (2016-2030);
- Action Plans for Water Pollution Prevention and Control (2015-2030);
- Action Plans for Soil Pollution Prevention and Control (2016-2030);
- Action Plans for Air Pollution Prevention and Control (2013-2017);
- National Environmental Protection Planning for the 13th Five-Year Period (2015-2020); and
- National Planning for Water and Soil Conservation (2015-2030).

Relevant sector departments of Chinese government have developed and implemented a series of programmes and plans that have effectively promoted biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration (see Table 5.1). All these have enhanced to varying degrees biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration at national, sectoral and regional levels. As a recent example, in the *Master Plan for the Major Projects for the Protection and Restoration of National Key Ecosystems (2021-2035)* jointly issued by NDRC and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) on 3 June 2021, it is proposed that by 2035, through vigorously implementing major projects for the protection and restoration of important ecosystems, and comprehensively strengthening ecological protection and restoration, the state of the country's natural ecosystems such as forests, grasslands, deserts, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and oceans will fundamentally improve¹⁵⁸. Overall, there has been important experience towards biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration worth highlighting, including a new development vision that purses high-quality economic development and high-level protection of the environment, a people-centered approach that meets people's growing needs of a beautiful environment, a systematic approach that manage mountains, waters, forests, grassland, farmland, lakes and deserts as inherent parts of one whole ecosystem (MOFA, 2021).

158 https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfb/tz/202006/t20200611_1231112.html

Table 5.1: Programmes and plans developed by departments related to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration of China

Departments	Name of Programmes and Plans
NDRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Ecological Conservation and Construction (2013-2020) Plan for Rehabilitating Agricultural Lands, Grasslands, Rivers and Lakes (2016-2030) 13th Five-Year Plan for Comprehensive Control Engineering of Rocky Desertification in Karst Areas Comprehensive Plan for Water Resources and Environmental Protection for Qiandao Lake and Upper Stream of Xin'an River Plan for Comprehensive Ecological Conservation in Key Areas of Western China (2012-2020) Environmental Protection Plan for Coordinated Development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region
MLR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13th Five-year Plan for Land Resources.
NDRC, MOF, SFA, MOA, MLR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Round of Overall Scheme of Grain to Green Program (2014-2020)
NDRC, MNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan for the Major Projects for the Protection and Restoration of National Key Ecosystems (2021-2035)
MEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan for Environmental Protection of Lakes with Relatively Good Water Quality National Plan for Ecological Conservation for the 13th Five-Year Period
MEP, CAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Ecological Zoning (revised)
MEP, MOA, MWR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in Key River Basins
MOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Sustainable Agricultural Development (2015-2030) Medium and Long-term National Plan for Conservation and Use of Agricultural Crops Germplasm Resources (2015-2030) Opinions on Implementing the Fight of Agricultural Non-point source Pollution Prevention and Control (2015-2020) National Plan for Conservation and Use of Livestock Genetic Resources for the 13th Five-Year Period National Plan for Grasslands Conservation for the 13th Five-Year Period
SFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Forest Land Conservation and Use (2010-2020) National Plan for Forest Management (2016-2050) National Action Plan for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Forest Genetic Resources Action Plan for Forestry Adaptation to Climate Change (2016-2020).
SFA, NDRC, MOF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Wetland Conservation for the 13th Five-Year Period
GAQSIQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations for Further Strengthening Inspection and Quarantine of the Import and Export of Biological Resources
SOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Marine Renewable Energy Development for the 13th Five-Year Period National Plan for Island Protection for the 13th Five-Year Period National Plan for Marine Observation Networks (2014-2020)
MII, NATCM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the Protection and Development of Chinese Medicinal Materials (2015-2020)

Note: NDRC, National Development and Reform Commission; MLR, Ministry of Land Resources (replaced by the Ministry of Natural Resources, MNR for short, in 2018); MEP, Ministry of Environmental Protection (replaced by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, MEE for short, in 2018); CAS, Chinese Academy of Sciences; MOA, Ministry of Agriculture (replaced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, MOARA for short, in 2018); MWR, Ministry of Water Resource; SFA, State Forestry Administration (replaced by State Forestry and Grassland Administration, SFGA for short, in 2018); MOF, Ministry of Finance; GAQSIQ, General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (replaced by *State Administration for Market Regulation*, SAMR for short, in 2018); SOA, State Oceanic Administration; MII, Ministry of Industry and Information; NATCM, National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Agriculture and Food Security Policies

To address major challenges facing agriculture and food security, some of which are highlighted in the previous section, China has embraced sustainable agriculture through a variety of national level strategies and policies, which have evolved over time. Significantly, promotion of sustainable agriculture landscapes and natural resource management are enshrined within the *13th Five-Year Plan* (2016-2020). It emphasizes, agriculture modernization, which among other objectives aims to promote water-efficient agriculture and high-quality farmland which can help to ensure food security and improvement in soil, irrigation and drainage facilities.

As shown in Table 5.1, the *National Agricultural Sustainable Development Plan (2015-2030)* is a programmatic document to guide the

sustainable development of agriculture in the coming period. The Plan divides the whole country into three regions: optimum development zone, moderate development zone and protection development zone, and takes step-by-step measures according to local conditions; It puts forward five key tasks including optimizing development layout, protecting farmland resources, saving and efficient water use, controlling environmental pollution, and restoring agricultural ecology.

Through a thorough desk review of existing policies, programmes and plans (see last section), ten policy streams on agriculture and food systems, including seven of the problem-driven policy streams and the other three working on the enabling conditions are summarized in Table 5.2 as below.

Table 5.2: Policy streams under review for China's agriculture and food systems

Policy Streams	Major Policies	Pathways/Interventions
Anti-agricultural non-point source pollution	<i>Opinions on Implementing the Battle of Agricultural Non-point source Pollution Prevention and Control (2015-2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop water-saving agriculture • Cut the use of chemical fertilizer • Cut the use of pesticide • Recycling of agricultural plastic sheeting • Resource-oriented utilization of livestock and poultry manure • Resource-oriented utilization of crop straw
Grain to Green Program	<i>New Round of Overall Scheme of Grain to Green Program (2014-2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy for plantation on slope farmland • Adjustment and optimization of agricultural structure
Establishment of well-facilitated farmland	<i>National Master Plan for Promotion of Well-facilitated Farmland (2011-2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of farmland productivity • Farmland rotation and fallow farming
Grassland restoration	<i>Grassland Law</i> <i>Opinions of the State Council on Promoting the Good and Rapid Development of Grassland Areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned grazing • Development of grass husbandry
Anti-overfishing	<i>13th Five-Year Plan for National Fisheries Development (2016-2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction on offshore fishing • Development of aquaculture industry and marine ranching

Policy Streams	Major Policies	Pathways/Interventions
In-situ conservation	<i>Medium and Long-term Development Plan for the Conservation and Utilization of Crop Germplasm Resources (2015-2030), etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In situ conservation of crop, forage and livestock, fishery germplasm resources • Negative validation rule for industries accessing the key ecological-function zones
Sustainable consumption	<i>Guidance on Promoting Sustainable Consumption</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening publicity and education • Guiding consumption behavior • Promoting green products • Accelerating the certification of low-carbon or organic products
Eco-compensation mechanism	<i>Opinions on Improving the Ecological Compensation Mechanism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical transfer payment • Horizontal transfer payment (financial compensation, talent training, industrial transfer, etc.)
Land tenure transfer and moderate-scale management	<i>Law on Land Contract in Rural Area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New types of agricultural management entity
Science and technology innovation	<i>Plan for Agricultural Science and Technology Development (2006-2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture green development • Effective agricultural supply • Modern marine agricultural

Source: adapted from He, 2019.

Gender Equality Policies¹⁵⁹

China has always upheld the constitutional principle of equality between men and women (see Box 5.2), which is also a basic state policy for promoting social development in the country. The *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women* amended in 2005 says, "The state practices the basic state policy of equality between men and women", making the state policy legally binding.

The *Report to the 18th National Congress of CPC in 2012* and the *Report to the 19th National Congress of CPC in 2017* both say "We should adhere to the basic state policy of equality between men and women and protect the legitimate rights and interests of women and children." This is the political commitment made by the governing party to make gender equality an integral part of the mainstream values.

¹⁵⁹ See the Report of the People's Republic of China on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000), which was submitted to the 59th session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women held in March 2015, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/previous-sessions/csw59-2015/preparations#National>

Box 5.2: The Constitution of the People's Republic of China (excerpt)

Article 48. Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, cultural and social, and family life.

The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women alike and trains and selects cadres from among women.

Over the past 20 years, China has progressively improved its legal system for the protection of women's rights and interests to achieve gender equality. China has promulgated or revised over 20 laws and regulations related to the protection of women's rights and interests, including the *Adoption Law*, *Law on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency*, *Law on Land Contracts in Rural Areas*, *Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women*, *Labor Law*, *Law on Labor Contracts*, *Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care*, *Law on Population and Family Planning*, *Law on Compulsory Education*, *Marriage Law*, *Law on Promotion of Employment*, *Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities*, *Anti-domestic Violence Law*, *Measures for the Implementation of the Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care*, *Legal Assistance Regulations*, *Regulations on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities*, *Regulation on the Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS*, *Regulations on the Work of Family Planning for the Migrant Population*, and *Special Regulations Concerning the Labor Protection of Female Staff and Workers*. These efforts have further improved relevant legislation and provisions of the above laws and regulations.

Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women that came into force in 1992 was the first fundamental law in China designed specifically for realizing gender equality and protecting rights and interests of women. It sets forth in details the legal rights and interests of women in politics, culture, education, property, personal affairs, marriage and family. An amendment to *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women* in 2005 officially established the legal status

of gender equality as a fundamental national policy, and revised "labor rights and interests" to "labor and social security rights and interests". Built on the Constitution and with the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women* at the core, this system now covers over 100 separate laws and regulations (SCIO, 2019).

The principle of gender equality has been further embodied in the legislation process. Paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Decision on Amending the *Electoral Law of the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses of the People's Republic of China* adopted in March 2010 stipulates, "deputies to the National People's Congress and local people's congresses at various levels should be widely representative. Among the deputies, there shall be an appropriate number of deputies representing the primary level, in particular workers, farmers and intellectuals; there shall be an appropriate number of women deputies, and the proportion thereof shall be raised gradually." Article 6 of the *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees* amended in 2010 includes provisions such as "ensuring that there are women members on villagers committees", and Article 23 provides that "women village representatives should account for more than one-third of the members of the villagers' representatives' assembly."

National programs for the development of women have been formulated to guide equal development of men and women. The State Council has published three national programs for women's development for the periods of 1995-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2020. The *National Program for Women's Development (2011-2020)* embodies the basic state policy of equality between men and women and advocates gender equality and stands for both forging an advanced gender culture and realizing women's rights and interests. Among the 57 major targets set out in the program, 26 are related to basic public services the government provides for women, which are aimed at facilitating women's sustainable development through public policies for gender equality.

Since 2000, China has included the implementation of the *National Program for Women's Development* in the national economic and social development plan. The *Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (2021-2025)* includes the "promotion of equality between men and women and women's full development", stating that "we will fully implement the programme for women's development, continue to improve the environment for women's development, and encourage women to exercise their rights equally and in accordance with the law, participate in economic and social development, and share in the fruits of development." Governments above the county level are required to incorporate the for women's development and ensure that women's development will be planned, implemented and realized in tandem with the economic and social development of the country.

5.2.3 State of Policy Guidelines and Gender Integration

A mass of guidelines is available to support the implementation of policies and plans at national and sub-national level in each of the four sectors. Remarkably, there is a significant progress for gender integration in food security and poverty alleviation in recent years. For example, the *National Nutrition Plan (2016-2030)* has been formulated, which sets forth specific indicators, intervention actions and projects targeting malnutrition of pregnant women, children, the elderly and other key groups. Women groups, together with ecological conservation and restoration, have been also included in national and local poverty reduction plans, such as the *Program for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China's Rural Areas (2011-2020)*, which requires that poverty reduction must be linked with natural resources and ecological conservation and focused on key groups such as ethnic minorities, women, children, and disabled persons¹⁶⁰. The State Council's *Poverty Alleviation Plan for the 13th Five-Year Plan Period (2016-2020)* takes "strengthening vocational skills training and employment guidance services for women from poor families" as a means to promote

¹⁶⁰ http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2011/content_2020905.htm

transfer employment and poverty alleviation.¹⁶¹ Yet, most of national strategies, programmes, and plans on climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration are not gender sensitive and need to further incorporate gender equality related targets and indicators in the future.

5.3. Gender Dimensions Within the Institutional Context

At national level, the Chinese Government has formed specific institutions within the sectors of climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, agriculture and food security, gender equality and sustainable development.

5.3.1 Overarching Institutions for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Environment and Development Conference (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992) adopted the Agenda 21 to implement the sustainable development strategy. In 1993, the Chinese government formulated *China's Agenda 21: White Paper on China's Population, Environment and Development in the 21st Century*, which deemed the first national level Agenda 21 in the world. The paper was approved by the State Council in March 1994 as an overarching strategic guideline for the formulation of economic and social development plans.¹⁶² Concurrently, the State Council approved the establishment of the **Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21** (ACCA 21) to effectively promote the implementation of China's Agenda 21. The ACCA 21 is affiliated to the Ministry of Science and Technology of China (MOST), with regard to some functions, also operates under the leadership of the State Development Planning Commission (SDPC, replaced by the NDRC in 2003). The Centre is the bridge between domestic and international partners for the implementation of the Priority Programme for China's Agenda 21. It provides information on sustainable development, consultancy services for projects, training and public awareness material¹⁶³.

¹⁶¹ http://www.cpad.gov.cn/art/2016/12/3/art_46_56101.html

¹⁶² <https://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/china/inst.htm>

¹⁶³ <http://www.acca21.org.cn>

In 2003, the Chinese government formulated the *China's Program of Action for Sustainable Development in the Early 21st Century* (State Council, 2003). It is an important policy paper that proposes the goal, key areas, and safeguarding measures to promote sustainable development in China.

More recently, in September 2016, *China's National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was formulated by Chinese government (MOFA, 2016). The plan has special emphasis on aspects including eliminating poverty and hunger, maintaining economic growth, improving social security and social services, safeguarding equity and justice, strengthening environmental protection, addressing climate change, as well as enhancing energy and resource efficiency. China's domestic **inter-agency coordination mechanism** comprised of 43 government departments has been established for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and its local governments will set up corresponding working mechanisms to ensure smooth implementation.

5.3.2 Institutions related to Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Food Security

Institutions Related to Climate Change

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the institutional arrangements for addressing climate change. After persistent efforts, China has built institutional frameworks for addressing climate change on national, local and relevant departmental levels, and is constantly improving them based on needs from daily work. In June 2007, the Chinese government decided to set up the **National Leading Group on Climate Change, Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction**. The Leading Group, headed by the Chinese Premier, is a cross-department coordination organization of China for climate change, energy conservation and emissions reduction. All units of the Leadership Group, as governmental authorities in respective industries, have appointed leaders and major responsible units for addressing climate change, meanwhile strengthened the guidance to respective industry associations

(MEE, 2018a). According to the requirements of organizational structuring and personnel changes as well as work needs, the State Council has adjusted the units or personnel of the Leadership Group¹⁶⁴.

The concrete work of the Leading Group is done by MEE and NDRC in accordance with their responsibilities. In 2008, a department was established in the NDRC, responsible for organizing and coordinating action on climate change all over the country. In 2012, *National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation* (NCSC) was established. The Department of Climate Change and NCSC were transferred to the MEE in 2018. Since 2008, all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the State Council, as well as some sub-provincial or prefectural cities, have established their own institutional mechanisms to address climate change. In general, China's institutional framework and working mechanism to address climate change features the unified leadership of the National Leading Group, administration by the MEE and NDRC, division of work among relevant departments under the State Council, and wide participation of various localities and industries.

The Chinese government has also established a national system for the preparation and reporting of National Communications on Climate Change and formed a relatively stable technical support team for the preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, National Communications on Climate Change and Biennial Update Reports (Table 5.3).

¹⁶⁴ http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2019-10/12/content_5438830.htm

Table 5.3: Main organizations involved in preparation of the National Communication, Biennial Update Reports and National GHG Inventories

Tasks	Organizations
GHG inventory for energy	NCSC; Energy Research Institute of NDRC; Fudan University; China Special Equipment Inspection and Research Institute
GHG inventory for industrial processes	Tsinghua University; Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of MEE
GHG inventory for agriculture (livestock)	Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in Agriculture, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)
GHG inventory for agriculture (croplands)	Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences
GHG inventory for LULUCF	Institute of Forest Ecology, Environment and Protection of the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF); Research, Planning and Design Institute of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration; Research Institute of Forestry New Technology of CAF; Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in Agriculture, CAAS; Institute of Atmospheric Physics of Chinese Academy of Sciences
GHG inventory for waste	Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences
Basic statistical data & national GHG inventory database	National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Source: MEE, 2018a.

Institutions Related to Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration

Ecological conservation demands revolutionary changes in how we produce, live, and think and what we value. It must be implemented in a complete institutional framework where there are diverse stakeholders. According to the *Opinions on Accelerating the Formation of Ecological Civilization* released in April 2015, CPC committees and governments at different levels bear overall responsibility for eco-civilization development in their regions, and all relevant departments should closely coordinate and cooperate in accordance with their respective responsibilities. The following information provides an overview of key institutions in China and their functions in the work related to ecological conservation.

The **Ministry of Ecology and Environment** (MEE) was officially inaugurated in April 2018, with a mission to “improve environmental quality and build a beautiful China which enjoys blue sky, green land and clean water”. It has the mandates not only to supervise efforts to prevent environment pollution, but also to

guide and supervise ecological conservation and restoration and coordinate the protection of biodiversity mainly through the *Department of Nature and Ecology Conservation (Biodiversity Protection Office; National Biosafety Management Office)*

The **Ministry of Natural Resources** (MNR) was also created in 2018 to share with MEE responsibilities for ecological conservation and environmental protection. It is mainly responsible for the rational development and utilization of natural resources, the coordination of ecological restoration of territorial space, the organization and implementation of the strictest farmland protection system, the supervision and administration of marine development, utilization and protection. It plays a major role in coordinating the protection policies of farmland, woodland, grassland, wetland and other land resources in China.

Administered by the MNR, the **State Forestry and Grassland Administration** (SFGA) is a specialized government agency responsible for the supervision and administration of forests,

grasslands, and wetlands and their ecological conservation and restoration. It also has the mandates to supervise and administer the prevention and control of desertification, terrestrial wildlife resources, and all kinds of protected areas in China. Therefore, it plays a critical role to conserve and restore major ecosystems, promote land greening, and ensure national ecological security in China.

The **National Development and Reform Commission** (NDRC) acts as the leading government agency in formulating and implementing strategies, plans, policies, and major programs of national social and economic development, including those related to sustainable development, climate change, energy saving, and emission reduction. Specifically, its *Department of Resource Conservation and Environmental Protection* is responsible for promote the implementation of sustainable development strategies, advance the construction and reform of ecological civilization, and coordinate ecological and environmental protection and restoration, energy and resource conservation and comprehensive utilization.

The **Chinese Academy of Sciences** (CAS) is a leading academic institution and comprehensive research and development center in natural science, technological science, and high-tech innovation in China. In the field of ecological and environmental research, CAS offers services of ecosystem monitoring, research, demonstration, and policy support through the **Chinese Ecosystem Research Network** (CERN) (see Box 5.3).

Box 5.3: Chinese Ecosystem Research Network

Established by CAS in 1988, the CERN serves as a functional network performing long-term investigation of typical ecosystems in China. It consists of 44 field research stations engaged in monitoring, experiment, research and demonstration; five disciplinary sub-centers responsible for the calibration of monitoring instruments and data quality control; and one synthesis center with the function of data exchange and inter-disciplinary research. Based on the CERN field stations. The ecosystem restoration models established by CERN have played a key demonstration role in the ecological development of the Loess Plateau, the restoration of degraded grassland, and the management of lake eutrophication in China. The efficient development models of modern agriculture developed by CERN have promoted the increase of grain production, farmers' income and farmland environmental protection in the North China Plain and the Northeast China Plain.

Other Institutions

There are several other key national governmental institutions engaged in efforts on ecological conservation and environmental protection in China.

- The **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs** (MOARA) has the responsibilities for the design and implementation of policies and measures to protect and manage agricultural land, fishery waters and biological species related to agriculture.
- The **Ministry of Water Resources** (MWR) has responsibilities for the design and implementation of policies and measures for water resource sector, with the focus on conserving and protecting water resources, flood control and drought relief, safe drinking water, and control of soil erosion and water loss.
- The **Ministry of Science and Technology** (MOST), with the collaboration of the **National Natural Sciences Foundation of China** (NSFC), is playing a key role in setting priorities for state investment in scientific and technological innovation for environmental protection, ecological conservation and regional sustainable development.

- The **China Meteorological Administration** (CMA) is a public service agency responsible for formulating policies and plans in terms of meteorological services, guiding the preparedness against weather-related disastrous events and organizing meteorological research projects.

Institutions Related to Agriculture and Food Security

China's institutional system governing food has undergone many reforms since the 1990s. In May 1993, the *Leading Group for Rural Work of the CPC Central Committee* was established as the deliberation and coordination body of the CPC Central Committee leading rural work and agricultural economy. The group is headed by a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, who is also Vice Premier of the State Council, and composed of leading officers of national governmental departments in charge of rural and agricultural economy. It is responsible for making decisions on major issues concerning rural and agricultural economic work. Every year in December, the CPC Central Committee Conference on Rural Work is held in Beijing. The group will be responsible for drafting relevant documents required for the conference. Its office is established in the MOARA of the State Council.

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs** (MOARA) is responsible for implementing the guiding principles, policies and decisions of the CPC Central Committee on work related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers. Its main duties are listed as below¹⁶⁵:

- Take the lead in preparing and implementing strategies, mid- and long-term plans and major policies related to agriculture, rural areas and farmer;
- Make overall arrangements to promote social programs, public services, culture, infrastructure and governance in rural areas;
- Draft policies for furthering the reform of the rural economic structure and consolidating and improving the underlying rural management systems;
- Give guidance on development of distinctive rural industries, agricultural processing, entertainment farming and township enterprises;

- Conduct supervision and regulation over agricultural sectors, including crop production, animal husbandry, fisheries, state farms, and mechanization;
- Regulate and oversee the quality and safety of agricultural products;
- Conduct zoning of agricultural resources to guide protection and management of agricultural land, fishery waters and biological species related to agriculture;
- Conduct oversight over and regulation of production of agricultural supplies and inputs;
- Conduct disaster prevention and mitigation in agriculture and prevent and control major crop pests and diseases;
- Assume responsibility for making investment in agriculture;
- Promote reform on the system of agricultural science and technology and development of the innovation system;
- Give guidance on work related to human resources in agriculture and rural areas;
- Lead international cooperation in agriculture.

There are a number of departments and bureaus established under the MOARA in charge of the work directly related to food and agricultural production, such as the *Department of Agro-product Safety and Quality*, *Department of Crop Production (Department of Agrochemical Management)*, *Bureau of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services*, *Bureau of Fisheries*, *Bureau of State Farms*, *Department of Seed Industry*, and *Department of Farmland Enhancement*. There are also several other departments devoted to agricultural industries and rural development, such as the Department of Rural Industries, Department of Rural Social Services, Department of Rural Cooperative Economy, and Department of Market and Informatization.

Many of previously mentioned institutions related to ecological conservation also contribute to enhance the agricultural production and food security in China. For example, the NDRC drafts overall reserve plans for grain, cotton, sugar and other strategic materials; MNR guides the implementation of land consolidation projects; MWR guides the construction of irrigation and drainage facilities and slope farmland and flood control projects;

¹⁶⁵ http://english.moa.gov.cn/Institutional/Mandates/202005/t20200526_300404.html

SFGA guides the farmland forest shelter network development projects.

In addition, there are several other institutions working on issues related to food safety and quality assurance, such as the *National Food and Strategic Reserves Administration* (NFSRA) responsible for purchasing and storing such crop and other strategic reserves, as well as the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) and the *National Commission for Health and Family Planning* (NCFAP, replaced by the *National Health Commission*, NHC for short, in 2018) as the overarching bodies in supervision and coordination (Ding et al., 2018). Specific to agricultural standards, NHC takes the leading role together with other ministerial bodies (mainly MOARA) in designing and enforcing compliance with standards. Therefore, multi-sectoral consultation and cooperation mechanism is essential to the operations of the institutional system.

Institutions Related to Gender Equality

China's national institutions and working mechanism for promoting the status of women, fully utilizing government resources and effectively mobilizing social resources, lay an important foundation for promoting gender equality and women's development (SCIO, 2015).

The National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee take the protection of women's rights and interests and promotion of gender equality as an important task and have established the *Office for Labor, Youth and Women's Affairs*, which reviews reports by various committees and relevant departments on the promotion of gender equality. Since 2009, a number of inspections and studies have been conducted on the enforcement of the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women and other relevant laws.

A working group on women and children has been established under the Committee for Social and Legal Affairs of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, to provide suggestions as appropriate on the priority and difficult issues

concerning women's development and to handle proposals on promoting gender equality and women's development.

The state has established a working mechanism featuring leadership by the government, multi-departmental cooperation and participation of the whole of society. In 1990, the State Council established the **National Working Committee on Children and Women** (NWCCW), which has been commissioned the legal duties to organize, coordinate, guide, supervise and urge departments concerned in promoting gender equality and women's development. Chaired by a member of the State Council leadership, the Committee is composed of leading ministerial-level members from relevant government organs. Over the previous years, the Committee has expanded its member units from 19 to 35 (Figure 5.2). The committee has its own offices, full-time staff, and funds. Similar organizations have been set up under local governments above the county level, forming a multi-dimensional and well-coordinated network for promoting gender equality and women's development.

The state supports the **women's federations** in representing and safeguarding women's rights and promoting gender equality. Women's federations perform their legal duties strictly. They participate in and supervise drafting and implementing laws and policies on behalf of the women by attending the NPC Standing Committee and special committees, and by submitting motions, proposals and suggestions to the respective sessions of the NPC and the CPPCC. Women's federations at all levels and other women's organizations have been playing an increasingly prominent role in conducting theoretical studies and carrying out publicity, education and training programs in relation to gender equality.

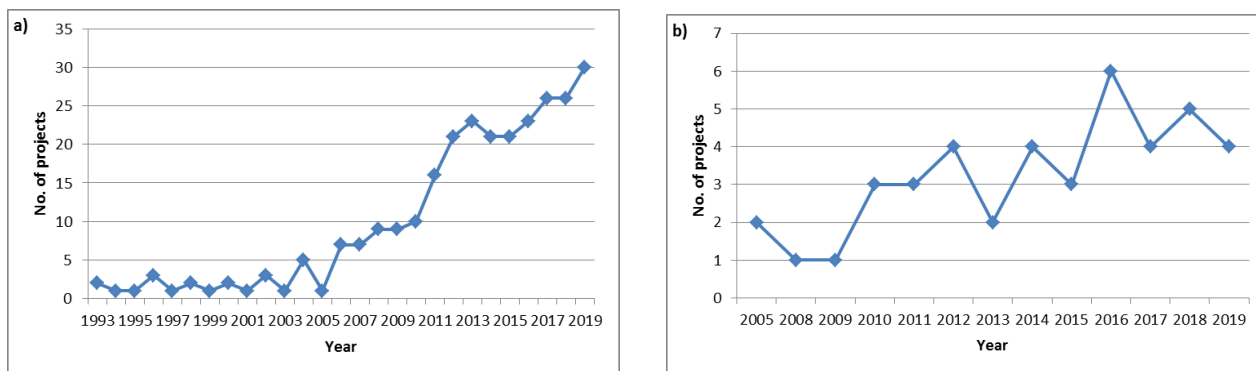


Figure 5.3: Number of projects related to women's empowerment with the support of: (a) National Social Science Fund of China, and (b) National Natural Science Foundation of China.

some scholars have studied the dynamic mechanism and effect of rural women's employment transfer in hilly areas; some scholars have made mechanism and empirical analysis on married women's employment, family echelon migration and the citizenization of rural migrant population. In addition, some scholars pay attention to the policy selection of cutting off the intergenerational transmission of poverty from the perspective of women.

All-China Women's Federation (ACWF)

In China, most women's NGOs are directly or indirectly managed by the ACWF. The ACWF is a group organization formed to represent and safeguard the rights and interests of women and promote gender equality¹⁶⁶. It has launched a series of activities in recognition of promising women, which have made important leading influence in promoting gender equality and encouraging women's development. These activities include: Bearer of *March 8 Red Flag*, *Most Beautiful Family Competition*, *Women's Action in Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, *Women's Action in Rural Revitalization*, *Women's Action in Poverty Alleviation*, and so on. Among them, the National Bearer of March 8 Red Flag and the Bearer of March 8 Red Flag (collective) are the highest honors awarded to outstanding women by the ACWF. In addition to the commendation work, the ACWF also organized a series of public welfare activities and initiated the **China Women's Development Foundation** (CWDF), aiming at safeguarding women's rights and interests, promoting women's development, and making contributions to building a harmonious society¹⁶⁷.

As of 24 March 2021, the *Public Service Platform of Social Organizations in China* shows that ¹⁶⁸there are 985 social organizations in operation with "women" or "female" in the organization names. In terms of registration departments, there are 11 women organizations registered in the *Ministry of Civil Affairs* (MCA), such as CWDF, *China Women's Press Association*, *China Women's Research Society*, and *China Women's Hand Knitting Association*; 90 registered in provincial civil affairs departments; and 883 registered in local civil affairs departments. These organizations have jointly formed a network for the protection of women's rights and interests, making their own efforts to promote gender equality (see Figure 5.4).

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.women.org.cn/col/col33/index.html>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/en/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=lists&catid=79>

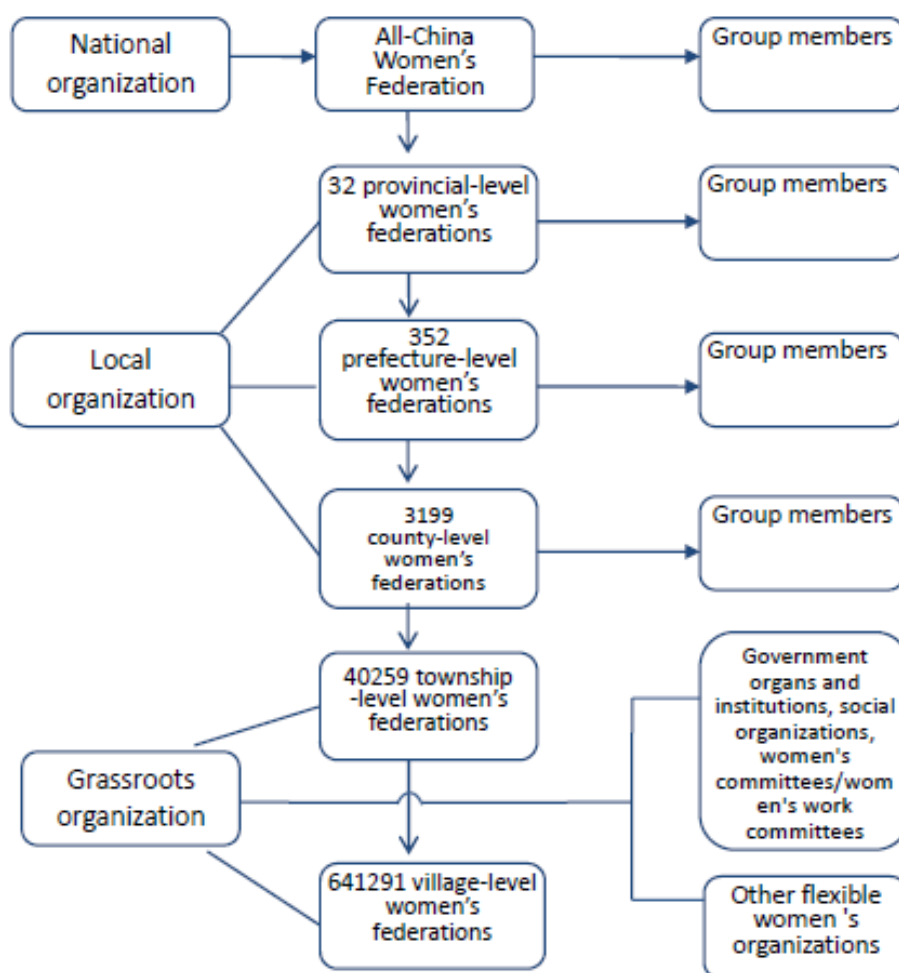


Figure 5.4: Structural Diagram of Women's Federations (SCIO, 2019)

5.4. Gender Integration in the Context of Interventions

This section presents only selected interventions implemented by government and non-government agencies in relation to gender mainstreaming into different sectors for identifying the best practices, lessons learnt and tools.

5.4.1 Key Projects/Interventions

Climate Change

Strengthening Qinghai women farmers' income security and resilience in a changing climate

Donor: UN Women China in partnership with International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

Leading Implementing Agency: Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP) of CAS in partnership with UNEP-IEMP

Local partners: Qinghai Provincial Poverty Alleviation and Development Bureau, Qinghai Women's Federation, county governments, local communities

Duration: July 2018-June 2021

Project Budget: USD 950,000

This project was designed to promote poverty reduction among women farmers by helping them become more economically resilient in a changing climate through improving and increasing their accessibility to climate-resilient and productive assets, finance, tools, technologies, capacities, and opportunities for moving up the value chain¹⁶⁹. The project directly addresses both China's national poverty reduction goals as well as SDGs for delivering gender equality and women's economic empowerment in selected poverty-stricken counties in Qinghai Province of China.

¹⁶⁹ "UN Women Helps to Protect China's Rural Women from the Impacts of Climate Change", 18 Sep 2018, <http://www.un.org.cn/info/6/936.html>

The key project intervention areas are access to agricultural inputs (finance and extension services); and access to markets and market services. The project places a strong emphasis on women's collective action through *Farmer Field Schools and Women Farmers' Associations* to ensure greater impact from capacity-building initiatives and better risk management. At the end of the project, gender-sensitive policy papers with recommendations were disseminated to national and local government for decision-makers to consider how best to support poverty reduction efforts from a gender perspective in the changing climate.

Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration

Natural Forest Conservation Program (NFCP)

Funding: Central Government Budget
Lead Implementing Agency: SFGA
Duration: 1998 to date
Programme Budget: CNY 240.0 billion (accumulated investment for 2016-2020)

The NFCP was initiated in 1998 as one of the Six Key Ecological Forestry Programs. The main objectives of the programme is to rehabilitate and revitalize natural forests and ultimately to realize harmonized development of resources, economy and society in forest regions. It has covered 750 counties and 190 state forest farms, forestry bureaus, and forestry enterprises in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River, northeast China, and Inner Mongolia. In addition to logging ban measures, the programme has enhanced afforestation and forest resources management, established ecological compensation mechanisms, resettled laid-off workers, and provided subsidies for workers' social insurance and for enterprises' social public service. During 2016-2020, the total investments from the central and local governments summed up to CNY 223.4 billion and CNY 16.6 billion, respectively. As a result, the area and volume of natural forests increased by 88.95 million mu and 1.375 billion m³, respectively¹⁷⁰.

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.forestry.gov.cn/main/424/20201222/143825004345662.html>

Conversion of Cropland to Forest Program (Grain to Green Program, GTGP)

Funding: Central Government Budget
Lead Implementing Agency: SFGA, NDRC, MOF, MOA, etc.
Duration: 1999 to date
Programme Budget: CNY 535.3 billion (accumulated investment for 1999-2020)

The GTGP was initiated in 1999, also as one of the Six Key Ecological Forestry Programs. With an aim to reduce soil erosion by planting trees or maintaining pasture on cropland with steep slopes, it is expected to improve degraded ecosystem services and generate socio-economic returns from ecosystem restoration, especially in regions such as the Loess Plateau (Fu et al., 2012). Replantation or natural enclosure is adopted for restoring degraded ecosystems. Farmers and households are provided with subsidies in forms of cash and seedlings. The state criteria of subsidy are CNY 1500 per mu for returning crop land to forest and CNY 800 per mu for returning crop land to grassland, respectively. The central government will transfer the subsidy funds to provincial governments based on the area of cropland converted to forest or grassland. Provincial governments can determine specific subsidy standard as long as it is not below the state criteria (He, 2019).

The GTGP is the largest ecological restoration initiative in terms of policy implications, investment amount, scope and level of public participation that China has ever proposed. And it is also regarded as the most significant programme in terms of enabling and benefiting farmers. The programme has directly benefited 41 million rural households and 158 million rural residents. On average, each household has received more than 9,000 yuan of subsidies from the central government since the inception of GTGP. In its new round since 2014, about 58 percent of cropland has been returned for the development of economic forests, which has broadened the channels for farmers to increase their incomes. During 2016-2020, the central government allocated a total of CNY 116.0 billion to return 59.54 million mu of cropland to forests and grassland. In particular, 97.6 percent

of poverty-stricken counties have participated in the program, benefiting 2.77 million registered poverty-stricken households¹⁷¹.

Agriculture and Food Security

TEEB Implementation in China: Promoting biodiversity and sustainability in the agriculture and food sector project

(TEEBAgriFood in China project)

Donor: EU Partnership Instrument

Lead Implementing Agency: UNEP TEEB Office through UNEP-IEMP

Partners: Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research of CAS, Chinese Academy of Environmental Sciences of MEE, Tengchong Municipal Government

Duration: August 2019-December 2022

Project Budget: USD 290 thousand

The overall objective of this project is to protect biodiversity and contribute to a more sustainable agriculture and food sector with well-functioning ecosystems in China. During 2019-2020, desk study and stakeholder consultations were made to summarize policy streams and key interventions targeting ecosystems and biodiversity conservation in the agri-food sector of China (He, 2019; Li, 2019). Currently, following the TEEBAgriFood Evaluation Framework (Obst and Sharma, 2018), scenario study is being carried out in Tengchong City, Yunnan Province, one of “Two Mountains Theory”¹⁷² practice and innovation bases awarded by MEE, to analyze the impact of organic agriculture production on natural, produced, social and human capitals at the landscape level. The study shall inform green food production policy scenarios in the city and disseminate the practical experience of “Two Mountains Theory” to the world.

Farmers’ Seed Systems Enhancement

Funding: multiple sources

Lead Implementing Agency: China’s Farmer’s Seed Network (FSN)

Duration: 2013 to date

The FSN is a pioneering organization in applying participatory research methods on agrobiodiversity and natural resource management in China. Since its inception in 2013, it supports farmers and researchers to cooperate in Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB), collaborate with public research institutes to strengthen the diversity of plant germplasm resources, and raise awareness and capacity of in situ conservation and breeding. It creates synergy between in situ seed conservation and formal gene banks by facilitating farmers to get technical support from plant scientists on PPB, community biodiversity registration and community seed bank, in order to support active and sustainable seed system and safeguard national seed security. It has worked in over 30 rural communities in 10 provinces across the country to preserve a protected commons of the farmers and plant breeders, support community-based seed conservation and sustainable utilization, and facilitate productive collaborations between farmers and plant scientists for strengthening farmers’ seed systems, improving farmers’ livelihoods, enhancing farmers’ dignity, and promoting national seed security¹⁷³.

Gender Equality

So far, China women’s organizations have launched a series of public welfare projects to serve the majority of women. This section will focus on employment rights, social security, resource allocation, physical and mental health, opportunity allocation, public services and other aspects to sort out the brand activities and public welfare projects of women’s organizations with national influence (Table 5.4).

¹⁷¹ <http://www.forestry.gov.cn/main/436/20210111/211424742710219.html>

¹⁷² The vision proposed by President Xi Jinping is “lucid waters and lush mountains are as good as mountains of gold and silver”.

¹⁷³ <https://www.fsnchina.info>

Table 5.4: Selected projects implemented by women's organizations in China**Employment right and entrepreneurship assistance****Revolving Loans for Mothers (Raise Her Business Plan)**

Lead Implementing Agency: CWDF

Starting Year: 1993

By means of “small loans, door-to-door household poverty alleviation, cycle use”, the project can help women in difficulties to achieve employment and reemployment. By the end of 2019, the project had invested more than CNY 360 million in total, helped more than 420,000 poor women to start their own businesses and reemployment¹⁷⁴.

Made by Mothers

Lead Implementing Agency: CWDF

Starting Year: 2016

Project budget: nearly CNY 5 million by the end of 2017

The project was launched in eight provinces including Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, Yunnan and Guizhou in September 2016. It cooperates with designers to create aesthetic products with international aesthetic and Oriental cultural symbols, which will be produced by mothers with certain production skills. Through the establishment of mother manufacturing cooperatives in natural villages, poor women are promoted to find jobs and start businesses locally¹⁷⁵.

Social security, physical and mental health**Women's Home**

Lead Implementing Agency: ACWF

Starting Year: 2010

In 2010, the ACWF vigorously promoted the development of grass-roots organizations of the Federation, and comprehensively deployed the construction of “Women's Home” in rural and communities. “Women's home” has increasingly become an important place for women's federations to contact and serve women and participate in grassroots social governance¹⁷⁶. It plays a key role in protecting women's rights and interests.

Health Express for Mothers (Healthy Mother Express)

Lead Implementing Agency: CWDF

Starting Year: 2003

The project provides various forms of health services, such as health education, gynecological disease examination, transfer of pregnant and lying-in women, disease relief, grassroots physician training, and maternal and child service capacity building. It greatly facilitates health centers and other medical institutions to reach remote villages for disease screening and inspection¹⁷⁷.

Resource and opportunity allocation**Mother's Parcel**

Lead Implementing Agency: CWDF

Starting Year: 2012

The project mobilizes the society to deliver the parcel which mainly composes daily necessities to poor mothers through the “one-to-one” donation mode, so as to help poor mothers solve some practical difficulties in life. By December 2019, the project had been funded with a total of more than CNY 141.43 million and more than 890,000 mother packages had been distributed to poor mothers and families in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, benefiting more than 890,000 poor mothers¹⁷⁸.

174 <http://mqcy.cwdf.org.cn/>

175 <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=99&id=115>

176 <http://www.women.org.cn/col/col151/index.html>

177 <https://www.mqjkkc.com/>

178 <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=100&id=80>

Public services

Spring Buds Program

Lead Implementing Agency: China Children and Teenager's Fund

Duration: 1989

It is a social public service to help girls who are out of school in poor areas return to school. During 1989-2019, the raised a total of CNY 2.118 billion in charitable donations, supported more than 3.69 million poor girls, and built 1,811 Spring Bud schools. A large number of students from Spring Buds schools have grown up and performed well in their job¹⁷⁹.

Water Cellars for Mothers

Lead Implementing Agency: CWDF

Starting Year: 2001

Water Cellars for Mothers

Lead Implementing Agency: CWDF

Starting Year: 2001

It is a centralized water supply project that focuses on helping people in Western China, especially women, get rid of poverty and backwardness caused by serious water shortage. It took 15 years for this project to build 139,400 rainwater collecting water cellars, benefiting 2.9 million people, with a total investment of CNY 955 million¹⁸⁰.

Ecological environment protection

March 8 Green Project

Lead Implementing Agency: ACWF

Starting Year: 1993

The project aims to promote women's participation in afforestation activities, through developing project demonstration bases with the support of the forestry departments. The bases shall be managed by women in a scientific and standardized way for the fruit production and processing, so as to bring both ecological and economic benefits.

Overseas women's organizations

Micro-credit Schemes

Lead Implementing Agency: Development Organization of Rural Sichuan (DORS)

Starting Year: 1997

The DORS was founded in the UK on 6 March 1997. It is a charitable organization dedicated to the rural development of Sichuan Province in China. Started in July 1997, "Micro-credit Schemes" is the organization's core public welfare project to provide one-year loans to women. Women have the right to decide whether to take the loan from the organization, and decide how to use it. At the same time, women are encouraged to assist and participate in the design of projects to ensure that the loans can meet their actual needs as much as possible¹⁸¹.

179 <http://www.cctf.org.cn/zt/cljh/?v=3>

180 <http://www.mothercellar.cn/>

181 <http://cn.dors.org.uk/projects/ruralcredit>

5.4.2 Relevant Tools, Analytical Approaches and Technologies within the Interventions/ Programs

As mentioned in the previous section, most of national strategies, programmes, and plans on climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration are not gender sensitive. However, they do offer valuable experience and lessons learnt that can be applied for designing and implementing gender-related interventions in various sectors (Fu et al., 2012; He, 2019). These include at least:

- Problem-driven and systematic planning: For each strategy and programme, clear policy targets are set for a specific interval of time (e.g., five years) and pathways to achieve them are proposed. What's more, it would be more productive to carry out overall strategic planning at the central government level and detailed planning at the local government level where better integration can be achieved.
- Phased and regionally-differentiated implementation: It usually begins with establishing pilots and demonstrations to test out good practices for up-scaling, and at the same time taking into full account of differences among regions so that the practices are customized to local circumstances and thus achieve higher sustainability.
- Effective compensation and community participation: There are many ways to engage and benefit local communities in lasting efforts such as ecological conservation. Besides the eco-compensation mechanism, market-based mechanisms and business models (see Box 5.4) should be also explored to motivate them with improved livelihoods outcomes.

Box 5.4. Six ways to transform “lucid waters and lush mountains” into “mountains of gold and silver”

Based on years of experience, China has created six ways to transform lucid waters and lush mountains into “mountains of gold and silver” (MOFA, 2021). That is, those who conserve the ecosystems are able to benefit from:

- Ecological compensation
- Green assets in the form of improved ecosystems
- Agriculture and tourism
- New business models arising from ecological conservation
- Successful brands of ecological products
- Trade of ecological products

These models of green development are valuable pilots for the larger effort of establishing the necessary subsystems of regulations, policies, production, circulation, consumption and technological innovation for green, low-carbon, circular development.

More experience and good practices could be learnt from the participatory approaches implemented by women's organizations and other NGOs, especially those that are based in communities for a long term. It's more likely for them to be aware of the role of women empowerment in the project activities. One of examples in this aspect is the Farmers' Seed Systems Enhancement Programme undertaken by FSN over the past years. Women are found to be the main seed keepers and food producers, and thus play significant roles in developing community seed banks and other in-situ conservation interventions. It also demonstrates the potential to address the nexus of food security, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation from a gender perspective. The gender perspective has been taken into China's national plans for nutrition improvement and poverty alleviation. Enhancing the interactions between practitioners and policy makers has the potential to scale up on-the-ground actions and promote gender equality in more sectors and on a larger scope.

5.4.3 Framework of Monitoring and Evaluation

To monitor and evaluate the progresses and achievements of the strategic plans, programmes and projects, a number of frameworks have been developed at the national, sector, and project levels respectively. As below are some examples.

Evaluation and assessment of targets for ecological civilization development

In December 2016, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the *Measures for the Evaluation and Assessment of Ecological Civilization Development Targets*¹⁸², which evaluates and assesses the performance of CPC committees and governments in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government. The evaluation shall be implemented annually and

the assessment every five years, so as to put into effect the central government's instruction that "success should not simply be judged by GDP".

The annual evaluation shall be organized by the NBS, NDRC, MEP, in conjunction with other relevant departments, and implemented in accordance with the Green Development Indicator System. The system mainly consists of indicators related to resource utilization, environmental governance, environmental quality, ecological conservation, quality of growth, green life, and public satisfaction in each region, and generates the Green Development Index for each region.

The target assessment shall be led by the NDRC, MEP, and the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee. They have developed a target system for the assessment of ecological civilization development, as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Target systems for the assessment of ecological civilization development ¹⁸³

No.	Target	Score value	Data source
Resource utilization		30	
1	Energy consumption per unit of GDP decreased*	4	NBS, NDRC
2	Carbon dioxide emission per unit of GDP decreased*	4	NDRC, NBS
3	Proportion of non-fossil energy in primary energy consumption*	4	NBS, NEA
4	Total energy consumption	3	NBS, NDRC
5	Water consumption per unit of GDP decreased*	4	MWR, NBS
6	Total water consumption	3	MWR
7	Area of cultivated land*	4	MLR
8	Area of newly-added construction land*	4	MLR
Eco-environment protection		40	
9	Ratio of days with good air quality in cities at or above the prefectural level *	5	MEP
10	Concentration of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in cities at or above the prefectural level that failed to meet the standards dropped	5	MEP
11	Proportion of surface water with a quality equal to or better than Class III*	(3)a	
(5)b	MEP, MWR		
12	Proportion of offshore water with a good quality (Class I & Class II)	(2)a	SOA, MEP
13	Proportion of surface water with a quality of inferior Class V*	5	MEP, MWR
14	Total COD emission decreased*	2	MEP
15	Total ammonia nitrogen emission decreased*	2	MEP

¹⁸² http://www.mee.gov.cn/zcwj/zyygwj/201912/t20191225_751549.shtml

¹⁸³ https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/fggz/hjzy/stwmjs/201612/t20161222_1161174.html

No.	Target	Score value	Data source
16	Total sulphur dioxide emission decreased*	2	MEP
17	Total nitrogen oxide emission decreased*	2	MEP
18	Forest coverage*	4	SFA
19	Forest growing stock*	5	SFA
20	Comprehensive vegetation coverage of grassland	3	MOA
Annual evaluation result		20	
21	Comprehensive situation of the annual evaluation of ecological civilization development in various regions	20	NBS, NDRC, MEP, etc.
Public satisfaction		10	
22	Residents' satisfaction with the development of ecological civilization and the improvement of ecological environment in their region	10	NBS, etc.
Ecological and environmental events			
23	Occurrence of major environmental emergencies, other environmental pollution events that cause adverse social impact, and serious ecological damage events in the region	Deduction item	MEP, SFA, etc.

Note: NEA, National Energy Administration. Other abbreviations refer to the note of Table 5.1. Those targets marked with * are binding targets for resources and environment in the Outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. Those score values marked with "a" in the upper right corner outside the bracket are used for coastal provinces, and "b" for inland provinces (autonomous regions, municipalities).

Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender Equality

According to *Legislation Law of the People's Republic of China*, a new mechanism for protecting women rights and achieving gender equality should be created in legislation and legal practice. In 2012, the *consultation and evaluation committee for gender equality in policies and regulations* of Jiangsu Province was established, as the first of its kind in China. After that, a complete evaluation system was set up in 30 provinces (autonomous regions, municipalities) for evaluating gender equality implications in laws and regulations. The system covers preliminary study before establishment, decision implementation, and post-implementation evaluation. Therefore, the concept of gender equality can be introduced into drafting, implementation and supervision of laws and policies in China (SCIO, 2019).

China has created a comprehensive *gender statistics system* and improved women's health, well-being and development indicators and gender-disaggregated indicators, which have been included in the routine statistics and

statistical surveys undertaken by relevant departments (see the examples in Table 5.6). In October 2016, the NBS published an interim statistics-based monitoring report for the *National Program for Women's Development (2011-2020)*, which provide statistic data and information on the progress of programme implementation in the fields of health, education, economy, decision-making and management, social security, the environment, and law. The results show that 44 out of the 54 key statistical indicators had achieved the targets set in the program¹⁸⁴. Afterwards, the NBS published the annual statistics-based monitoring report for the national programme at the end of each year from 2017 to 2020¹⁸⁵.

The NBS also published *Women and Men in Chinese Society: Facts and Statistics* in 1995, and updated it with new data in 1999, 2004, 2007, 2012, and 2019; and has published annual releases of *Statistics on the Status of Chinese Women and Children* since 2008.

184 http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201611/t20161103_1423701.html

185 http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/202012/t20201218_1810126.html

Table 5.6: Examples of key statistical indicators for monitoring women's development in China

Area	Statistical Indicator	Data Source
Women and Health	1. Average life expectancy for women	NBS
	2. Maternal mortality rate	NCHFP
	3. Screening rate of common gynecological diseases	
	4. Incidence of moderate and severe anemia among pregnant/ lying-in women	
	5. Rate of married women of childbearing age using contraceptive methods	
Women's Education	6. Percent of girls in kindergarten	MOE
	7. Percent of female students in primary and junior middle school enrollment	
	8. Percent of female students in regular senior middle school enrollment	
	9. Higher education gross enrollment rate percent 24.2 26.5 26.9 30.0	
	10. Percent of female students in regular higher education enrollment	
	11. Percent of female students in vocational middle school enrollment	
	12. Percent of women trainees of employment training centers and private vocational training institutions	MOHRSS
	13. Illiteracy rate among young and adult women	NBS
Women and the economy	14. Percent of women in all employed people	NBS
	15. Number of female employees in urban work units	
	16. Percent of female employees in non-agricultural sectors	
	17. Percent of female senior professionals in state-owned enterprises	MOHRSS
	18. Percentage of enterprises implementing the <i>Special Regulations Concerning the Labour Protection of Female Staff and Workers</i>	ACFTU
	19. Number of women receiving urban subsistence allowance and rural "five guarantees"	MCA
	20. Average urban and rural subsistence allowance	
Women's participation in decision-making and management	21. Percent of women deputies to the NPC	NPC
	22. Percent of women deputies to the NPC Standing Committee	
	23. Percent of women members of the CPPCC National Committee	CPPCC National Committee
	24. Percent of women members of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee	
	25. Percent of leadership teams of provincial governments having female cadres	Organization Department of CPC Central Committee
	26. Percent of leadership teams of municipal governments having female cadres	
	27. Percent of leadership teams of county governments having female cadres	
	28. Percent of leadership teams of provincial government departments having female cadres	
	29. Percent of leadership teams of municipal government departments having female cadres	
	30. Female representation in enterprise boards of directors	ACFTU
	31. Female representation in enterprise boards of supervisors	
	32. Female representation in enterprise workers' congresses	
	33. Percentage of female members in villagers' committees	MCA
	34. Percentage of female heads of villagers' committees	
	35. Percentage of female members in urban residents' committees	

Area	Statistical Indicator	Data Source
Women and social security	36. Number of urban female employees participating in the maternity insurance scheme	MOHRSS
	37. Number of female participants in the basic medical insurance schemes for urban employees and non-working residents	
	38. Number of female participants in the unemployment insurance scheme	
	39. Number of female participants participating in the basic old-age insurance scheme for urban employees	
	40. Number of female participants in job-related injury insurance	
Women and the environment and law	41. Percentage of rural people having centralized water	MWR
	42. Percentage of sanitary toilets in rural areas	NCHFP
	43. Number of shelters for women and child victims of violence	ACWF
	44. Assistance provided by shelters	

Note: All the indicators are derived from the *Report of the People's Republic of China on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)*, which was submitted to the 59th session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women held in March 2015, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/previous-sessions/csw59-2015/preparations#National>. MOE, Ministry of Education; MOHRSS, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security; ACFTU, All-China Federation of Trade Unions.

Monitoring and Assessment of Socio-Economic Impacts of Grain to Green Program (GTGP)

During the implementation of GTGP, its ecological, economic, and social impacts have become a focus of attention of many people. In 2007, the NBS, NDRC, and five other ministries and bureaus decided to jointly carry out monitoring and investigation on the programme implementation since this year. After that, several forestry sector and national standards were released to provide specification of monitoring and evaluation on the program's socio-economic impacts and ecological benefits (Table 5.7). Following these technical standards and general practices of monitoring the key ecological forestry projects, national reports were prepared to monitor the ecological benefits of GTGP annually during 2014-2017.

In early 2020, the national report was released to reveal the comprehensive benefits of GTGP by the end of 2017. The results show that the GTGP in contiguous poverty-stricken areas has produced a total ecological benefit of CNY 560.1 billion per year. What's more, project subsidy funds become an important source of cash income for the households participating in GTGP, which significantly improves their short-term income, and lays a foundation for them to get rid of poverty as scheduled and accelerate the increase of income to become rich (SFGA, 2019). Efforts should be further made to promote the high-quality development of the programme in future.

Table 5.7: Technical standards of monitoring and evaluation and assessment reports released for GTGP in recent years

Type	Name	Release Date
Forestry industry standard (LY/T 1757-2008)	Indicators for monitoring and assessment of socio-economic impacts of the for conversion of cropland to forests	Released by the SFA in September 2008
National standard (GB/T 23233-2009)	Evaluation in project for the construction of conversion of cropland to forest	Released by the GAQSIQ and China National Standardization Management Committee in February 2009
Forestry industry standard	Technical standard and management specification for monitoring and evaluation of ecological benefit of conversion of cropland to forest project	Released by the SFA in 2012
Forestry industry standard (LY/T 2573-2016)	Specification of monitoring and evaluation of ecological benefits of returning farmland to forest project	Released by the SFA in January 2016
Monitoring report	National report on monitoring of ecological benefits of Conversion of Cropland to Forest Program 2013-2016	Coordinated by the GTGP Management Center and released by the SFA annually during 2014-2017
Monitoring report	National report on monitoring of comprehensive benefits of Conversion of Cropland to Forest Program 2017	Coordinated by the GTGP Management Center and released by the SFGA in December 2019.

5.5. Overall Conclusions

The Government of China has ambitious plans for both socio-economic growth and ecological civilization development, through the implementation of a number of national laws, policies, programmes and plans for climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, agriculture and food security, and gender equality. Strong institutional systems, including that for M&E, have been established to deliver targets in each sector. However, the integration of gender equality with other sectors, or women's multidimensional role in the sustainable development agenda, is still much under appreciated. Considering

rich experience has been derived from large efforts in different sectors, and gender equality has been increasingly demonstrated on the ground and taken into national plans for food security and poverty alleviation, there is great potential to integrate the gender perspective into the efforts to address climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration. On the other hand, it necessitates nexus approaches, cross-sector coordination, stakeholder engagement and interactions, and so on to promote gender mainstreaming in more sectors and on a larger scope.

CHAPTER 6

THE CONTEXT OF NEPAL

6.1 Country Background

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal lies in the lap of the Himalayas. In the small span of 200 kms in width - ranging from a low of 60 m in the southern plains to over 8000 m in the high mountains – the country is rich in biodiversity and ecosystems in terms of its location, and socio-cultural diversity among its population. It has an estimated population of 29.6 million in 2021, a little over half of which are female¹⁸⁶; the declining growth rate and a median age of 24.1 years signals a demographic dividend.

Mountain Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Nepal

Apart from eight out of the top ten tallest mountains in the world, Nepal has deep gorges, river valleys and flat lands that provides a unique

assemblage of very different habitats and a great diversity of plants and animals, within slightly less than 0.1 percent of the global land mass. The country's 118 ecosystems harbors over two percent of the flowering plants, three percent of the pteridophytes and six percent of the bryophytes in the world's flora. The country also harbors almost four percent of the mammals, almost nine percent of the birds and close to four percent of the world's fauna of butterflies (Paudel, Kindlmann, & Bhattarai, 2012).

Efforts to manage mountain biodiversity overlap with other thematic efforts, particularly with those related to protected areas, landscape management, and community-based forest management. Of the 20 protected areas, 13 are located in the mountains, which cover 84 percent of the total protected area in the country (Figure 6.1). The Government of Nepal (GoN) is also

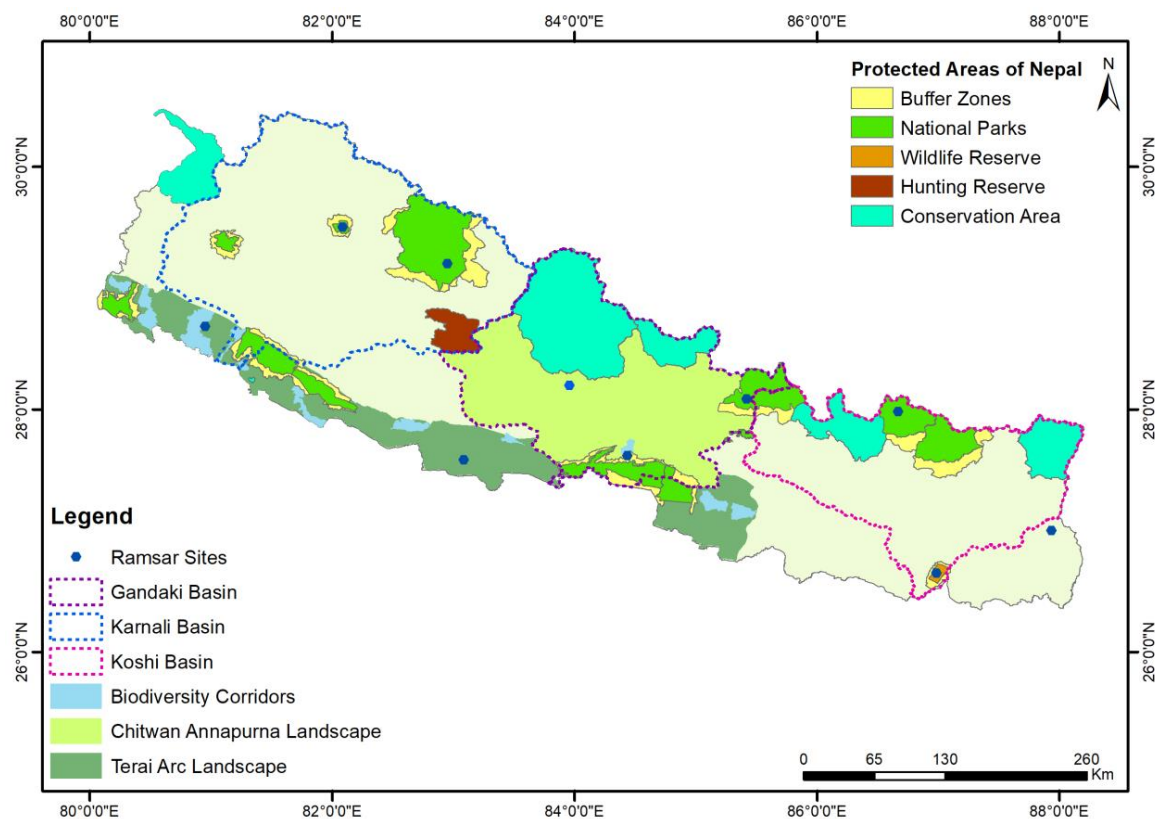


Figure 6.1: Map of protected areas in Nepal.

186 World Population Review Data, 9 May 2021. (<https://world-populationreview.com/countries/nepal-population>)

implementing landscape-specific programmes in two important mountain landscapes, namely the Sacred Himalayan Landscape, and the Kailash Sacred Landscape (GoN, 2014).

The 118 **ecosystems** in Nepal range from tall grasslands, wetlands and tropical and sub-tropical broadleaved forests. There are ten major groups of forests, and exceptionally rich biodiversity in the tropical savannas and alpine meadows. Forests constitute an important ecosystem in the country, and as of 2020 a total of 44.74 percent of the country is covered by forests and other wooded areas (FAO, 2020). Nepalese forests are rich in biodiversity (flora/fauna), and 80 of the forests are within conservation areas. These forests are managed under different modalities but community managed forestry is one of the most dominant and successful management modalities, with around 22 thousand Community Forest User Groups managing over 22 lakh ha of forests¹⁸⁷. Nepal's forests are highly important from a livelihoods, ecosystem and environmental perspective, and from an economic growth perspective, since they have the potential to raise revenue from international carbon trade.

The **wetlands** in Nepal include rivers, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, marshy lands and irrigated paddy field and covers approximately five percent of total areas with a huge water storage capacity of 225 billion m³ (MoFE, 2018). They have very high ecological significance that harbors many threatened species of flora and fauna and serves as resting places for many migratory and globally threatened birds. Nearly 85 percent of Nepal's agrarian communities rely on wetland resources for food, fodder, fiber, folk medicine, navigation, fishery, mine and genetic resources. They also have high cultural and economic significance since many ethnic groups are dependent on them for their livelihoods; a number of festivals and cultural activities are also linked to and performed at wetlands. The country currently has 10 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) with a surface area of

60,561 ha.¹⁸⁸ The country also includes 12 of the 867 global terrestrial ecoregions (GoN, 2014).

However, insufficient knowledge and understanding of mountain ecosystems, lack of a long-term vision, inadequate financial resources and technical capacity are some of the major gaps and constraints in sustainable management of Nepal's mountain ecosystems. In-depth understanding and incorporation of the value of mountain ecosystem services in national development planning, GDP accounting, and decision-making is one of the key requirements for sustainable management of mountain biodiversity.

Mountain Ecosystems and Women's Roles:

In mountain ecosystems like that of Nepal, women play a key role in managing, conserving, and using different plant and animal species to sustain the environment, their livelihoods, and those of their communities (Dhakal & Leduc, 2010). As in the greater Himalayas, in Nepal too, women are crucial actors in biodiversity conservation and management in their multiple roles as farmers, herders, forest gatherers, primary health care givers, collectors of water, food processors, herbalists, market vendors, collectors and cultivators of indigenous vegetables, selectors and preservers of seeds, soil conservationists, and sustainers of natural and human-made environments (Khadka & Verma, 2012). They also play an important role in mountain ecosystem-based economic enterprises such as in homestay management. Given the gendered roles and responsibilities, women's knowledge, needs, and problems associated with biodiversity conservation and management are often different from men's and thus they have a stronger interest and role in conserving biodiversity.

Additionally, traditional beliefs about the diverse uses of plants are deeply rooted in Nepali culture, and the country's various ethnic groups have developed their own indigenous knowledge systems relating to the role of plants in food, clothing, shelter, health care and their spiritual needs, including the medicinal and nutritional value of diverse plant species (Byers & Sainju, 1994). Among the nearly 60 different indigenous groups in Nepal, many are

¹⁸⁷ The Community Forestry Program in Nepal is a global innovation in participatory environmental governance that encompasses well-defined policies, institutions, and practices. The programme addresses the twin goals of forest conservation and poverty reduction (Ojha, Persha, & Chhatre, 2009).

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.ramsar.org/wetland/nepal>

mainly settled in and around high biodiversity wilderness areas including protected areas. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) has made commitments to document traditional knowledge and capacity building of “women, *Dalit*,¹⁸⁹ and *Janajatis* (indigenous groups) and local communities”; yet there is much left to do in terms of fulfilling the targets particularly in relation to mainstreaming gender equality (MoFE, 2018).

In order to address the global and national challenges related to the effects of climate change, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem restoration, Nepal is a signatory and a member of a number of different international conventions, as well as scientific groups (see Box 6.1).

Box 6.1: International Conventions, Protocols and Commitments of Nepal Related to Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Change

1. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ratified 1988)
2. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, Ratified in November 1993)
3. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001)
4. Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration (2007)
5. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
6. The Paris Agreement (International Treaty on Climate Change)
7. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - Member
8. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) - Member
9. International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2007)
10. International Union for Conservation of Nature – Member State
11. CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
12. Protocols: Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing; Montreal Protocol on Substance that Depletion the Ozone Layer; and the Kyoto Protocol (to operationalize the UNFCCC)
13. UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD)

189 Dalits are historically and traditionally, socio-culturally, economically and political marginalized groups that were classified as so called “lower castes” in the Hindu caste structure.

The Impact of Climate Change in Nepal

Nepal is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Despite its negligible contribution to total global emissions of greenhouse gas, the country has high risks of adverse effects of climate change. It is at high-risk due to the country's fragile topography, the climate-sensitive livelihoods of the people and their limited adaptive capacity. The negative effects of climate change have been directly experienced in forest and biodiversity, energy, human health, tourism, habitation, infrastructure development as well as in the areas of livelihoods, while there has been huge loss of lives and property due to climate induced disasters such as flood, landslide, and windstorm and wild fire every year (GoN, 2019).¹⁹⁰ Globally the country ranks fourth in terms of vulnerability to climate change and as the impact of climate change increases, Nepal's vulnerability continues to grow.

Climate change is already having significant impacts on the environment in Nepal; species' ranges are shifting to higher altitudes, glaciers are melting, and the frequency of precipitation extremes is increasing. Natural hazards such as drought, heat wave, river flooding, and glacial lake outburst flooding are all projected to intensify over the 21st century, potentially exacerbating disaster risk levels and putting human life at risk. Around 70 percent of Nepal's population depends upon agriculture, and farming in the Himalayan countries are highly susceptible to climate change compared with other sectors and regions thus even the slight changes in climatic conditions can have a major impact on their lives and livelihoods (Paudel, Zhang, & Yan, 2020). While agricultural activities have been greatly affected in the Himalayan region with regional variations, it is more serious in developing countries, such as Nepal, where the majority of farmers practice rain-fed farming (ibid). The vulnerability of Nepal's communities, particularly those living in poverty, in remote areas, and operating subsistence agriculture, increases the risk posed by climate change. Without support to the poorest in Nepalese society inequalities are likely to widen.¹⁹¹

190 <https://floodresilience.net/resources/item/national-climate-change-policy-2076-2019-of-nepal-english/>

191 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/677231/climate-risk-country-profile-nepal.pdf>

Impact of Climate Change on Women:

The GoN acknowledges that climate change has a significant effect on Nepal's economy, society, and ecosystems, especially amongst vulnerable populations (women in particular) and sectors. Thus, climate change impacts can pose challenges to the country's development agenda and in reaching the goals of the Agenda 2030 and these concerns are well reflected in the National Climate Change Policy, 2019 as well as the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy in the context of Climate Change.¹⁹² Women are also more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as they rely more on natural resources, and in particular on agriculture, to secure their livelihoods, but they are less able than men to access the relevant information and skills to manage the impacts of climate change and related disasters (Leduc, 2009) (see Box 6.2).

Box 6.2: Impact of Climate Change on Nepali Women

"Across Nepal, there has been an increase in rural women's workload rendering multiple effects on women's health, income, safety, nutrition, violence against women and ultimately on women's social, economic and political empowerment. Variability in water availability has negatively affected women's livelihoods. The hardening of agricultural soils and the emergence of new pests and crop diseases, all widely observed, are increasing women's workloads, forcing them to spend long hours tilling the land and weeding fields. The decrease in overall productivity with reduced diversity in crop and food intake has presented a unique challenge to women as 'food managers' of their households. Challenges to agro-based micro enterprises run by women's collectives due to decline in agricultural production and decline in income from women-managed and controlled high-value crops ('pewa' crops) has affected women's economic independence. Climate-induced changes in forests and biodiversity, including the emergence of invasive species, are leading to a loss of household income and livelihood options, especially for women and people from poor, indigenous, and marginalized communities, such as the *Chepang* and *Dalits*." (Gurung & Bisht, 2014)

The Context of Food Security in Nepal

Despite its richness in geographic, environmental and socio-cultural diversity, Nepal remains an economically poor country where poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition problems have persisted for long time. Variations in the prevalence of undernutrition are seen by age, gender, ethnic and caste group, socio-economic status, and region (NPC, 2018). Close to one-quarter population lives below the poverty line, 46 percent are unemployed and 16 percent are undernourished (CBS, 2011). Susceptibility to natural disasters, such as drought, earthquakes, floods, and landslides, vulnerability to fluctuations in global prices, and poor infrastructure, drive food insecurity in the country. Harsh climates, rough terrain, poor soils and short growing seasons result in low production and food deficits (Kurvits, et al., 2014). Disparities in wealth, education, and nutrition exacerbate vulnerabilities in marginalized communities, leaving them less likely to recover from shocks.¹⁹³

Climate change has compounded these problems with the climate increasingly becoming erratic and unpredictable, with significant variations in patterns of water availability (Kurvits, et al., 2014) which affects agriculture production and productivity in Nepal. Extreme weather and meteorological events cause about 90 percent of crop loss, of which droughts and floods combined account for nearly two-thirds of the loss (UNDP, GoN, & FAO, 2014). The hardest hit are landless, poor and marginalized farmers, mainly women, especially in mountain regions, since their geographic marginalization is compounded by other socio-cultural, economic and political marginalization (Kurvits, et al., 2014). Additionally, the growing labor outmigration of predominantly men, has negatively affected the agriculture sector in terms of labor shortage leading to abandonment of land. The remittance money has had an impact on increasing outmigration to more lucrative jobs outside of rural areas and has supported a new culture of increasing expenditures on consumer goods, including imported food grains (ibid).

192 <https://floodresilience.net/resources/item/national-climate-change-policy-2076-2019-of-nepal-english/>

193 https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FFP_Nepal_Fact_Sheet.pdf

While food security in Nepal has improved in recent years, 4.6 million people are still food-insecure, with 20 percent of households mildly food insecure, 22 percent moderately food-insecure, and 10 percent severely food-insecure (MoH, ERA, & ICF, 2017). Moreover, food security is highly variable throughout Nepal. Overall, the country has a surplus of food which may be stored, yet in 2013, the GoN identified 27 out of its 75 districts as having food deficits, and most of these areas were in western highlands (Kurvits, et al., 2014).

Table 6.1: Global Hunger Index for Nepal, 2000-2020.

2000	2006	2012	2020
37.4	31.0	22.8	19.5
Alarming	Serious	Serious	Moderate

Source: (Welthungerhilfe & Concern Worldwide, 2020)

The Global Hunger Index¹⁹⁴ scores for Nepal have been improving over the years, from a situation of “alarming” in 2006 to one that is “moderate” in 2020 (Welthungerhilfe & Concern Worldwide, 2020) (see Table 6.1). Despite years of improvements in reducing global hunger the situation is still met by new and old challenges like climate change and conflicts around the world. Additionally, though food security has overall improved, there has actually been an increase in the *vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity* in mountain regions not only in Nepal but globally as well (FAO, 2015).

In Nepal, agriculture contributes one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP) and about three-quarters of the population work in the sector. Over 80 percent of women are employed in agriculture contributing over 60 percent to the agriculture economy, compared to only 56.3 percent men who contribute only 39.5 percent (FAO, 2019). The relationship between gender, social equity and agriculture is complex in Nepal (ICIMOD, n.d.). Women have tremendous knowledge and skills regarding farming systems, natural resource management, and biodiversity

¹⁹⁴ The GHI score for each country is calculated using a three-step process that draws on available data from various sources to capture the multi-dimensional nature of hunger - inadequate food supply, child mortality and child undernutrition. For more details refer to Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide (2020).

management in different agro-ecosystems. Despite the important role of women in the sector, the majority of rural women mainly work as subsistence agricultural producers; they often lack full rights over the use of, or decisions regarding the sale or management of productive assets such as property, cash crop produce and livestock, including access to credit and inputs. Land is the main source of economic livelihood in Nepal thus, it is an important source of power and status. There are shifts in the traditional division of labour that are taking place primarily due to the out-migration of rural men; many women are taking-up additional responsibilities such as ploughing and marketing, which is also leading to the feminization of sector with increasing work burden. Women continue to face wage discrimination in the sector but their ownership of land has been slowly increasing: 20 percent of women owned land in 2011 - a rise of 10 percent compared to 2001. This is an important development, as land-ownership rights remain a major constraint for most women. Additionally, gender roles influence household food consumption in Nepal, with women often eating last in the family. This often results in lower nutrient intake for women. These gendered eating habits further contribute to undernourishment and anemia for women in Nepal (NPC, 2018).

“Gender inequalities are the most pervasive of all inequalities, and interactions between SDG2 on zero hunger, and the SDG5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment along with other SDGs are an essential pre-condition to achieving SDG2. Ending hunger and improving nutrition is not only crucial for women due to their key roles in food production, food preparation and childcare, but also because of their special vulnerabilities related to reproductive health” (NPC, 2018).

The Situation of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Nepal

In Nepal, patriarchal and patrilineal systems, and paternalistic behavior towards women have led to deep-rooted discrimination against women and girls in all sectors. This is intertwined with religious ideologies that prescribe strict conventions, norms and behaviors, not only towards women but for certain caste and ethnic groups as well. Thus, discrimination

based on caste and ethnicity also has historical and political roots in the country. To address these conditions, Nepal has widely adopted the principles of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) – a unique product - to address the diverse, multi-dimensional aspects of historical and traditional, socio-economic, cultural and political marginalization of groups of people (see Box 6.3). The GESI approach is focused on delivering equal rights, opportunities, and mainstream services to all citizens.

Box 6.3: Defining Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a concept that address unequal power relations experienced by people on the grounds of gender, wealth, ability, location, caste/ethnicity, language and agency or a combination of these dimensions. It focuses on the need for action to re-balance these power relations, reduce disparities and ensure equal rights, opportunities and respect for all individuals regardless of their social identity.

(GESI Working Group, 2017)

The Constitution of Nepal, with the commitment to end gender discrimination, has guaranteed women equal rights to property, right to safe motherhood and reproductive health rights, right to ensure proportional representation at all concerned levels in addition to the right to enjoy fundamental human rights for all. These provisions in themselves provide the strongest rationale for addressing GESI issues at all levels of inquiry, policies, programs and in the overall governance of the country. Additionally, the country's commitment and ratification of a number of international treaties create an obligation on the part of the government to honor those treaties and change the legal framework to ensure that those commitments, particularly to gender equality, are honored (see Boxes 6.4 and 6.5).

Box 6.4: International Agreements Ratified by the Government of Nepal in Relation to GESI

- i. 2020: United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- ii. 2020: UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (The Palermo Protocol)
- iii. 2015: Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, urging development interventions to “leave no one behind”¹⁹⁵;
- iv. 2011: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 (National Action Plan Prepared in 2011) (related to women, peace and security issues)
- v. 2010: UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- vi. 2007: International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169, calling on Governments to protect the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples¹⁹⁶
- vii. 2007: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- viii. 1995: Beijing Platform for Action, calling for the removal of barriers to equal political participation;
- ix. 1992: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- x. 1991: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), upholding women's right to participate in and influence public life¹⁹⁷;
- xi. 1971: The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), calling for “fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”.¹⁹⁸

195 UN (2015) *Resolution 70/1, Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 21 October 2015

196 International Labour Organization (ILO) (1989) *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989* (No. 169)

197 United Nations (1979) *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*

198 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) (1965) *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted on 21 December 1965*

Box 6.5: National Documents of the Government of Nepal Related to Gender Equality

- i. 2015 Constitution of Nepal: Article 38-4 of the Constitution of Nepal (2015), stipulating that “women shall have the right to participate in all bodies of the State on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion”;
- ii. 2017: The Election Commission Act 2017, directing the Election Commission Nepal to adopt gender friendly and inclusive principles while conducting local elections in a free and fair manner.
- iii. 2017: Amendments in the National Civil Code Act which has made some significant changes in the laws related to marriage, divorce, property rights, criminalization of rape and sexual harassment, and includes a separate chapter on women and children to protect their rights.
- iv. 2017: National Criminal Code Act 2017 that prohibits discriminatory behavior against any citizen on the ground of origin, religion, race, caste, sex, physical condition, language or region, ideology.
- v. 2015: Amendments to the existing laws to broaden the definite of rape and to make marital rape a non-bailable crime
- vi. 2015: Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Elimination) Act, 2015.
- vii. 2009: the Nepal Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act 2066 (2009)
- viii. 2007: Human Trafficking (Control) Act (2007)
- ix. 2006: The Gender Equality Act (2006), which included penal provisions for marital rape

In Nepal, patriarchal and patrilineal systems, and paternalistic behavior towards women have led to deep-rooted discrimination against women and girls in all sectors. This is intertwined with religious ideologies that prescribe strict conventions, norms and behaviors, not only towards women but for certain caste and ethnic groups as well. Thus, discrimination based on caste and ethnicity also has historical and political roots in the country. Though women's rights and equality have been a central part of Nepal's development agenda for over 50 years, traditional social norms, values and attitudes continue to influence behavior and impact negatively on women's access to and control over resources, their agency and voice, and their overall empowerment (Pradhan, 2014). Additionally, the intersection of multiple categories of differences in Nepal such as caste, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, differential abilities, geographic regions, etc., have created important differences within and across categories of individuals and groups. Multiple identities and dimensions have led to multiple levels of oppression and discrimination, leading to double or even triple discrimination faced by groups of individuals (such as '*poor Tarai Dalit women*') (ibid). Yet some of the global development and gender related indicators show a slow improvement in the conditions of gender equality in the country (see Table 6.2).

Social Cultural Diversity and Gender Norms:

Cultural diversity and complexity characterizes the current social landscape of the country. The Census of 2011 recorded 125 caste/ethnic groups marked by socio-cultural diversity and richness, 123 documented languages, and 10 different religions being practiced (CBS, 2012)¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁹ This study aims at studying “gender” equality in different sectors, but focuses attention on the roles of women vis-à-vis men and does not address the concerns of sexual and gender minorities (SGM). Nepal is one of the first countries in Asia to recognize the “third/other gender” and has given people an option of this identification (in passports, citizenship documents). Yet SGMs still struggle for recognition and social acceptance of their identity and their right to sexual expression, and continue to face stigma, discrimination, oppression and violence, due to their gender-based identity.

Table 6.2: Global indicators related to human development and gender equality, 2010-2019²⁰⁰

SN	Global Indicators	2010	2014	2019
1	Human Development Index (HDI)	0.428 (138th of 169)	0.540 (145th of 187)	0.579 (147th of 189)
2	Gender Development Index (GDI)	-	0.912 (102 out of 187)	0.897 (147 out of 189)
3	Gender Inequality Index (GII)	0.716 (110 out of 169)	0.479 (98 out of 187)	0.476 (115 out of 189)
4	Gender Gap Index (GGI)	0.603 (123 out of 134)	0.658 (110 of 145)	0.680 (101 out of 153)
5	Inclusive Development Index (IDI)	-	4.24 (27 out of 79)	4.15 (22 out of 74)

Inclusion in the Legislation: Through Constitution guarantees, quota and other mechanisms, there was a dramatic increase in representation of women in all state organs after the 2017 elections. Women now hold 33.5 percent of the federal parliament; 34 percent of the provincial assemblies; and 41 percent of the elected position in local councils and ward committees (IFES Nepal, 2018). Additionally, 21 percent of assembly seats were won by Dalits²⁰¹, giving women and minorities significant formal involvement in governance. Yet women won 91 percent of the **deputy** positions at the local level and only around three percent of the chief positions – signifying how more changes are necessary at the structural levels and in mindsets.

Economic Disparities: There has been a slow improvement in the economic empowerment of women as 26 percent have assets in 2016 compared to 20.5 percent in 2011. The participation of women and men in the labor force is at 26.3 and 53.8 percent respectively, and the rate of unemployment 13.1 and 10.3 percent respectively (GoN, 2020). A slow achievement is being seen in the civil service jobs primarily due to reservations/quotas where at present 25 percent of civil service employment is female compared to only 11 percent in 1993.²⁰²

Educational Disparities: Based on the 2011

Census the literacy rate of women and men are 57.7 percent and 75.6 percent respectively. These rates vary considerably by different social groups with the most marginalized groups (Hill and Tarai Dalits, Madhesi Castes, and Muslims) having lower rates at all levels, and women within all these groups having even lower rates compared to the men, as well as by geographic areas (CBS, 2014) (Gurung, Pradhan, & Shakya, 2020). Gender differences continue to be present in current school/college attendance, higher levels of education, and in technical subjects at the college levels (MoEST, 2017).

Health Conditions: Overall reproductive health indicators for women have been improving over the years. The maternal mortality rate has decreased from 539 maternal deaths to 239 for every 100 thousand live births between 1996 and 2016 and the total fertility rate is currently 2.3 per woman (MoH Nepal, New ERA, & IFC, 2017). But access to reproductive health care (as well as other general health care) is not only related to access and availability of such services but is also influenced by gender norms and values. Discriminatory norms have also resulted in harmful practices for girls and women in some hill communities where they are considered as being impure during their menstruation, childbirth and postpartum period and are thus restricted in their movements and interactions during these periods, with detrimental impact on their health.

200 Data for this table has been taken from the following sources: UNDP Human Development Reports from 2010, 2014 and 2019; The Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum from 2010, 2015 and 2020; and The Inclusive Development Index 2018/WEF <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-inclusive-development-index-2018>.

201 Dalits are historically and traditionally, socio-culturally, economically and political marginalized groups that were classified as so called “lower castes” in the Hindu caste structure.

202 Department of Civil Personnel Records of 2019.

Gender-Based Violence: Nepal continues to be one of the countries in the world with a high level of violence against women due to deep-rooted gender discrimination, poverty, discriminatory legal provisions and socio-cultural norms and practices based on patriarchal values. This continues to influence everyday life of women and girls despite the myriad of policies that have been put in place by the government. In 2016, 26 percent of women reported that they had experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence in their lifetime (MoH Nepal, New ERA, & IFC, 2017).

Trafficking of women and girls is also a serious concern in Nepal which is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children who are subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The GoN has increased efforts to mitigate this through a rise in both the number of trafficking investigations and victims identified, and by doubling its budget to provide victim care services to female victims of violence, including trafficking victims (US State Department, 2017).

New Gender Equality Policy to End Discrimination

Nepal's much awaited National Gender Equality Policy was made public on the occasion of International Women's Day in 2021²⁰³. The policy aims to: remove discriminatory barriers to the socio-economic development of women, children and adolescent girls; end gender discrimination, violence and exploitation and establish norms and values based on gender equality; institutionalize a gender responsive governance system in all the three tiers of government; and achieve economic empowerment of women.

The COVID-19 Pandemic in Nepal

The current second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has hit Nepal especially hard. Despite a relatively slow start in 2020, preparedness for another wave, delays in vaccination and an unprecedented surge in India has seen Nepali migrants heading back home in droves, helping the resurgence and wide spread of the virus. The impact of COVID is exacerbated for women and girls across every sphere, notably as reduced

food security, income and savings due to loss of jobs; reduced access to reproductive health services due to reallocation of resources and priorities; increased unpaid care work due to the closure of schools and working spaces; and increased gender-based violence. In mountain areas like the HKH the pandemic has hit hard agriculture and tourism – key mountain-based economies and has compounded the vulnerabilities of mountain communities to slide into chronic poverty, already impacted by climate change.

Studies have shown how the pandemic has negatively impacted the SDG achievements due to factors linked directly to the pandemic or the measures taken to control them²⁰⁴. However, the pandemic also presents opportunities for opening a window for sustainable transformation necessary for a more resilient and inclusive growth particularly for hard hit, marginalized mountain communities (Pradhan, et al., 2021). Thus, tangible and targeted gender responsive measures need to be taken for recovery and building resilience, starting with more investments in programming and disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity and region. Increased public investments will be needed particularly for mountains in inclusive and accessible health services and infrastructure, agricultural support, and sustainable and low carbon development (ICIMOD, 2020).

6.2. State of Gender Integration in Policies

This section provides an overview of key national level policies, strategies and plans related to climate change, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and food security in Nepal. The policy review took into consideration: (i) the state of interconnectedness and interrelationship between the policies for a holistic impact; (ii) identification of mountain specific issues related to ecosystem, climate change, biodiversity conservation and food security and whether they are being addressed; and (iii) whether gender needs assessment had

²⁰³ <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/new-gender-equality-policy-to-end-discrimination>

²⁰⁴ The negative impacts on SDGs resulted from factors linked to the pandemic or the measures taken to control it. The key five impending factors are lockdowns, underemployment and unemployment, closure of institutions and facilities, diluted focus and funds for non-COVID-19 issues, and anticipated reduced support from development partners (Pradhan et al., 2021).

been done or not, and what policy provisions exists to address specific needs in - related to knowledge, capacity, technology, and services - of women in general, and mountain women in particular. The review also examines overall consistencies and coherence in policies, strategies, plans and monitoring (in sectoral guidelines and incentive schemes), from the perspective of mountain women.

6.2.1 The Constitution, Development Plans and SDG Roadmap

The 2015 Constitution of Nepal has a set of 32 fundamental rights including right to food, right to live in a clean environment, health care, employment, housing, social security, safer motherhood, and education (GoN, 2015). With the adoption of the new constitution, the country has moved from a unitary to federal governance system requiring the state to clarify roles and devolve power to federal, province and local level to manage the sectors. These changes have far reaching implications on sectoral policies related to climate change, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and food security. The 15th Development Plan (2019-2023) and a roadmap to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2016-2030) are the most recent long-term development plans, where the former has prioritized 10 strategies and SDGs are well aligned (Annex 4 and 5).

Nepal started internalizing the SDGs with an arrangement for SDG budget coding to programs and projects. Since the FY 2017/18, development projects that would assist in achieving SDGs have been prioritized in annual plans and budget as well as in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The SDG roadmap provides country specific indicators, baseline, targets and policy guidelines for the localization and implementation of SDGs (NPC, 2017) and facilitates integrating the SDGs into all the federal, provincial and local plans and programs (NPC, 2020). The Needs Assessment, Costing, and Financing Strategy has estimated that the country needs annually NRs. 2,025 billion (about USD 19 billion) on average to implement the SDGs in its full potential (NPC, 2020).

A High-level Steering Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, an SDGs Implementation

and Monitoring Committee coordinated by the Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Thematic Working Committees coordinated by the Members of the NPC have been formed for steering, implementing and monitoring of the SDGs. In addition, the federal parliament has a separate Sustainable Development and Good Governance (SDGG) Parliamentary Committee with an important role in formulating and updating the necessary laws, monitoring and oversight (FPS, 2020). The formulation of these policies, as well as the legal and institutional architecture indicate that in the past five years, Nepal has created a solid framework needed to internalize, implement and achieve the SDGs.

The Constitution ends all forms of discrimination against women. In addition to the fundamental rights provided to all citizens, there are a set of specific women's rights guaranteed by the constitution. They include: a) equal right to lineage without any gender discrimination; b) right relating to safe motherhood and reproductive health; c) right to justice and compensation against violence against women; d) right to participate in all state structures and bodies on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion; e) right to special opportunity in education, health, employment and social security on the basis of positive discrimination; and f) equal rights in property and family affairs. These constitutional and legal provisions ensure the participation of women in the public domain and pave a way to address gender inequality.

Gender equality has also received a high priority as a crosscutting theme in all sectoral policies, strategies and plans as evident in the gender mainstreaming strategy outlined in the 15th Plan: (a) formulating sectoral gender equality policies; (b) adopting gender responsive governance system; (c) institutionalising gender responsive budgeting; (d) developing disaggregated data system; (e) implementing special economic empowerment programme targeted to women; and (f) increasing access to justice against violence against women. These provisions provide ample opportunities for sectoral development plans and programmes to implement affirmative policies and actions in favor of empowering women and girls, and

enhance women's space for participating and benefitting from information, capacities, labor, skills and technologies.

6.2.2 Sectoral Policies and the State of Gender Integration

The Government of Nepal (GoN) has adopted several policies and strategies for addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and promoting agriculture and food security. They have been in implementation for some time and some have been recently revised to align with the new Constitution and state restructuring. This section examines some of these policies from the perspectives of sectoral interlinkages, gender equality and focus on mountain geographies.

Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment Policies

National Climate Change Policy 2019

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) aims to enhance the climate change adaptation capacity of the most vulnerable, build resilience of ecosystems, promote green economy and mainstream climate change in sector programmes. There are eight priority sectors identified to respond to CC including agriculture and food security, forest biodiversity, and watershed conservation. The policy has well recognised the interlinkages between climate change, ecosystems, food security and biodiversity. On ecosystem restoration, the policy focuses on application of adaptation methods in integrated watershed management; protection of water sources; promotion of sustainable forest management and agroforestry; management of wetland, watershed and landscape; risk reduction of glacial lake outburst and adoption of climate friendly village/cities. The priority actions to minimise climate change effects on food security, includes development of crop suitable for dry and water logged areas; technologies that protect crops from climate induced disasters; water efficient irrigation schemes; weather forecast and dissemination methods; insurance schemes; multiple and efficient use of water (rainwater harvesting, water recharge ponds and renewal energy) and preparedness and prevention from epidemic and vector borne diseases induced by the

climate change. Similarly, measures to minimise the effects of climate change on biodiversity include promoting crop diversification, organic farming, agro-forestry; adoption of land use plans; documentation of traditional knowledge, skills, practices, and developing technologies for climate compatible agriculture system.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), awareness/capacity development, research/technology and climate finance are four crosscutting themes adopted by the policy. The policy recognises the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and other disadvantaged groups. The measures proposed to address GESI issues include development of sector specific climate change strategies addressing the needs and priorities of women and disadvantaged groups; targeting households and communities that are at climate risk; promotion of local indigenous knowledge, skills and technologies; and enhance access to weather-related information. The policy has a provision for a 'climate budget code' within sectoral plans and allocation of specific budget targeted to women and disadvantaged groups for adaptation. However, the policy is silent on specific climate change issues in the mountains and strategies to address them, apart from the provisions related to watershed and wetland management, and reducing risks of glacial lake outbursts that are important elements of mountain ecosystems.

The policy focuses on research for technology development namely, to promote climate compatible traditional and nature-based technologies; encouraging youth researchers; and mobilising private sectors and bilateral/multilateral cooperation to invest on climate smart technology development. However, it does not recognise the specificities of mountains, which has ecosystems different than other areas. The neglect of mountain issues raises questions on the relevance and applicability of the approach outlined in the strategy to the mountain context.

The policy also fails to acknowledge the roles, knowledge and capacity of women in mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Women are treated as one of the 'vulnerable groups' and thus in need of relief. As a result, the

policy lacks provisions related to women friendly tools/technology development, information dissemination, capacity building, disaggregated data, and active targeting of women or gender impact assessment.

National Environment Policy 2020

The National Environment Policy (NEP) is focused on pollution control, management and environmental impact assessment and production and use of alternative energy. The policy recognises the risks of climate change and has prioritised the development and use of alternative energy; promoting energy efficient building construction; environment friendly infrastructure and transport, and expansion of the 'climate smart village' programme. There is a focus on integrated land and watershed management in the fragile *Chure* hills and implementation of land use planning. Environment friendly, low-cost agriculture and livestock technologies such as roof farming, rain water harvesting, and improved cookstoves are promoted. Sustainable forest management is emphasized for biodiversity conservation and production.

The NEP also does not analyse and respond to mountain specific environmental issues. In terms of gender equality, women and disadvantaged groups are prioritized for compensation against pollution and in capacity development. Mainstreaming GESI in the formulation of environmental policies, plans, budget and their implementation are specifically mentioned, but the policy is silent on the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on livelihoods and health conditions of women. It does not recognise women's specific needs/priorities related to information, tools, technologies and investments, to enable them to perform actively in environment protection and governance.

Nationally Determined Commitment (NDC) 2020

Nepal's 2nd NDC lays out its commitment to mitigation and adaptation to climate change for 10 years (2021-2030). On mitigation, the NDC has focused policy measures on energy, agriculture, forestry and other land use, and waste management sectors. Adaptation

priorities cover eight thematic areas including agriculture and food security; forests; biodiversity and watershed management (GoN, 2020); there are four crosscutting themes including GESI; awareness/capacity building; research, technology and extension; and climate finance management. The impact of climate change on ecosystems, biodiversity, food security and livelihood have been duly recognized, and specific targets and measures to address them have been set. However, except in one provision related to maintaining forest stock, the NDC is silent on mountain specific issues and remedies. As the challenges and opportunities related to climate change and the way it interacts with food security, biodiversity and ecosystem are different in mountains compared to the plains and hills, the provisions outlined in the NDC may not be relevant and applicable to the geographical, social, economic and demographic context of mountain areas.

The NDC also recognizes the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and considers them as one of the most vulnerable groups. It has set a target to develop a gender action plan in all climate change related interventions by 2030 comprising specific programmes and resources for equal and meaningful participation of women; promote leadership, participation and negotiation capacity of women in climate change forums; and maintain gender disaggregated data in monitoring and reporting. The NDC also has provisions on the development of technology and practices, fair and equitable benefit sharing and allocation of specific budget to safeguard the needs of women and the disadvantaged.

NAP Formulation and LAPA Framework 2019

Nepal is formulating a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) that will replace the NAPA developed in 2010. The country also revised the Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) framework in 2019 in response to the changed socio-political context. The revised LAPA framework has clarified the roles of different levels of government to implement adaptation plans. The 753 local governments are assigned to enhance adaptive capacity of individuals, households and communities by building

climate resiliency and by incorporating climate compatible development approaches into local development plans and budgets. The federal and provincial governments are to create enabling policy and institutional environments, and provide budget and technical support to the local governments (MoFE, 2019). The framework consists of six key elements including awareness and capacity building, vulnerability and risk assessment, disaster risk reduction strategies and integration in local periodic plans; and their implementation at individual, households and community level.

The LAPA framework also provides list of potential adaptation activities and practices in 10 different sectors including agriculture and food security (section 2.1); biodiversity and watershed management (section 2.2); disaster risk reduction and management (section 2.6) and gender equality and social inclusion (section 2.9). The framework has considered GESI as one of the working approaches and has a separate section highlighting how gender equality can be integrated throughout. In addition, there are gender specific provisions outlined in relation to adaptation in different sectors (Box 6.6).

Box 6.6: Gender Equality Provisions Outlined in Nepal's LAPA Framework 2019

- Participation of women/disadvantaged in vulnerability and risk assessment & in identifying sensitive areas
- Prioritizing activities in annual plans and budget that contribute to gender equality
- Participation of women in awareness raising and capacity building
- Integrating GESI as one of the indicators in vulnerability and risk assessment
- Promoting climate resilience livelihoods and income generation activities targeting women
- Enhance women's access to information, knowledge and climate friendly technologies
- Community based early warning and weather forecast systems development, with women's participation
- Skill based training to women on disaster risk reduction at local level
- Participation in disaster management preparation including safe shelter, relief and health services

Source: (MoFE, 2019)

Though GESI is one of the working approaches, LAPA's focus on gender friendly tools, technologies and women's access is implicit or insufficient. The framework also lacks provisions for investment in capacity building and empowerment of women to work effectively on CCA at local levels.

Forest Policy 2018 and Forestry Sector Strategy (2016-2025)

Nepal's Forest Policy aims to enhance production and ecosystem services through restoration of forests, conservation of water, and integrated watershed and wetland management that directly contributes to address CC mitigation (MoFE, 2018). Biodiversity conservation related provisions include promotion of in-situ/ex-situ conservation and management of rare species; traditional and community conservation of plant and animal species; and integrated management of eco-corridors. The provisions to contribute towards food security and livelihoods include increasing access of people to forest products; promotion of forest based green enterprises, and income generation from forest and NTFPs. This policy too is silent on mountain specific forestry issues, adaptation needs and strategies to respond them.

GESI is considered as one of the approaches to implement the forest sector policies. The policy has set a target for at least 50 percent participation of women in all forest sector related organisations; improve equitable access to benefits from forest management and integrate a GESI perspective in plans and budgets. But there are no specific interventions and strategies planned to achieve these results. The policy is silent on gender roles and its impact on forest management; it neither recognises the specific knowledge, skills and capacity that women possess, nor proposes interventions to utilise them.

The Forest Sector Strategy and Action Plan comprises five outcomes including improved biodiversity, enhanced watershed and ecosystem services; strengthened climate resilient capacity and improved livelihoods. GESI is one of the approaches of the strategy and proportionate representation of women and other disadvantaged groups is emphasized in leadership positions and key decision-making

forums. Priority actions to operationalize gender equality include application of gender equality across all forest sector institutions; capacity building, disaggregated monitoring system; proportional representation; gender responsive budgeting guidelines; establishing GESI unit and focal points; adoption of affirmative action in government forestry sector institutions and zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

National Agroforestry Policy 2019

Agroforestry is an integrated system of practicing agriculture, livestock and forest activities on the same unit of land, and Nepali farmers have been traditionally practicing this system. This policy has prioritized development, expansion and promotion of collective and commercial agroforestry through mobilization of private, community and cooperatives. It focuses on development of market and infrastructure (road, tools and equipment, irrigation, technology, market and related facilities); research and value chain and financial incentives to farmers to establish agroforestry systems (MoALD, 2019). The policy recognizes different topographies that affect agroforestry practices and aims to develop area-based agroforestry models i.e., cereal/pulse/oilseed based in the Terai (plains); tree based in low hills; fruit tree based in mid mountains; fish based in river/lakes; and medicinal plants/livestock based in the high Himalayas.

This policy is gender blind despite the fact that agroforestry helps women meet their basic needs to forest and non-forest products, and reduces time and efforts in performing gender roles. Women have specific knowledge and skills related to agroforestry that can be capitalized to make interventions more effective, yet the policy is silent on these aspects. There is a provision for the establishment of an Agroforestry Inter-Ministry Coordination Committee, but the committee has no specific provisions for participation of women, or women related institutions indicating a complete neglect of gender issues.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2014-2020

Nepal's NBSAP has identified several threats to different types of biodiversity in the country

and has proposed specific measures to address them. Climate change is considered as one of the greatest threats to biodiversity that applies to all ecosystem. The strategy has specific focus on conservation of mountain ecosystems and biodiversity with the following additional targets:

- Research on biological richness and diversity driven services in at least 10 mountain ecosystems;
- Environment friendly economic development through ecosystem-based adaptation programme in at least 1,000 ha of degraded mountain ecosystems;
- Ecofriendly tourism with focus on community-based ecotourism;
- Develop and implement green projects (water, biodiversity, forests and energy) in the mountains;
- Develop a regional cooperation plan to foster cooperation in trans-boundary landscapes.

There is a separate focus on enhancement of national capacity for improved management of biodiversity focusing on training need assessment of various groups. The strategy (section 5.5.5) specifically mentions targeted programmes to enhance capacity of local communities, especially women, Dalits, Janajati and indigenous groups to support their livelihoods and conserve biodiversity. On GESI (section 5.5.9), the strategy has prioritized adoption of gender responsive policy; equitable participation; equitable access to biological resources and benefit sharing, capacity building and development of a GESI implementation handbook in different languages.

National Wetland Policy 2003 (updated 2012)/National Ramsar Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2024)

Nepal has a long history of the wetland conservation associated with local cultures, tourism and forest management. It joined to the Ramsar Convention in 1971 and ratified it in 1988. Though a wide range of policies related to the environment, biodiversity, agriculture, water, land use and forest emphasizes the importance of wetlands and guide their management, the National Wetland Policy 2003 (updated 2012) is the one dedicated to wetlands conservation and sustainable management. The key objective

is the wise and sustainable conservation and management of wetlands resources, while the core approach is to involve local people in the management of wetlands and its biodiversity.

The policy provisions are grouped into - the wise use of wetland; awareness raising; prevention, control and management of invasive species; establishment of institutional mechanisms and prohibition of work that might have adverse impacts on wetlands. National Ramsar Strategy and Action Plan is developed to help operationalize the National Wetland Policy and Nepal's commitment to the Ramsar Treaty. The strategy has identified several issues, threats and challenges in the areas of wetland management. Some of them include: loss and degradation of wetlands, invasive alien species, negative effects of climate change, inadequate knowledge and science-based information, inadequate coordination and managing of trans-boundary effects. Strategies and action plans to address these issues include a) conservation and management of the Ramsar site network and double the coverage; b) follow wisely used principles to manage wetlands and Ramsar sites; c) build capacity of federal and local stakeholders; d) foster national and international cooperation; and e) strengthen monitoring and evaluation.

The wetlands policy encourages women's participation for the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands, promoting project activities conducted by local women. It promotes traditional knowledge, skills, and wetlands practices inclusive to the wetland dependent communities, and ensures gender equity in planning and management of the wetlands. However, the provisions are less specific to how the needs and priorities of women are met. Both documents are silent about existing gender gaps in information, technology, skills and capacity related to wetland management and actions to address the gaps.

Agriculture and Food Security Policies

Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act, 2018

The key elements of the Food Sovereignty Act that are relevant for the SDGs mostly relate to the identification of food-insecure households

(Section 5 and 6); distribution of food to priority households (Section 7); protection of farmers' rights (Section 12 to 19); requirement to create a food plan (Section 20); creation of a public food supply and distribution system (Section 25 to 30); and promote sustainable agriculture system (section 15-17). The Act provides specific directions to the state to increase investment in agriculture and implement focused programmes for improved technology, environment friendly inputs, expand markets and insurance schemes, and adopt preventive measures for the mitigation of adverse impact of climate change on agriculture production.

The Act has recognised adverse impact of climate change on agriculture production and food security, and has specific provisions to protect the sector. They include promotion of sustainable agriculture system based on biodiversity, develop system of weather forecast, prevent degradation of water sources, fixing support price of the agro products based on investment cost and make arrangements to provide the farmers with compensation in case of loss of products. In terms of gender equality, the Act requires the state to expand access of women farmers and landless families to agricultural land and materials; and prioritise women's groups and cooperatives while expanding the food distribution system.

National Agriculture Policy, 2004

The National Agriculture Policy aims to transform subsistence-oriented farming systems into a commercial and competitive system. There are three areas of thematic focus i.e.: (a) increase agricultural production and productivity; (b) enhance competitiveness and commercialization; and (c) promote environment friendly agriculture and natural resources and biodiversity conservation (MoAD, 2004). Though the policy is silent on how agriculture sector will address the adverse effects of climate change, the provisions related to conservation, promotion and use of natural resources and biodiversity directly and indirectly helps minimize CC impact and ecosystem restoration (Box 6.7).

Box 6.7: Provisions in National Agriculture Policy 2004 that Address Climate Change Effects

- Establish surveys and surveillance systems to assess impact of excessive rains; droughts, diseases, insects and other natural calamities; followed by relief packages
- Minimize use of chemicals/hormones and promote production and use of organic fertilizers;
- Establish gene bank, participatory biodiversity parks and promote in-situ conservation of biodiversity;
- Develop farming system based on agroforestry and biodiversity conservation, participatory watershed management and river basin conservation;
- Control of land fragmentation and encourage scientific land management
- Expansion of livestock insurance as well as gradual expansion of insurance schemes for poultry, seeds of selected crops, and high value agricultural products,
- Promote organic farming with a certification service
- Promote cooperative, collaborative and group-based land management models

Source: (MoAD, 2004)

The policy has equity related provisions to: identify/ classify farmers and provide package of subsidies to landless and resource poor farmers with less than 4 ha of land; safety nets for farmers with less than 0.5 ha land and those without access to irrigation. On gender equality, the priority actions focus on: (a) ensuring 50 percent women's participation in agriculture production related interventions, institutions and organizations; (b) mobile training camps to help women participate in training; and (c) flow of disaggregated data and information related to involvement of women. However, these women specific provisions exist in isolation, and not integrated throughout. For example, in most of the provisions related to CCA, women play a significant role as de-facto manager and agriculture worker (Box 6.7), but the policy is silent on gender roles and the specific barriers faced by women farmers to benefit from these provisions. It is also silent on the need for gender responsive information, technologies, tools and services undermining the important

contribution women make in overall agriculture development.

Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) 2015-2035

The ADS provides directions for Nepali agriculture for the next two decades. It acknowledges the negative impacts of CC on agriculture productivity and the need for introducing appropriate adaptation mechanisms to increase the resilience of farmers. It promotes environmentally sustainable agriculture practices such as intercropping, conservation tillage, organic farming and agroforestry, efficient water management, non-conventional irrigation, treatment of livestock, agro-processing waste for biogas, and integrated plant and soil nutrient management which are known as effective climate smart initiatives. The strategy also puts strong emphasis on improving resilience of farmers to CC, disasters, price volatility, and other shocks through a combination of measures such as adoption of stress tolerant crops and animal species, establishment of early warning systems, access to farmers welfare funds, food and seed reserve systems, and climate smart agriculture practices. It aims to mobilize diverse agricultural finance and insurance providers to supply a variety of competitive and demand driven financial and agricultural insurance products (MoAD, 2015). The ADS has a specific output to "*establish a comprehensive set of mechanisms at the policy, planning, and implementation levels to assure gender equity, social and geographical inclusion*" (ADS 2015, p. 63), in addition to specific provisions targeted to women farmers (Box 6.8).

Yet, the strategy is silent on the feminization of agriculture and time poverty due to the combined effect of CC and increasing outmigration of Nepali men; this silence has resulted in a lack of interventions and resources on technologies and services to reduce women's workload.

Box 6.8: Specific Provisions Outlined in ADS to Reach, Benefit and Empower Women Farmers

- Awareness raising about women's rights to land and its significance on agriculture production.
 - Increase women's land ownership (single or joint) from 10% (in 2010) to 50% by 2035.
 - Promote women's organization and co-operatives to achieve economies of scale in technology dissemination, marketing, finance and logistics
 - Encourage women for agro-entrepreneurship through innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - Increase participation of women in agricultural projects
 - Create job opportunity for women through value chain
 - Strengthen the implementation of GESI strategy.
 - Capacity building to control decisions about the use of resources including irrigated agriculture and water resource management
 - Training on financial management for farmers, cooperatives, agri-entrepreneurs, rural women and rural youth to enhance agricultural enterprise creditworthiness.
 - Encourage farmer organizations, cooperatives and private sector to increase women representatives participating in coordination, monitoring, and decision-making bodies
- (MoAD, 2015)

National Agriculture Research Centre (NARC) Vision 2011-2030

NARC is a dedicated institution for technology development, varietal development, testing and for validation of new varieties, technologies and tools in farmer's fields in Nepal. The Center has developed and released a significant number of improved and hybrid crop varieties for their resistance to pests and disease, higher yields, and their tolerance to extreme conditions such as drought. It has also promoted cost-effective zero/ minimum tillage technology and other conservation practices. The NARC Vision 2011-2030 has expanded the scope of research from commodity and discipline-based to include agro-forestry, water management, and other related natural resource systems. It has focused on developing resilient agricultural technologies and varieties to adapt to and mitigate CC impacts (MoAD, 2010).

NARC has developed some gender friendly technologies such as a corn sheller and millet thresher (*kodo chutne machine*). They are popular among women farmers as these are time saving technologies. However, the vision and programme give inadequate attention to climate smart, labor saving, and women friendly technology development and dissemination. But it does not recognize mountain specific opportunities and challenges in agriculture production, and therefore lacks investment in tools and technology development for mountain contexts.

Irrigation Policy 2013

The main objective of this policy is to provide year-round irrigation suitable to the land and land use through the effective use of existing water resources. It has recognized CC as one of the important challenges leading to loss of water sources and irrigation potentials. It puts emphasis on integrated watershed management and outlines the need for development, protection, promotion and utilization of underground water, rain water harvest and natural water sources to increase areas under year-round irrigation (MoAD, 2013).

Due to increasing feminization of agriculture, women are increasingly involved in irrigation management, which was earlier considered as men's domain. Studies have confirmed that CC has led to increased water scarcity in most of the farming communities in Nepal which has increased workload for women to arrange water for household use and farming. Additionally, due to the outmigration of men, women's involvement in irrigation management is increasingly requiring women to seek/ access information, inputs and services related to irrigation (Rai Paudyal, et al., 2019). The policy has failed to acknowledge women's specific needs in terms of water; changing gender role in water management and is silent on measures to increase women's access to irrigation facilities.

6.2.3 Gender Mainstreaming Strategies in the Sectors

Nepal has developed separate GESI strategy and action plans to mainstream gender equality in sectoral policies related to climate change, environment and agriculture. Key elements of these strategies and action plans are summarized below.

Climate Change GESI Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2030)

This strategy aims to integrate GESI issues in mitigation and adaptation to CC following the same eight thematic areas as outlined by NCCP (MoFE, 2020). (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Key Elements of GESI Strategy and Action Plan in Climate Change (2020-2030).

Key Elements of GESI Strategy and Action Plan in Climate Change
Agriculture and Food Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote women's participation and capacity building to make adaptation technology inclusive, equitable and productive • develop and provide adaptation technologies that are resilient to climate change and increase food security • increase women's access to land and productive resources, adaptation focused services and information • gender analysis of infrastructure, market information and mechanism, promote agriculture entrepreneurship among women and climate vulnerable • insurance to women and vulnerable households in collaboration with private sectors • develop and expand women's time saving technology and increase access to gender friendly tools
Forest, Biodiversity, Water, Watershed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation and leadership of women in conservation and management • increase access of women to income generation, green enterprises • enhance adaptation capacity of women, equitable distribution of forest-based livelihood opportunities • develop infrastructure, human resource and technology that minimize climate hazards to women and marginalized • adaptation capacity of women by mobilizing FUG fund in alternative livelihood opportunities • campaign on women's participation in conservation and multiple use of water
Disaster Risk Reduction, Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • women's leadership in institutions related to disaster management • access of technical knowledge and skills to women responding to disaster • mechanisms to increase awareness and control violence against women during the disaster • women's access to information forecast on disaster • especial programmes on risk reduction and disaster management targeted to women and disadvantaged
Research, Capacity, Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender impact assessment of climate change in different sectors to inform policy and decision making • strengthen capacity of information centers and networks to ensure gender responsive information and extension services
Gender Planning and Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget allocation supporting adaptation capacity of women • institutional mechanisms for equitable distribution of benefits from climate friendly programme in all sectors
Participation in Climate Change Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender equality in climate change related capacity building, knowledge management and information dissemination • gender balance and women's leadership in international procedures • internalization and integration of gender equality in national policy, programme, budget, finance and technology related to climate change

The GESI provisions outlined address specific needs and priorities of women in CC response. The strategy also recognizes the important role women play to combat CC and therefore proposes to equip women with information, technology and services. In theory, the GESI mainstreaming strategy provides guidance for all relevant sectors to integrate gender equality in subsequent guidelines, plans and budget. However, in reality, there is little consistency and coherence within the Ministry between the GESI mainstreaming strategy, and the sectoral policies, plans and guidelines. GESI mainstreaming strategy in CC is yet to be integrated into sectoral policies and guidelines, so that they are implemented.

Forestry and Environment Sector GESI Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2030

The forestry sector was probably the first in Nepal to develop a sectoral GESI Vision in 2006, followed by a detailed GESI Mainstreaming Strategy in 2007. The objective was to strengthen its focus on the involvement of the poor, women and excluded communities in access to benefits from the sector (MoFSC, 2007). The strategy had four key change areas identified, namely: a) Gender and equity responsive policy and strategies; b) Equitable governance and GESI responsive institutional development; c) GESI responsive budget, programs, and monitoring; and d) Equitable access to resources and benefits. After seven years of implementation, the GESI Mainstreaming Strategy was reviewed with mixed results found (MoFSC, 2007). Based on the learning and in order to align with the 2015 Constitution and new federal governance structure, the forestry sector strategy has been revised and a new Forestry and Environment Sector GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2030) has been developed. The objectives, strategies and priority actions of the new strategies are grouped into three core areas: a) GESI responsive policies and institutions; b) Equitable sharing of resources and benefits; and c) safe and violence free workplace and environment (Box 6.9)

Box 6.9: Key Elements of Forestry and Environment Sector GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2030)

- a. GESI Responsive Policies and Institutions at all levels in GoN/NGO/private sector institutions through:
 - Gender audit and revision of existing policies, strategies, guidelines from GESI perspectives; development of action plan to remove gender disparities;
 - Making structures, human resources, decision-making mechanisms at every level GESI responsive;
 - Establish GESI unit within the ministry with clear responsibility, rights and resources.
- b. Equitable sharing of resources, benefits and opportunities through:
 - Fifty percent mandatory representation of women in CFUGs, leadership and decision-making processes;
 - Targeted grants and green enterprises schemes aimed at equitable sharing of resources and opportunities;
 - Provision of at least 35 percent fund generated from forestry sector to invest on women's skills, enterprises, leadership and livelihood improvement, at least 15 percent for similar investments on Dalits and other disadvantaged groups;
 - Promotion of traditional knowledge, skills and practices related to natural resources (identifying, documentation, protection and linking with enterprises).
- c. Workplace that is safe, dignified and free from violence and disparity:
 - Training, sensitization and behavioural change communication;
 - Zero tolerance policy for gender and sexual violence in the workplace;
 - Code of conduct, provision of independent hearing mechanisms and capacity building;
 - Gender and disability friendly infrastructure, tools and technologies.

Source: MoFE, 2021

Agriculture Sector GESI Mainstreaming Strategy, 2006

This strategy was developed in 2006 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Development (MoAD) with support from ADB. The strategy has outlined several priority actions with long term and short-term implications to strengthen gender equality in the sector. The strategy has attempted to integrate gender equality into the thematic areas outlined in the National Agriculture Policy 2004 (Table 6.4).

Some priority actions listed in the strategy are outdated now because of changes in socio-political and policy context, and emerging issues such as CC. These require the strategy to be updated which is not yet done. Nevertheless, most of the priority actions outlined by the strategy are still relevant and contribute to

reach, benefit and empower women in the sector. However, these actions are not fully recognized and incorporated in several other policies developed by the ministry since 2006.

Table 6.4: Key Elements of Agriculture Sector GESI Mainstreaming Strategy, 2006

Priority Actions Outlined in Agriculture Sector Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, 2006
<p>Increase in Access to Assets and Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercialization: increase women's participation in production of export-oriented agriculture products with technologies and credit support targeted to women; facilitate to enhance women's access to markets, increase women's access to communication, information and technologies, encourage women's participation in high value agriculture production • Irrigation: provided women access to irrigation facilities and knowledge, technical skills and support to use water saving technologies; prioritize support to irrigation projects demanded and managed by women • Training and capacity: ensure women farmers participation in enterprise development, high value agriculture and ensure women's need and priorities are addressed by agri machines and technology development; ensure at least 33 percent women participation in any training; 50 percent representation of women farmers in any agri-excursion and off farm training • Input and services: encourage women farmers with support scheme to establish agri business/industries; maintain and update data on women's participation in all agriculture activities and support systems • Income/livelihoods diversification: encourage women in engage in diversified high value agriculture and link the progress to performance appraisal of technicians; increase women's access to inputs (credit, seed, fertilizer, vet services, insurance); women focused information and service system to improve soil productivity and controlling land degradation;
<p>Voice and Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote formation of women farmers groups as well as ensure at least 60 percent women's representation in mixed farmers groups; provide technical and material support targeted to women groups; equal participation of women in decision making in community groups; • promotion of women farmer leaders and provide special support to encourage them work with women farmers • establish institutional mechanisms to hear grievances from women farmers and to address them
<p>Organizational Arrangements</p> <p>establish and strengthen gender focal desk with clear responsibility, rights and resources; develop and use gender mainstreaming checklist at all stages of projects and programs</p> <p>gender research and evaluation; collection and use of gender disaggregated data at all stages</p> <p>33% reservation in higher education, training and exposure for women technicians; proportionate representation of women technicians at extension service centers at all levels</p>

Source: (MoAD, 2006)

6.2.4 State of Gender Integration in Sectoral Guidelines

Gender specific provisions, though limited, if translated into actions through implementation guidelines, plans and resources, provide ample opportunities towards gender equality and increase overall performance of the policies. In practice however, there are very few sectoral policies that are supplemented with guidelines. Rather, the policy intentions are translated into action through incentive schemes, some of which are presented below.

Model Agroforestry Implementation Guideline 2020: This guideline recommends different models for different agro-ecological zones. While fruit-based agroforestry system is recommended for the mid hills, NTFP and livestock-based models are recommended for the high hills/mountain regions. The procedure to implement the agroforestry policy comprises sensitization and awareness on agroforestry programmes; capacity building of stakeholders; selection of farmers, groups and cooperatives for partnership (on a 50 percent contribution basis); distribution of fast-growing seedlings of medicinal plants, non-timber, timber and multipurpose trees, and provide technical/material and financial grant to the selected partners for implementation (MoFE, 2020). Projects requires beneficiary groups to contribute 50 percent of the total cost to receive the government grant, but this is waived for women's groups. Except this particular provision, the entire implementation guideline is gender blind.

Grant Guidelines on Organic Fertilizer 2072: This guideline promotes the production and use of organic fertilizers, which is an important element of food security, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation. It provides subsidy to farmers on organic fertilizer production and use. Women play an increasing role in preparing, conserving, using and managing compost within households. Due to outmigration of men, women are also increasingly managing fertilizers from the neighborhood or markets. Only the landowners are eligible to access to the subsidy and this is usually men. Lack of land ownership constrains women to access to and benefit from the subsidy, and this gender barrier is neither mentioned nor addressed by the guideline.

Small Irrigation (Shallow Tube Well) Implementation Guidelines 2018: The guideline is applicable only for drought affected Terai districts; the needs of mountain communities for irrigation are not captured. The guideline provides special subsidy to Dalits, former Kamaiya (bonded laborers) marginal farmers and women. But this principle is not reflected in processes for targeting, access to information and services elaborated in the guideline. Women are primary users of small irrigation and they are also responsible for caring and maintenance of irrigation schemes and nearby water sources. Women face specific gender barriers related to information, credit and workload that constrain their ability to benefit from this scheme. The guideline neither recognizes such barriers nor addresses them.

Agriculture Cooperative Grant Guidelines 2015: Cooperatives are important means of implementation of policy provisions and schemes developed to support farmers to adapt to CC. Women farmers are usually involved in women cooperatives and benefit from easy access to information, credit, skills mediated through the cooperatives. Cooperatives also provide a forum for women to organize and develop leadership capacity. Under this guideline, the government provides grants and low interest loans (up to 85 percent) for agricultural projects including extension, enterprise and marketing. There are no specific provisions however, to reach, benefit and empower women cooperatives.

Crop and Livestock Insurance Guidelines 2013: This guideline is to equip farmers with insurance to reduce and manage risks due to adverse climate and related events. It provides up to 50 percent subsidy/grants to farmers on premium amount. The guideline (and whole scheme) is gender blind as it does not consist of any specific measures to encourage women's participation in the scheme. The guideline requires paying 50 percent from of the premium amount by farmers themselves to benefit from the insurance scheme. Lack of an independent source of income and decision making make it very difficult for women to participate, and benefit from this scheme.

6.2.5 Gender Responsive Budgeting System

The GoN officially introduced the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) system in FY 2007-08. The system seeks to ensure that the needs and interests of women, men and children likewise are effectively addressed in the annual budget. All sectoral ministries categorize their programme budgets according to the extent to which they support gender equality. The guideline has prescribed three categories: (i) Directly gender responsive; (ii) Indirectly gender responsive, and (iii) Neutral. Within these three broader categories, the system uses five qualitative indicators to analyze budget allocations from a gender lens, all of which are assigned an equal weight of 20 percent each (Table 6.4).

The key steps of GRB operationalization comprises analysis of the gender situation, identification of gender needs and concerns, gender analysis of the programme, and addressing gender needs in programme and budget (MoF, 2013). Subsequently, a 'Gender Auditing Module' has been incorporated in the budget formulation process, which analyzes sectors including BC, forestry, and FS through a gender perspective. The share of the annual budget directly benefiting women (directly gender responsive) has been continuously rising from NRs. 19.09 billion (11 percent of the total budget) in 2008-2009 to NRs. 562 billion (38.2 percent) in 2020-21 (Figure 6.1).

Table 6.4: Indicators and Categories of Gender Responsive Budget System in Nepal

No.	Indicators	Score
1	Women's participation in formulation and implementation of the program	20
2	Women's capacity development	20
3	Women's share in the benefit	30
4	Promoting employment and income generation for women	20
5	Qualitative improvement of women's time-use or reduced workload	10
TOTAL		100
Directly Gender Responsive (1)		Indirectly Gender Responsive (2)
=> 50%		>20% to <50%
		Neutral (3)
		<20 %

Source: MoF, 2013.

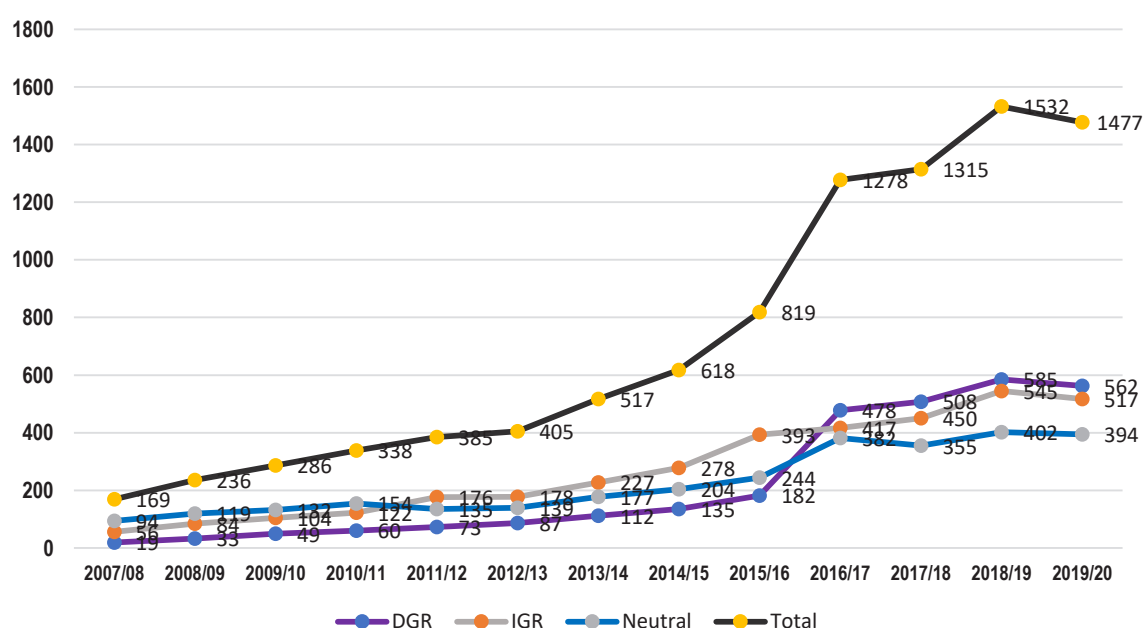


Figure 6.1: Trend of Gender Responsive Budget Allocation in Nepal (2007/08-2019/20)

Nepal is making a good progress in GRB allocation, as the government machinery has improved its capacity for its adoption. Budget forms, manuals and software systems have been revised in all government institutions, constitutional commissions, sectoral line ministries and departments (MoF, 2013). However, the GRB system suffers from the lack of proper monitoring of the expenditure and documentation of impact on women's lives. Lack of sex disaggregated data is still an issue in BC, forest/environment management and FS sectors that needs to be addressed for assessing the impact of GRB on gender equality. With the transition to the federal structures, the responsibility of managing forests, biodiversity and land/natural resources has devolved to subnational and local levels. Hence it is equally important that GRB is internalized and adopted at the province and local levels where actual resource generation and expenditure takes place. It is also important to ensure that women's meaningful participation is ensured during planning, implementation and monitoring of all development interventions at the local level, especially those funded from GRB. Scholars expect much higher levels of GRB given the fact that women representation stands at 34, 35 and 41 percent at the federal parliament, provincial assembly, and local assembly, respectively (Ghimire, 2019). The guideline needs to be revised based on these learnings

6.2.6 Policy Issues, Lessons and Opportunities

The review of sectoral policies uncovers a number of issues that need to be addressed for visible and sustainable impact on gender equality and to realize a greater role of gender equality in sustainable development. Despite the shortcomings in the policies as discussed above, Nepal shows emerging opportunities for integration of gender equality in sectoral policies and enhancing women's role in sustainable development. Some of them are discussed here.

Key Policy Issues

- i. **Inadequate sensitivity and understanding of mountain context and interventions:** Despite being recognized as a mountainous country in the world, most of the sectoral

policies lack an understanding of mountain specific opportunities and challenges across all sectors. This has resulted in a complete neglect of mountain issues and lack of interventions that suit mountain economic, social and ecological contexts. The current level of understanding of the mountain specificity and their relations in addressing CC, BC and FS is inadequate. More resources and investment are needed to strengthen the understanding of the linkages and to generate mountain specific solutions.

- ii. **Inadequate analysis and understanding of gender barriers and opportunities:** Policies and strategies increasingly acknowledge the important role of women in addressing CC, BC, agriculture production and FS. But they lack proper gender analysis and understanding of what enables and disables women to participate, contribute and benefit from the policy provisions and interventions. **Gender barriers** such as - traditional gender roles that require women to take entire responsibility of unpaid care work; lack of education, training and exposure; lack of land ownership, access to credit and technologies; gender norms constraining mobility, access to public space and decision making; and more importantly the intra-household power relation - all constrain women's ability to access and benefit from available policies and incentive schemes. Such gender barriers are hardly recognized and addressed in policies, guidelines and incentive schemes. In most cases the sectoral policies also lack knowledge and understanding of opportunities such as the knowledge, skills and capacities that women have in the sectors that could be utilized for more effective and sustainable outcomes. Lack of understanding of the gender barriers and opportunities explains weak gender integration in the policies.
- iii. **Household as a unit of intervention, undermines intra-household dynamics:** Most of the policies and incentive schemes consider the 'household' as a unit of intervention. In principle, reaching and benefiting households also reach and benefit women as a member of households.

Studies analyzing the effectiveness of climate interventions have found that gender relations, basically considers women as a supportive actor of men and not an independent actor of forest/natural resource management, often restricting women's access to opportunities, decision-making, training, participation in meetings and marketing of products (Paudel, Tiwari, Raut, Sitaula, & Paudel, 2019). In addition, the tools and technologies available for improved practices are not women friendly, restricting women's potential to contribute in the sectors. Policies have not recognized these constraints and therefore lack efforts to minimize gender disparities.

- iv. **Considering women as a 'beneficiary', and not as an 'active agent' of sustainable development:** Existing policies have increasingly recognized the disproportionate impact of CC, loss of biodiversity and food insecurity on women, and consider women as one of the vulnerable groups. Attempts are made through GESI policies and strategies to protect women from the vulnerability and minimize the adverse impact. This is a welcome policy move. But domination of this perspective in policy making has resulted in a complete neglect of women's agency and the important role they have been playing in sustainable development.

Because of women's direct exposure to nature and greater dependency to perform gender roles, women hold vast knowledge, skills and capacity for conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, mainly land, forests, water and biodiversity. Being primarily responsible for care work, women are also responsible to manage food and therefore have the knowledge, skills and capacity to manage food security in times of crises. Women farmers, with direct exposure to CC effects, pose tremendous knowledge and skills in climate smart behavior and have been developing adaptation methods and coping mechanisms on their own. Their experiences, innovations, knowledge and skills in agriculture production, seed and food processing and storage are important

assets for sustainable food production and are critical for BC and enhanced FS. Achieving sustainable development is not possible unless these important assets that women hold are recognized, protected, enhanced and promoted for replication and adoption at wider scale. The sectoral policies are silent on these important aspects.

- v. **Limited integration, coherence and consistency across the sectors and in relation to gender equality:** Though the SDG Roadmap and 15th Periodic Plan are well aligned and interconnected, other policies still seem to exist in isolation and there is a lack of coherence and consistency in policies related to CC, BC and FS. For example, the CC policy is explicit on policy provisions specific to BC, ER and FS. These CC policy provisions are not reflected in agriculture, wetland, forestry and biodiversity policies. On the other hand, the NBSAP has outlined policy provisions specific to mountains and agriculture biodiversity that are not reflected in CC or agriculture policies.

Gender equality has been considered as a crosscutting theme across the sectors. But in reality, gender equality is also treated in isolation. Though gender mainstreaming strategies exist in all three sectors (climate change, agriculture and forestry/environment), the strategies and priority actions suggested are hardly reflected in the respective sectoral policies and plans. In addition, the interplay between gender, agriculture, ER and CC has rarely received policy attention. Lack of interconnectedness, coherence and consistency is a major issue that may explain the lack of implementation of policy provisions in these sectors.

Even within the sector, there is lack of consistency and coherence between policies/strategies and guidelines. Some guidelines have been developed to operationalize sectoral policies but most of them are gender blind. Gender specific provisions in sectoral policies and strategies are not fully reflected and translated into guidelines and incentive schemes related to the same sector. Lack of such horizontal and vertical coherence across sectors and between

policies and guidelines, often disempower women and affects the effectiveness of policy implementation.

- vi. Lack of provisions for women's participation in policymaking processes: Climate smart technologies and practices are adopted more successfully when they are appropriate to women's interests, resources and demands (Huyer, 2016). This requires participation of women and their representatives in policy-making processes. Natural resource and environmental governance sectors including CC, BC, forestry, agriculture, and wetland management are often considered as technical issues. Technical experts – mostly men – at macro level dominate current policymaking processes. There are no mandatory provisions for women's participation, and policy drafting processes do not provide space for participation of women, their organizations and even local level stakeholders that are closer to the realities. The gap often results in absence of deliberation from a gender perspective.

Though all line ministries and major departments have established a Gender Focal Desk with responsibility for gender mainstreaming, often these units have limited space to participate in policy making. These units also lack the mandate, skills, resources and authority to perform their tasks, which might also explain the situation of gender neglect in most of the policy documents, guidelines and incentive schemes.

vii. **Insufficient information, capacity and technology relevant for women**

Though in most of the cases, the policies have emphasized research and development, very few have realized a need for development of women friendly tools, methods and technology necessary. There are separate divisions to work on research and technology development in both agriculture and forestry/environment ministries, but there are limited innovations and technologies developed in the sectors that respond to CC and demographic properties, especially of the mountains. The NARC vision for example is far behind in acknowledging gender differences

in priorities and developing time saving women friendly and climate smart technologies, tools and equipment in agriculture. NARC is also underfunded and gets limited policy attention; the same applies to the Forest Research and Training Center of the MoFE. The existing level of human resources, their competency and funds for technology generation needs to be improved from a gender responsiveness perspective.

- viii. **Less availability/use of gender disaggregated data in policy making and impact monitoring:** Gender responsive policy making requires an understanding of who does what, who controls which resources, and whether those working in the field are equipped with knowledge, information, skills, technology and finance to perform their work better. Policy makers often lack reliable comprehensive set of disaggregated data on these critical aspects and whenever they are available, there is limited tendency among the policymakers to use the data and inform the policy.

Major Opportunities

i. **Constitutional provisions on gender equality and sustainable development:**

Nepal has gone through a dynamic and rapidly changing demographic and socio-political context in the past decade. The 2015 Constitution is one of the most important opportunities as gender equality is one of the guiding principles. It has safeguarded women's right to equal participation, access to and control over resources and other economic assets, and enjoy fundamental rights. Many of these rights directly contribute to achieve the SDGs. The country has passed several laws in the past three years to operationalize these rights into laws and actions. It has also integrated SDGs into national development plans. Some policies have been updated and are in the process of operationalization, while others are in process of revisions or updating. These national contexts provide an enabling environment and important opportunity to proactively engage in policy processes towards gender equality.

- ii. **Empowered local governments are closer to the realities:** The constitution has assigned the task of natural resource governance, including the management of land and land-based resources, agriculture and FS, forest management, BC, adaptation to CC, and disaster risk reduction and management to the jurisdiction of local governments in Nepal. Local governments, with representation of more than 40 percent women have three major functions - local policy making; executing the decisions; and monitoring the development initiatives. As they are closer to the reality, it is expected that the policies, processes, and interventions planned and implemented at local levels will respond better to the local context and challenges. This also applies to responding to mountain specificities and interventions related to CC responses, ER, BC and FS in the mountains.
- iii. **Expanding space for women in law making and executive positions:** Nepal is also one of the leading countries in South Asia in expanding women's space in law making and executive positions. The constitution guarantees women's participation - at least 33 percent at federal parliament and province assembly; 40 percent in local governments and 50 percent in key decision-making positions. Current representation stands at 34, 35, and 41 percent at the federal parliament, province assembly, and local governments, respectively. Additionally, 50 percent of key executives at local governments are women. However, the mere representation of women is not sufficient to ensure gender integration. It is equally important to build capacity of those representatives for effective voice and for integration; it is equally important for age old discriminatory mindsets, attitudes and behaviors change. Women representatives at all three levels can be reached with information and capacity so that the policies, plans and budget respond to women's needs and priorities across the sectors.
- iv. **Localization of Gender Responsive Budgeting:** GRB is one of the good practices being institutionalized in Nepal,

currently being used as a gender responsive planning tool. There is an opportunity to expand GRB not only as a planning tool but also as a tool for result monitoring. Moreover, it needs to be localized and used at all levels as a planning and monitoring tool to ensure that activities that directly benefit women with knowledge, capacity, technologies, credit and service schemes are adequately financed.

6.3. Institutions and State of Gender Integration

6.3.1 The Overall Institutional Context

The promulgation of the 2015 Constitution marks Nepal's transition from a unitary state to a federal republic comprising three levels, namely the Federation, the seven Provinces and the 753 Local Level of governments. This has resulted in a fundamental paradigm shift in the systems, structures and functioning of the governance, with the devolution of substantive development and service delivery responsibilities to the provincial and local governments (GoN, 2020). The relationship between the three tiers is based on principles of 'cooperation, coordination and collaboration'; each of the three levels of government is empowered with constitutionally specified "exclusive" and "concurrent" jurisdictions, with the local governments having considerable roles, responsibilities and authority, compared to the previous governance structure. According to the Local Government Operation Act (LGOA) there are 753 local governments that comprise Gaunpalikas and Municipalities, as well as District Coordination Committees (DCC) and Wards (the smallest administrative units) (ibid).

The country has begun the transformation to a federal system with some initial gains yet the relative slow progress in delivering the required regulatory and the institutional framework has caused concerns among the provincial and local governments in its impact on their ability to deliver (World Bank, 2019). There has been some deployment of staff but there are still significant gaps between the needs and existing capacity at all levels. There is a significant amount of framework legislation required to enable the development of legislations at the province and

local levels, the lack of which has had an impact on the efficient management of assignments and public finances, as well as challenges in their ability to adequately deliver and manage the provision of public services (ibid). There are still the pitfalls in the federalization process, where the constraints deter the devolution of power and resources to local bodies as well as the transformation of local governments into autonomous institutions in Nepal (Zafarullah & Acharya, 2020).

For the smooth governance, service delivery and impact achievement to reach the national and SDG targets, the government needs to: carry out reviews of unbundling exercises for concurrent assignments at each level; assess and design capacity for devolution of service delivery responsibilities; improve revenue mobilization and funds investment; and clarify lines of responsibility for monitoring and reporting. Of special interest to this study is that the government also needs to ensure institutional mechanisms for a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) receptive and climate change responsive structures and systems to be in place to build better accountability for an inclusive and sustainable development process.

It is against this backdrop of transition that this section will present an overview of the organizational structures and functions of the government in implementing the policies and programs to achieve the SDGs in relation to climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security. It will also assess the available human resources and their capacity (and constraints) in particular to carry out gender responsive programming and the budgets that are available for it.²⁰⁵

6.3.2 Overarching Institutions

There are a number of institutions at the federal level that have policy, programmatic, fiscal oversight, as well as research, monitoring and evaluation responsibilities for the overall development sectors and processes, including those that are of key interest to this study. For several years now, the GoN has also been

²⁰⁵ Given that this study is a desk review, extensive information on human resources and gender sensitive budgets was not readily available.

trying to ensure the mainstreaming of GESI as a conceptual and strategic tool in most of the different sectors with development of sectoral policies, strategies, or operational guidelines that address GESI mainstreaming, as well as instituting Gender Focal Persons in most of the ministries.

The National Planning Commission (NPC)²⁰⁶ is the specialized and apex advisory body of the Government of Nepal for formulating a national vision, development policy, periodic plans and sectoral policies for overall development of the nation. It has the overall responsibilities to assess resource needs, identify sources of funding, and allocate budget for socio-economic development. It also serves as a central agency for monitoring and evaluating development programs, and evidence-based policy formulation and planning. Out of the seven Provinces, all except Province 7 have formulated their Planning Commissions; while some are formed as 'Policy and Planning Commissions', other has linked it directly with 'Economic Affairs'.

Multi-year planned development policy and processes began in 1956 in Nepal and the country is currently in its 15th Plan (2019/20-2023/24). The earlier plans pursued a welfare approach focused on women's reproductive role but since the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997–2002) onwards a paradigm shift from 'women in development' to 'gender and development' has been evident since then the periodic plans have pursued gender equality and women's empowerment through a gender mainstreaming strategy.

The 15th Plan has highlighted gender equality goals, and throughout the Plan calls for GESI strategies, policies, and programs in all sectors.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ https://www.npc.gov.np/en/page/39/about_us/npc_functions/roles_responsibilities

²⁰⁷ The key gender equality goals in the 15th Five Year Plan are as follows: "By the end of the plan, the Gender Development Index will have increased from 0.897 to 0.963. The ratio of women who have experienced physical, psychological, and physical violence in their lifetime will have decreased from 24.4 to 13%. Federal, provincial and local levels will have formulated and implemented gender-friendly policies and acts. All forms of discrimination and exploitation will have been significantly decreased, women's contribution to the national income will have been accounted for, a gender-responsive budget will have been institutionalized at all levels, and a data system to measure gender equality and empowerment will have been developed" (GoN, 2020).

Interestingly, the Plan also has a specific focus on the forest biodiversity and watershed sector, where the key challenge identified has been “to distribute equitably the benefits from this sector’s products and services among people who are different in terms of class, gender, and social status” (GoN, 2020). Thus, a strategy has been devised to “institutionalize GESI in forest, biodiversity, and watershed management and to distribute the benefits from this sector equitably”, with activities focusing on: GESI strategies in forest management systems including community forests will be improved and implemented in time, and biodiversity resources at all local levels and associated traditional knowledge, skills, practices, socio-cultural practices, arts, intellectual property of indigenous and local communities will be registered and documented (ibid).

The 15th Plans also aims to “reform the current legal and institutional provisions by following the policy of mainstreaming in population and development through the means of rights-based gender equality and inclusion (ibid). Among other activities, the Plan envisions that the participation of poor, marginalized, Dalit, women, children, adolescents, disadvantaged, and people with disabilities and senior citizens will be ensured in population and sustainable development-related programmes aligning it with the tenets of gender equality and social inclusion (ibid, p. 223-224).

The NPC is the key agency engaged in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and leads and supports institutional mechanisms to do so. A high-level **Steering Committee of Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs** (Chaired by the Prime Minister) provides the overall leadership. The **SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee** (Chaired by the NPC Vice-Chair) provides guidance to the federal, provincial and local governments, facilitates inter-ministry coordination for resources, and monitors and reports on the achievements (NPC, 2020). The NPC also has a data portal for tracking the SDGs.²⁰⁸

The Ministry of Finance (MoF): In addition to having oversight of allocation of financial resources and fiscal management, and the budget formulation, implementation and regulations as well as fiscal M&E, the MoF also serves as the focal point for Global Climate Facility, and Global Environmental Facility (GEF). MoF formally brought to practice the **gender responsive budget (GRB)** code since FY 2007/08, aimed at integrating a gender perspective in policies and planning so that public resource allocation is responsive towards gender equality. An inter-ministerial Gender-Responsive Budget Committee (GRBC) has the mandate to design a methodology to monitor sectoral budget allocations and public expenditures from a gender perspective (FAO, 2019).

The MoF has also adopted a climate change financing framework for integrating climate change and climate finance into national planning and budget processing to ensure that climate finance reaches the vulnerable communities, particularly when climate programs are directly implemented by line ministries. The climate budget code was introduced in the annual budget of fiscal year 2012/13 to track climate public expenditure (Figure 6.2). There have been numerous projects addressing climate change, however, there are gaps in gender co-targets within many of such projects (Box 6.10).

208 https://dataviz.worldbank.org/views/ProvincialSDGDash-boardv8/Province?iframeSizedToWindow=true&embed=y&showAppBanner=false&display_count=no&showVizHome=no

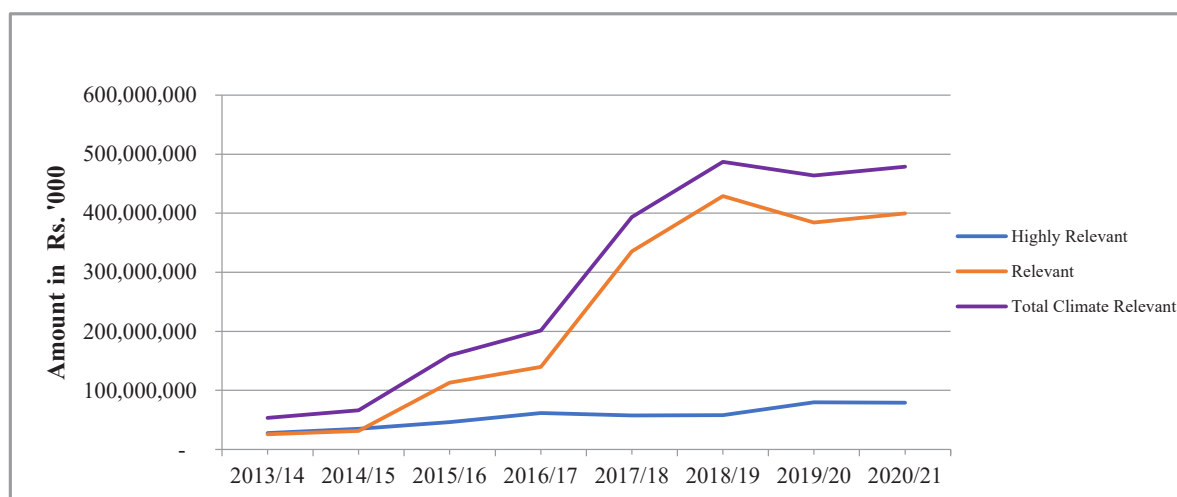


Figure 6.2: Trend of Climate Relevant Budget of Nepal, 2013-2021

(Source: Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2013/14 to 2019/20, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, in PRC, 2019)

Box 6.10: Climate Change Adaption and Gender Equality Projects in Nepal

A recent study on tracking adaptation climate finance showed how, limited projects lacked gender co-targets.

- In the period of 2013-2017, a total of 609 climate-related projects were committed to Nepal, with total climate commitments amounting to USD 1.92 billion, of which USD 643 million was committed in 2017. Nepal's three largest climate finance providers and their contributions were as follows: World Bank (33 percent), Asian Development Bank (29 percent) and European Investment Bank (11 percent).
- Between 2013-2016, just over half of adaptation projects in Nepal also reported gender equality objectives. Yet, only 39 percent of adaptation finance to Nepal was found to target gender equality; thus, 61 percent of this adaptation finance lacked gender co-targets. Despite the majority of donor's adaptation projects reported gender co-targets, 61 percent of adaptation finance did not address gender equality, indicating that many large adaptation projects lack a gender equality focus.

(Rai, Chhetri, & Dhital, 2020)

The **Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC)** has the key responsibility for developing and overseeing policies, laws and standards for women's rights and empowerment, including conducting

research on women's empowerment and gender equality to improve the status and conditions of women. The Women's Empowerment Division within the MoWCSC has four key Sections, namely: Human Trafficking Control, Women's Development and Gender Equality Mainstreaming, Alleviating Gender-based Violence and Data Analysis and Publication Section.

As mentioned previously, the MoWCSC has formulated the National Gender Equality Policy that has recently been endorsed by the Council of Ministers. This policy provides overall strategic guidance to institutionalize a gender responsive governance system in all the different government agencies at all three levels of the government, through gender-responsive policies, budget and programs.²⁰⁹ The policy envisions a **Gender Equality National Coordination Council** (Chaired by the Minister) with representation of all seven Provincial Social Development Ministries, Member of the NPC (Federal), Secretary of the MoWCSC, Provincial Planning Commissions with the Joint Secretary of the MoWCSC as the Secretary of the Council. Additional official and experts can also be invited to be members of the Council, and working sub-committees can also be formed by the Council.

²⁰⁹ <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/new-gender-equality-policy-to-end-discrimination> (Downloaded 2 May 2021) and presentation of the policy by an official of the MoWCSC on May 6th 2021.

At the Province levels the **Gender Equality Policy envisions the formation of a Gender Policy Coordination and Monitoring Committee**, comprised of key official from the Provincial government, and this committee will work together coordination of this policy with other sectoral policies to ensure harmonization and the integration of gender equality within other sectors as well.

Prior to the issuance of the National Gender Equality Policy, a number of sectoral ministries (Agriculture, Education, Forest and Environment, Health, Federal Affairs and Local Development, Urban Development, Water Supply and Sanitation, Physical Infrastructure and Transportation) have already issued and are implementing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion strategies, policies and guidelines. These ministries have also established dedicated units with specially trained staff and systems to monitor results. In most cases a Gender Focal Person and a Gender Desk has been allocated at the National Planning Commission and all Ministries and Departments. However, in many cases these staff/units have been unable to deliver effectively due to multiple reasons – they do not have an adequate mandate or authority, limited or no resources for gender related work, and most importantly a continuing absence in any institutional linkage between their gender mandate and the main work of the Ministries.²¹⁰

The **federal and provincial governments** in Nepal have a number of Ministries, including their different Departments and Divisions that have different primary and secondary roles related to climate change adaptation (CCA) and mitigation, as well as biodiversity conservation (BC), ecosystem restoration (ER) and Food Security (FS). Additionally, there are several ‘federal oversight agencies’ as well as Commissions and Authorities who may not be directly engaged in design and implementation of the Climate Change programs but have crucial roles in relation to legal adjudication, vigilance, corruption control, ombudsperson, and audit.

210 Asian Development Bank, Department for International Development, UK, and The World Bank. 2012. Sectoral Perspectives on Gender and Social Inclusion: IRRIGATION. Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment 2011. Sectoral Series: Monograph 5. Kathmandu, Nepal.

6.3.3 Institutions related to Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Food Security

Institutions Related to Climate Change and Biodiversity

The Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) is the focal ministry for climate change, as well as biodiversity and ecosystems. Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity, and Forests and Watersheds, are three out of the five different Divisions. The key institutional structures for climate change at the federal level include Climate Change Management Division (CCMD) and the REDD Implementation Centre (REDD-IC) within the MoFE. MoFE has also formed gender working groups for forests, environment and climate change, instituted Gender Focal Points, and has also formed GESI, livelihoods and governance thematic working groups at the federal level to support the mainstreaming of GESI in forestry and climate change (Shrestha & Gurung, 2020). Also, previously the District Forest Coordination Committees, used to play an effective role in the inter-sectoral coordination of forestry resources and programs, but with federalism, the structures for technical and administrative support and inter-sectoral coordination have still not been determined. Following is a brief description of different mechanisms within CC, BD and ER:

Climate Change Management Division (CCMD)

- Develop and implement CC policy, programmes and conduct policy related studies and research.
- Coordinate climate change activities of different organizations and a focal point for international conventions, protocols related to CC.
- mainstream the climate change adaptation strategy into other relevant sectoral policies.
- The transition of the environment and climate change functions from the Ministry of Environment and Population, to the MoFE has had an impact on the CCMD and its functions. Subsuming the CCMD within the MoFE has meant relatively less authority and visibility for it compared to the traditionally powerful forestry sector,

and has made it relatively less functional than earlier. CC advocates have often lobbied for a separate agency with a clear role and mandate to tackle the CC adaptation and mitigation agenda, with effective inter-agency coordination and measures to monitor achievement related to the SDGs and adherence to international commitments.²¹¹

REDD Implementation Centre (REDD-IC)

- The lead entity to carry out readiness activities, implement emission reduction programs and demonstrate results related to REDD+ in Nepal.
- REDD+ Strategy aims at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and by undertaking sustainable management of forests aligning with effective fair and equitable benefit sharing with indigenous peoples, local communities, women, Dalits, Madhesi, poor and other marginalized groups, while adopting appropriate social and environmental safeguards. Gender considerations in REDD is especially important for mountain countries like Nepal, where the majority of the rural population, especially women and disadvantaged groups depend on forests for subsistence.
- The REDD-IC was very proactive in taking progressive steps and processes for GESI integration²¹² under the leadership of the Planning Chief – a senior male staff who is the Gender Focal Point functioning within its ToR.
- Provisions made for a dedicated GESI budget with funding from the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility²¹³; dialogue platforms such as **Gender Working Groups** initiated, and made provisions for individual and organizational members in the high-level **REDD Coordination Committee**.

211 Based on personal communications with a climate change expert with national/international knowledge.

212 The initial leadership came from the Planning Chief – a senior male staff - who was also the Gender Focal Point. While individual leadership within the REDD-IC has spearheaded positive changes, the institutionalization of these responses is critical to sustain these processes (Gurung, 2020).

213 The GESI budget within the REDD-IC has fluctuated from NRs. 1.2 million (0.36% in 2018) to NRs. 17.9 million (3.8% in 2019) and was at NRs. 2.5 (0.86% in 2020) (ICIMOD, n.d.).

The formulation of the **National Adaptation Plan** is currently ongoing; it is expected to build on Nepal's achievements with respect to GESI, and activate monitoring mechanisms to ensure the participation of women and vulnerable groups, and enhance their equitable access to resources and benefits from adaptation interventions. However, the GoN has already presented the **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** under the Paris Agreement for the period 2021-2030, which will be implemented through federal, provincial and local governments, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders including youth, women and Indigenous Peoples (GoN, 2020). Some of the key coordinating institutional mechanisms for climate change which the NDC envisions are as follows:

- Environment Protection and Climate Change Management National Council*: still under formulation, but envisions at least three women members from amongst academics/ experts in forestry and environment;
- Inter-Ministerial Climate Change Coordination Committee* which has limited provision for women's participation and no provision for disadvantaged groups;
- Thematic and Cross-Cutting Working Groups*²¹⁴ (at the federal and local levels): the NDC vulnerability and risk assessment (VRA) had several iterations with eight thematic committees. The Gender, Livelihoods and Governance Committee focuses on integration of GESI in the planning and implementation of CC adaptation, and within the other themes too (Box 6.11).
- Provincial Climate Change Coordination Committees*: as of date, four of the seven provinces have conducted their first meeting of this committee, and the federal CCMD is working closely with them on plans for capacity building so that they can perform based on their Terms of Reference.

214 The Thematic and Cross-cutting Working Groups were identified during the preparation of the NAPA in 2010. The eight Thematic Groups are: Agriculture and Food Security; Forest, Biodiversity and Watershed Conservation; Water Resource and Energy; Rural and Urban Settlements; Industry, Transportation and Physical Infrastructure; Tourism and Natural and Cultural Heritage; Water, Sanitation and Health; and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. The four Cross Cutting Working Groups are: GESI; Livelihood and Good Governance; Awareness Raising and Capacity Development, Research, Technology Development and Extension; and Climate Change Financial Management (GoN, 2020).

Box 6.11: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Targets in the Nepal NDC 2021-2030

By 2030, develop an Action Plan for integrating GESI in achieving NDC targets:

- Develop specific programs with dedicated resources (human and financial) to ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women, children, youth, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized groups in climate change-related policy development; and during the planning, monitoring and implementation processes at local, provincial and national levels.
- Promote the leadership, participation and negotiation capacity of women, Indigenous Peoples and youth in climate change forums.
- Ensure gender-disaggregated data when reporting on progress and achievements.

Source: GoN, 2020

Key Challenges related to CC Mechanisms:

- The existence of these mechanisms is necessary and highly encouraging; but some of them are still not functional and others are just beginning the process of picking up the pace of work²¹⁵.
- The impact of climate change on food security and GESI have been completely relegated to the MoALD and the MoWCSC respectively. Better impact can be expected with closer coordination since climate change has a growing impact on agriculture production and practices, and thus ultimately food security, and the heightened impact on women and vulnerable populations is much better understood at present.
- The integration of climate change, food security and GESI is critical, even more so for mountain communities where the impact is even higher, thus the institutional mechanisms need to reflect this.

CC Mechanisms in the Provincial and Local Governments (PLGs)

- PLGs have direct and indirect roles in the design, planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring of climate change interventions at local levels. Climate change plans, programs or projects designed or agreed by federal agencies are developed in consultation and/or concurrence with the PLGs.

²¹⁵ Based on personal communications with a climate change and GESI expert.

- PLGs have a geographic focus - watersheds, river basins, landscapes and settlements – but limited specific oversight agencies apart from the Provincial Policy and Planning Commissions. But they will implement all development programs, through the Municipalities, Wards and the DCC as guided by the LGOA 2017.
- Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment (MoITFE) is the focal ministry for climate change in the Provinces. The Environment and Climate Change Division within the MoITFE, and the Infrastructure and Environment Management Section are the two key institutional arrangements for climate change at provincial and local levels respectively (ICIMOD, n.d.).
- The integration of climate change and GESI at the PLGs still needs to be substantially equipped, capacitated, and strengthened. Limited clarity on the functional linkages between the three tiers of the government, continues to create challenges for the PLGs to formally receive technical support and for the federal government to monitor progress, provide and guide the PLGs (Shrestha & Gurung, 2020).

Environment and Biodiversity Division at the MoFE:

- The focal point for all international commitments related to biodiversity (e.g., the CBD), and is responsible for policy formulation, strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, research and documentation of BC efforts in coordination and collaboration with donors and I/NGOs.

Ecosystem Restoration related

The MoFE is the focal ministry for all wetlands within the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation as the Ramsar Administrative Authority in Nepal.

- National Wetland Coordination Committee has representation of key wetland impacting sectoral ministries²¹⁶.
- The majority of the resources and staffing within forestry is currently still with the central level, creating confusions and functional constraints. Watershed

²¹⁶ This is an example of a donor led initiative. There is a history of these committees being most often active only as long as the donor facilitates it and has resources for it. (Personal communication with a Forestry Expert).

management functions however have been given to the PLGs. Thus, clarity in the roles, responsibilities, and resources mobilization is still lacking²¹⁷.

Institutions Related to Agriculture and Food Security

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD)**, formulates policies, laws, standards and regulations on: (i) agriculture, agrobiodiversity, and bio-technology, and (ii) on food security, food rights, food sovereignty and food quality and purity. It is also responsible for agriculture data, research, resource conservation, development and extension, and the development, promotion and coordination on inter-provincial agriculture industrialization, fisheries, livestock business.

The establishment of the **GESI Section** in 2012 within the Ministry was a result from a recognition of the importance of integrating women farmers within the folds of its programs since 1993.²¹⁸ It manages information and documentation of GESI databases from all seven provinces and is responsible for the implementation of the GESI responsive budget. In addition to the vertical coordination, this Section also coordinates horizontally with other line ministries and development agencies (FAO, 2019).

Challenges for GESI and Geographical Inclusion in the MoALD: As in the MoFE, this Section has limited authority, an inadequate mandate and limited human resources (FAO, 2019). Additionally, the Gender Responsive Budget Committee (GRBC) established by the (then) Ministry of Agriculture Development in 2014, was supposed to harmonize relations with districts and regional and central departments in order to implement GESI policies, plans and programmes. However, the GRBC is not functioning as expected because of the resource constraints and lack of gender auditing (ibid).

217 Personal communication with a Forestry Expert.

218 The establishment of the Women's Farmer Development Division in 1993 heralded the Ministry's focus on women farmers and their integration into its training programs. Following a review of the impact made by this Division and with the aim of institutionalizing women's active participation in all agricultural sub-sectors, the ministry established the Gender Equity and Environmental Division in 2004, which was later replaced by the GESI Section in 2012 (FAO, 2019)

There has been a strong government and donor priority on nutrition and food security, thus many government and non-government actors are involved in numerous multi-sector activities related to nutrition and food security throughout Nepal. The NPC is the apex government body which assumes a stewardship and coordination role to bring the various government/non-government entities including the external development partners under one umbrella. Some of the institutional mechanisms include:

- **High Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee and the National Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee** – both established within the NPC with coordination platforms extending down to sub-national levels, responsible for the national level coordination of the implementation of the Multi Sectoral Nutritional Plan (MSNP-II).²¹⁹ A Secretariat has been established within the NPC and staff is placed by WFP and UNICEF.
- **Provincial Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees** will be formed to oversee the implementation of MSNP-II) in Provinces.
- **National Agrobiodiversity Conservation Committee**, has representation from CSOs as well as farmers.²²⁰ This is the apex body which has been active in providing oversight to the implementation of the National Agro-biodiversity Policy (BS 2071) but currently lacks the institutional mechanisms at the provincial and local government levels.
- **Food and Nutrition Security and Agro-Biodiversity and Environment Departments** (within the MoALD), both functions to address issues of food security and biodiversity.
- Human Resources, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Department (within the Planning and Development Cooperation

219 The High-Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee was formed to primarily govern the implementation of the Multi Sectoral Nutritional Plan (MSNP-II) which is currently in its second phase (2018-2022) (NPC, 2017). According to a Senior Officer from WFP, these high-level committees have not yet been functional.

220 LI-BIRD is the only CSO that is represented in the committee along with one female and one male farmer, though these members have not participated regularly. The other members are representatives from different government agencies.

Coordination Division of MoALD) is responsible for the formulation of human resource policies and standard, training and capacity building, formulating policies, programs and standards for gender equality and social inclusion, as well as coordination and facilitation.

Center for Crop Development and Agrobiodiversity Conservation is the focal organization for developing national policies and procedures in the areas of agriculture biodiversity conservation and provides support for enhanced production and productivity of cereal, pulse and industrial crops as well as services for agro-biodiversity conservation.²²¹

Nepal Food Security Monitoring System is a comprehensive food security monitoring and analysis system in Nepal that collects, analyzes and presents information on household food security, emerging crises, markets and nutrition from across the country. Initially established by the WFP, it has been institutionalized by the GoN in collaboration with the Ministry and the NPC²²².

A Gender Responsive Budget Committee (GRBC), was established in the MoALD in 2014 aiming at harmonizing relations between districts, regional and central departments in order to implement GESI policies, plans and programs. However, the GRBC is not functioning as expected due to resource constraints and a lack of gender auditing (ICIMOD, n.d.). The political transition and restructuring have also affected GRB across other sectors as well. Without accountability measures put in place and monitored on a timely basis with appropriate actions taken, such institutional mechanisms will not be effective.

Challenges in relation to institutional mechanisms related to agriculture and food security

- A lack of coordination and cooperation among three tiers of government institutions, especially since the federal entity has to communicate through Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration.

- Harmonization of national policies and development of systems (such as operational guidelines) at the provinces and municipalities are still not complete, resulting in poor localization and ownership of national strategies such as, the Agriculture Development Strategy, MSNP-II, Seed Vision etc.
- The PLGs still lack necessary human resources, which continue to be concentrated at the federal level.
- Duplication in resource mobilization and limited systems in harmonizing data and information continues to be a challenge. An institutional analysis conducted for the ASHA Project in relation to CCA and GESI aspects revealed gaps that are likely in other sectors and projects too (Box 6.12).

BOX 6.12: Institutional analyses of ministries and agencies, in relation to CCA & GESI, ASHA Project

Brief overview of District Line Agencies (Forestry, Agriculture, Livestock):

- implementation in six mid-western districts - Jajarkot, Salyan, Kalikot, Dailekh, Rolpa and Rukum;
- district and field level technicians had adequate knowledge of the relationship and impact of CC, adaptation techniques and climate resilient technologies in their respective sectors;
- but they were not proficient to identify and implement CC adaptation activities, or on methods to increase resilience of livestock farmers;
- there were gaps in human resources under the different line agencies, and frequent transitions among staff;
- there was no provision of CCA and GESI focal points;
- knowledge products on CCA not readily available within all sectors (except forestry)
- limited equipment and tools – computers, audio visual equipment, GPS, field gear,

Source: GoN, 2017

²²¹ <http://doacrop.gov.np/index.php/pages/objectives-2021-02-15-222547>

²²² <https://neksap.org.np/home>

6.3.4 Research, Non-Governmental Institutions, and Civil Society Organizations

There are a number of donors, national and international non-governmental organizations,

research institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) agencies that are engaged in the four study sectors – CC, BC, ER and FS.

Table 6.5: Key Government/Semi-Government Research Organizations and Universities in Nepal

Research Organizations	
1	Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)
2	Forest Research and Training Center (FRTC)
3	Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM)
4	Nepal Administrative Staff College (Center for Climate Change Management)
5	National Agriculture Research Council (NARC)
6	Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC)
Universities	
1	Tribhuvan University Central Departments of: Environmental Science, Hydrology and Meteorology; and Institutes of: Forestry (Pokhara), Engineering (Pulchowk); Agriculture & Animal Sciences, Rampur
2	Kathmandu University
3	Agriculture and Forestry University
4	Pokhara University

Research Institutions: High quality research is a critical need to understand and address the challenges being faced in the four study sectors, but Nepal has few publicly funded and they have highly inadequate resources for research (MoFE, 2020) (Table 6.5). There is even a lower capacity (and political will) for knowledge generation, use and integration into planning and implementation, and evidence-based policy formulation and feedback. Institutions like NAST and NARC, that have a clear and critical mandate for research in CC, BC, ER and FS, have seen a weakening in their engagement with focal ministries over the past years and its capacity constrained due to the lack of resources (ibid). Within universities there is lack of dedicated research wings that focus on forest, agriculture, or environment. Moreover, decisions related to research projects are taken in a top-down bureaucratic manner, hence aspiring faculty researchers do not see enough incentives doing so (ibid). There are a number of non-governmental research organizations, think tanks and academic NGOs that have been active in research in climate change and

food security but they too are dependent on external funding. The International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional institution focused on knowledge development and sharing on mountain environments related to climate change, biodiversity conservation and many kinds of ecosystems in the HKH region including Nepal, using a gender perspective.

Donors, I/NGOs and CSOs: Nepal has had a long history in donor assistance in development policy formulation as well as implementation. The total foreign aid commitment to the country has been USD 2,015 million in FY 2019/20²²³. While a lot of these funds are spent directly by the government, a considerable amount is channeled through international and national NGOs to implement a number of different programs. Multilateral and bilateral donors such as the various UN Agencies, EU, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, GCF, USAID, DFID, JICA, IUCN, etc. support to Nepal in the four sectors.

²²³ <https://amis.mof.gov.np/web/guest/home>. Around USD 1,954,803,362 in agriculture and USD 505,077,461 in forestry.

There are around 245 international NGOs and over 51,000 national NGOs²²⁴ that are registered with the GoN. These organizations have been playing an important role in supporting the GoN in service delivery, infrastructure development, community mobilization and capacity building, and humanitarian assistance over the years, in various sectors including those covered by this study. Many of these CSOs support capacity building of community groups and networks in advocacy for policy implementation as well as equitable and sustainable development. There are many NGOs that focus exclusively on women's empowerment and gender equality, addressing concerns related to socio-cultural discrimination, gender-based violence, economic opportunities, building capacity, and advocating for their basic human rights. Most of the INGOs and some NGOs have clear policies related to GESI which influence their work at the institutional and community levels in terms of GESI sensitive and responsive strategies, guidelines, organizational culture, personnel policies, as well as monitoring and evaluation of both personnel and programs.

There are networks of individuals and organizations working in forestry, agriculture, disaster, community adaptation, women's political participation and socio-economic empowerment, and indigenous people's rights – such as Federation of Community Forests User Groups in Nepal, Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association, National Federation of Irrigation Water Users Association Nepal, Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists, National Indigenous Women's Federation Nepal, and the Inter Party Women's Alliance²²⁵ which have been active in implementation, monitoring, knowledge generation and advocacy for the rights of their members and the sectoral causes that they support.

In relation to food security, there are two organized platforms for coordination and collaboration in the field of nutrition and food security in Nepal: the Nepal Nutrition Group

comprised of UN agencies, donor agencies and international NGOs, and the Food Security Donor Working Group comprising of UN and donor agencies. The Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition in Nepal was also established as a network of all CSOs implementing community level nutrition and related interventions on different sectors such as nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, livelihood, education, urban development and local development. Despite a promising start up, this CSO alliance however has not been functional at present.²²⁶

6.3.5 Human Resource, Capacity, and Budgetary Provisions

The Constitution of Nepal includes provisions for inclusion and representation of historically marginalized groups, including women, in political bodies and decision-making positions at the three levels of governments. Reservations for marginalized groups in the bureaucracy have been in place since 2007. Yet as of 2019 only 25 percent of the 87,608 government employees in Nepal were women - a significant improvement though from 2007 when only eight percent of women were in the civil service. Disaggregating the data by caste/ethnicity shows that more than 61 percent of people in the civil service are from the traditionally socio-economically privileged Hill Brahmin and Chhetri groups, while historically marginalized groups such as the Madhesi Dalits and Muslims each make up less than one percent of the bureaucracy (Pokharel & Pradhan, 2020).

Civil service employees are broadly grouped into three categories, i.e., gazetted (Officer/ Executive Levels)²²⁷ non-gazetted (Non-Officer/ Clerical Level) and unclassified staff. Women make up only 18 percent of the gazetted staff but nearly 28 percent of the non-gazetted staff. Similarly, indigenous and traditionally marginalized caste and ethnic groups are still highly under-represented compared to their share of the total population; inclusive legal provisions are necessary but not sufficient on their own to guarantee representation,

224 <https://www.swc.org.np/> (Downloaded 26th May 2021)

225 FECOFUN (<http://fecofun.org.np/>); HIMAWANTI (<http://mail.nhimawanti.org.np/home>); NIFUAN (<http://www.nfiwuan.org/>); NEFEJ (<https://nefej.org.np/>); NIWF (<http://niwf.org.np/>); IPWA (<http://www.ipwa.org.np/>)

226 Personal communication with a Senior Officer from WFP.

227 Gazetted Officers are executive/managerial-level public servants in Nepal, while Non-Gazetted Officers are of lower rank and have less authority. The specifications of gazetted positions are announced or published in the official gazette.

participation and inclusion. The impact of the changes in the reservation policies for in civil services for women and marginalized groups will materialize slowly as new vacancies are filled in. The overall low percentage of women staff in the civil service is clearly reflected in the forestry, environment and agriculture sectors (Table 6.6). At the time of this study, there is

only one senior female staff heading a technical department in the MoFE and only 25 percent of the staff in the Ministry are women. In the MoALD, only 8.5 percent of women are at the managerial level compared to a little over 13 percent at lower levels (ICIMOD, n.d.).

Table 6.6: Government staff in MoFE and MoALD.

S.N.	Government Institutions	Percent of Female Staff
1.	MoFE	25% (13 out of 58)
	In 7 Divisions	1 Senior Female staff
	DoFSC	12% (5 out of 41)
	District Forest Officers @ Districts	4% (3 out of 84 DFOs)
2.	MoALD (FY 16/17)	
	Total Gazetted (Exec/ Managerial)	145 (8.5%)
	Total Non-Gazetted (Officers)	375 (13.3%)

Sources: MoFE 2020, DoFSC 2020 & MoALD 2020 in ICIMOD n.d.

Knowledge, Skills and Capacity Related to GESI Integration

A Federalism Capacity Needs Assessment was carried out in 2018-19 to identify the gaps between the needs and the capacity at all levels of government in Nepal for the transition to federalism. It assessed capacity in terms of (i) organizational, including human capacity, (ii) institutional and regulatory (laws and regulations), and (iii) physical infrastructure (World Bank, 2019). The assessment pointed out that the transition to federalism has increased the need for systematic capacity building for elected officials and civil servants at all levels, and that this is a huge cost. Moreover, a lack of a comprehensive strategy for capacity building is an important gap in itself. In 2019, over 50 percent of the human resource capacity needs of the PLGs had not been filled. The sectoral ministries were under-capacitated with respect to their federal mandate (policy-setting and monitoring and evaluation) and over-capacitated with respect to implementation functions for which they are no longer responsible. The assessment also found that there is limited clarity on the responsibility concerning the M&E of service delivery and the performance of the PLGs, as well as a lack of M&E systems and database for performance (ibid).

This assessment was not able to look into the capacity of the current civil servants in relation to their skills and knowledge on the conceptual and practical elements of GESI or the capacity of the new structures and institutional mechanisms to deal with GESI integration. However, it did identify that there are limited mechanisms for effective implementation and monitoring of GESI activities in the PLGs programs, for example, there is a need to have expenditure tracking linked to gender-responsive budgeting (ibid).

Two Sides of GESI Internalization and Implementation Capacity

Within much of the government institutions, and especially within the MoFE and MoALD and its key Divisions and Departments, staff have received training and orientations on the conceptual aspects of GESI and to some extent on how to integrate it in programs. On the one hand there is a perception among government civil servants and some of the development partners that there is enhanced understanding and ownership on GESI issues and processes, and some level of internalization as well. But when it comes of budget allocation and supporting development programs, there is a lot of political pressure as well which interferes.²²⁸

²²⁸ As per communications with former civil servants and staff from development agencies.

A popular (and true) example, is how many local governments have consistently used the budget allocated for women's empowerment to build roads, since *"women also use the roads, and perhaps even more than men"*! In the previous unitary governance system, the GRB tracking had been moving ahead but with the changes in the structures, systems have yet to be put in place for gender responsive tracking of budget and programs, and thus building up systems for accountability.²²⁹

On the other hand, despite the number of trainings and orientations, there is still relatively weak understanding and internalization of the values, norms and perceptions about gender equality and social inclusion. There is still an "old thinking and perceptions" in the bureaucracy that often question the need for actual representation of women and other marginalized groups at all levels, as opposed to just designing policies and programs for them to "participate in". The understanding that representation and opportunities to voice opinions by women and other marginalized groups is beyond "poverty alleviation" is still not clear and "the old ways of thinking" still exists within the bureaucracy. Low sensitivity and limited internalization of GESI concepts and values, coupled with a performance monitoring system that does not monitor or evaluate GESI related performance, has not been able to make the necessary changes within many of the government institutions. This has a direct impact of the implementation of policies even though many of the policies in place have tried to integrate GESI, and thus does not culminate in the impact it was intended to bring²³⁰.

However, there is agreement about the fact that the situation and environment is changing, and that the reservations for women and individuals from marginalized communities in the bureaucracy is playing an important role in bringing this change.

6.3.6 Informal Institutions: A Bigger Challenge with Deeper Roots²³¹

The lack of necessary laws, clarity in the jurisdiction of the three tiers of governments, and ongoing mistrust about the intent of the devolution of power by the federal to the PLGs, political upheavals and the COVID pandemic, are all huge challenges in the smooth governance in Nepal, resulting in questions about fulfillment of the SDG Goals. However, a larger challenge with more deeper roots is the informal rules, norms and processes in which the old and the new institutions continue to be embedded in (Tamang, 2018), resulting in constraints in achieving gender equality and inclusive development. Though the changing policies and structures have given new space to women as agents within the civil service, as elected representatives or even as participants, the historical terrain of conflict, structured inequalities and other informal institutions including cultural and social values continues to impact the dynamics of gender equality (ibid).

In Nepal, patriarchal systems, and paternalistic behavior towards women have led to deep-rooted discrimination against women and girls in all sectors. This is intertwined with religious ideologies that prescribe strict conventions, norms and behaviors, not only towards women but for certain caste and ethnic groups as well, where intersecting inequalities are exacerbated (Pradhan, 2014). Though women's rights and equality have been a central part of Nepal's development agenda for over 50 years, social norms, patriarchal values and attitudes continue to influence behavior and impact negatively on women's access to and control over resources, their agency and voice, and their overall empowerment.

This persistent ideology and practice are the major challenge in the advancement of women within the sectors of this study – both women within the institutions and the participants and agents who seek services, inputs, knowledge and resources. This patriarchal mindset has continued to frame the larger development and climate change discourses in Nepal. Women

229 As per communication with former civil servant in the forestry sector.

230 As per communications with former civil servants and staff from development agencies.

231 Much of the information for this section has been received through interviews with several government officials at the federal and province level.

and the socially marginalized groups are mostly framed as vulnerable, beneficiary groups (to be protected, guided and supported) and not as primary stakeholders or contributors or as agents of change. Thus, women and the socially marginalized groups largely remain as 'poor and marginalized beneficiaries' (ICIMOD, n.d.) in the field, while within formal institutions, they are unable to take up their roles, be an equal partner in the planning, decision-making and monitoring especially within government institutions.

i. **GESI Policies and Strategies in Place but Limited Practice**

The MoFE and the MoALD have GESI strategies and GESI Focal Persons (GFP) within their planning divisions, yet there is limited discussions and discourses on GESI at the federal and provincial levels pointing towards limited internalization of GESI issues at the personal level, within the workplace, and in the programs. GESI issues are most often projectized, especially with donors like the World Bank, UN agencies, ADB, etc. where safeguards, standards and processes have to be followed. Thus, conducting a gender analysis, mainstreaming GESI in the programs, and monitoring gendered outcomes becomes non-negotiable. The bureaucracy is still not sensitive and accountable towards 'inclusion' and the concepts and its practices are still not internalized.²³² Most often the GFP within the Ministries do not have a clear ToR. The MoWCSC has an important role to play in not only designing clear ToRs but also supporting the development of inter-institutional horizontal and vertical linkages to ensure that GESI is understood and integrated within policies, programs and personnel capacity. Additionally, in most case it the Chiefs of the Planning Division who are the GFP; they are over-burdened and are not able to provide adequate time or technical inputs. A separate senior officer, with a clear mandate and authority would have been more effective, as long as mechanisms for accountability were also drawn out.

²³² Personal communication with a climate change and GESI expert, March 2020.

ii. **Limited Knowledge and Capacity**

Women's rights and equality have been a central part of Nepal's development agenda for over 50 years, but a push towards addressing gender norms, questioning the unequal power relations, and changing socio-cultural norms, values, attitudes and behaviors is still a relatively recent phenomenon. In addition, knowledge and skills for in-depth analysis of, and addressing the intersections of gender (including sexual and gender minorities), caste, ethnicity, class, geographic locations, age and even abilities (mental and physical), are skills that are still lacking, especially at the PLGs.

iii. **Weak M&E Systems at the Personnel and Levels**

Monitoring and evaluation of personnel and programs from a gender perspective is overall weak within the government institutions and sectors. There is limited harmonization and accountability; the reporting systems are weak and thought there is some increase in sex disaggregated data, there is very limited analysis of changes in gender norms, practices and power relations. Government policy is limited to meeting targets of women's participation (33 percent mandated by most policies) in programmes and projects rather than addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in agriculture and the wider rural economy (FAO, 2019). This is also true in relation to international commitments such as CEDAW and the SDGs.

There are no annual performance monitoring systems in place to assess skills, knowledge and application of GESI in practice, among government institutions. This is true for even within the planning divisions, where the GFPs are housed and tasked with mainstreaming GESI.²³³

In most of the sectoral donor assisted programs/projects, it is mandatory to have done a gender analysis and to have GESI M&E practices. Yet in most cases, this results in mere sex disaggregated monitoring, or a focus on women and girls. Additional skilled staff are brought in on a contract basis and

²³³ Interview with Climate Change and GESI Expert.

thus such practices are not institutionalized and do not sustain beyond the project period (ICIMOD, n.d.). “The lens of viewing women and marginalized groups as vulnerable groups have largely contributed in sidelining GESI issues as a crosscutting theme and not the primary focus of the sectors, which means very low investments in terms of budget, human resources and capacity building and monitoring” (ibid).

iv. **Discriminatory Organizational Culture and Norms**

While overall there have been women and family friendly policies that have been introduced within the bureaucracy (such as maternity leave), the recognition of, and adjustments for women’s reproductive roles and responsibilities is still problematic. This is manifested more when female staff with reproductive responsibilities need to be field based and cannot be as mobile as their male counterparts. Women feel under tremendous pressure to have to develop masculine traits and behaviors to fit in and compete with their male counterparts. Demoralizing female staff through bullying and harassment; frustrations with inadequate systems and long drawn processes for redressal; and inadequate psycho-social support and counselling to help cope with discrimination and mental stress, are important elements that have remained unaddressed. *“They are always asking why “doing gender” is necessary. We really need to develop a thick skin”*.²³⁴

v. **What Has Worked?**

The gendersensitive and responsive policies at the personnel and programmatic levels have helped to bring positive changes, step by step. Yet this alone has not been sufficient. Where there have been “gender champions” – especially among senior level men – there has been examples of a conducive and responsive environment where support has been received. But there is a need for more of such “role models” to exemplify the critical need for gender equality practices. However, *“... as long as the men do not feel threatened, they will continue to provide necessary support”*.²³⁵

²³⁴ Interview with a Climate Change and GESI Expert.

²³⁵ Interview with a Climate Change and GESI Expert.

Examples of how Nepal’s community forestry has successfully made incremental changes in engaging women as members first, and then as decision makers sitting on the Executive Committees, is a well-known success story. However, unfortunately the same level of investments has not been made for other programs in the climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security sectors. The LAPA formulation and implementation process could possibly become another success story given that a GESI sensitive process has been designed with supportive guidelines to put them into practice. There was sustained support and high government ownership for the CF policies and awareness raising interventions. The pitfall of having policies and guidelines only in writing but not much happening in practice needs to be avoided for all the other sectors.

6.4. Gender Integration in the Context of Interventions

6.4.1. Major Interventions and their Characteristics

There were 12 projects that were reviewed extensively and the following criteria were used to make the selection: (i) projects that had been successfully accomplished or were drawing close to the end; (ii) projects that had been scaled up and replicated; (iii) projects that were gender responsive; (iv) projects that were known to be innovative, and had used new tools and technologies for gender integration; (v) a mix of projects that were implemented by both government and NGOs; and (vi) projects with good practices and successful field stories. The projects reviewed are as follows:

1. Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond the Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihood in Agriculture Sector
2. Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Program
3. Home Garden Program Phase I to Phase IV
4. Hariyo Ban Program, Phase I and II
5. Nepal Climate Change Support Programme
6. Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas
7. Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions Project

8. Ecosystem Based Adaptation in Mountain Ecosystems in Nepal
9. Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded Forests and Rangelands of Nepal
10. Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas
11. Nepal Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Programme
12. Scaling Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal

Articles, project documents, evaluation and other reports, stories and other relevant information of accomplished projects were gathered, reviewed and assessed the extent of gender consideration into the project cycles (design, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting). The gender-friendly technologies, tools and approaches tested/promoted by these projects that could be cross-fertilized and scaled up in the mountain areas of Asia were teased out. The key lessons/knowledge generated in terms of gender-friendly technologies, tools and approaches/strategies with potential for replication elsewhere in the mountain areas of Asia are highlighted. The listed projects represent the sectors that the study is focusing on, namely, agriculture and food security, biodiversity, ecosystems and climate change. Most of these projects had started after 2010 and have been accomplished successfully, while some are almost completed. The review of the 12 above listed projects implemented in Nepal shows different level of gender integration in Nepal. Only six projects are presented briefly below, but rich details of all the projects can be found in Annex 6.

Agriculture and Food Security

1. Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP)

Donor: The World Bank **Duration:** 2013-2018
Implementing Agency: MoAD

This project aims to enhance food and nutritional security of targeted communities in selected locations of Nepal. It has reached the most vulnerable small-scale producers, including women, who are hardest hit by poverty. This is

clearly a women-focused project under which a Social Management Framework was prepared that incorporated social inclusion in the project design and the adverse impacts were identified on time and mitigated accordingly. The introduction of equipment such as corn shellers, seed grading machines, processing mills, and improved cooking stoves have reduced women's workloads. Aside from these, the implementation of the project has brought about positive economic, social and political change for women within their communities.

2. Home Garden Project (HG)

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC/Nepal) **Duration:** 2002-2018

Implementing Agency: LI-BIRD

The HG project promotes home gardens for wellbeing of resource poor and disadvantaged groups. This is simple, effective and within the technical know-how of women and disadvantaged groups. It was designed and implemented in four phases: i) Initial formative research (Phase I) that focused on the characterization of indigenous HG system, an assessment of the potential of HG in improving women and disadvantaged household's food and nutrition security; ii) Refinement of HG technologies, practices and implementation modalities (Phase II); Development of pathways for scaling up HG (Phase III); and iv) Mainstreaming HG into national agriculture extension programme (Phase IV). The HG proved to be successful in improving household food, nutrition and income security of smallholders, especially women and disadvantaged groups. Thus, this is integrated into the national agriculture extension system and in the course curriculum of government's Center for Technical Education and Vocational Training.

Biodiversity and Climate Change

3. Hariyo Ban Program (HB Program)

Donor: USAID **Duration:** 2011-2016 (Phase I) and 2016-2021 (Phase II) **Implementing Agency:** WWF, CARE, FECOFUN, and NTNC

The HB Project aims to reduce adverse impacts of climate change and threats to biodiversity in Nepal. Hariyo Ban is regarded as one of the most GESI sensitive in the forestry sector, bringing lessons and best practices that showcase leadership of women and socially excluded groups in NRM. The project implemented

Underlying Causes of Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment tool for selecting sites. The three community-tested tools developed by CARE - the Participatory Governance Assessment, Participatory Well-being Ranking, and Public Hearing and Public Auditing were used to improve the internal governance of CFUGs, and conservation area management committees. Through this different female friendly, labor saving technologies for non-timber forest products processing and packaging was also introduced in the field such as biogas, improved cook stoves etc. HB Program Phase II promoted and scaled-up successful GESI approaches of Phase I. The continuation of first phase HB Program to the second phase, along with GESI considerations shows the importance of a gender inclusive approach for the project to be effective.

4. Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas (ASHA)

Donor: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) **Duration:** Feb 2015 - March 2022 **Implementing Agency:** MoFE

The project objective is to strengthen the adaptive capacity of the communities and institutions to better contend with climate change risks in the project districts. The ASHA Project's target groups are climate vulnerable households, ensuring GESI dimensions - representation of women, Dalits, ethnic groups and minorities in various committees and implementing specific measures to ensure women's empowerment and social inclusion. This project has done a tremendous effort to ensure GESI by developing various guidelines, manuals, strategies, procedures, flyers, posters etc. for integrating gender equality, women's empowerment, social inclusion and social mobilization in project activities. This project highlights that Local Adaptation Plans for Action is a key mechanism to enhance climate resiliency at local level by developing appropriate adaptation measures to enhance the resiliency of the poor and vulnerable.

5. Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP)

Donor: EU and DFID (Phase I); DFID (Phase II) **Duration:** Phase I: 2013-2017 Phase I Transition Extension: 2018-Dec 2019 **Implementing Agency:** MoFE (Central); 26 Local Bodies in 14 Districts.

This project is a significant initiative by the GoN in the sector of climate change adaptation. It ensures that Nepal's poorest and most vulnerable people are able to adapt well to the negative impacts of climate change. One of the highlights was supporting the implementation of LAPA to increase the resilience of climate vulnerable and poor people of the project areas. This project adopted a strategy to ensure women's participation in the user committee (UC) in leading roles (47.02 percent women) with at least one woman in each UC in a decision-making role, along with representatives from other ethnic groups. The project sets an example by reforming the representation of women and disadvantaged groups to 50 percent District/Village Energy Environment Climate Change Coordination Committee. It has promoted eco-friendly and women friendly technologies such as ICS, bio-gas plants, micro solar systems; improved water mills helped in reducing women's workload and improving health conditions.

Agriculture and Climate Change

6. Scaling Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal (CSA)

Donor: Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) Project **Duration:** 2015 - 2017 **Implementing Agency:** LI-BIRD in collaboration with CGIAR

This project developed portfolios of targeted climate-smart agricultural technologies and practices for benefitting women and marginalized farmers of three agro-ecological zones (terai, mid-hill, and high hill) of Nepal. The project followed the principles of fairness, equity and inclusion to address GESI issues. It ensured meaningful representation and participation of women, poor and disadvantaged people, their access to livelihood resources, and ability to exercise voice and influence agency, throughout the project. The project carried out vulnerability assessments for women, Dalits and the Janajati community. This helped to identify community-specific climatic vulnerabilities and appropriate adaptation interventions. Therefore, economic empowerment of women was prioritized to reflect the meaningful representation and participation of women through access to livelihood resources and their ability to exercise their voices and influence agency throughout the project period - a process ensured through M&E, Fund Flow Analysis and other

gender sensitive tools. Women-friendly tools included the hand-held corn sheller, finger millet thresher and jab planter, which reduced women's drudgery and allowed them to work more efficiently.

Based on the analysis of the selected 12 programs/projects that were implemented in Nepal, we can draw up a few **overall conclusions** in relation to the experiences of gender integration and mainstreaming within projects related to climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem restoration, and food security. Additionally, there are **six key themes** that arise from the learnings from these projects, particularly from their successful experiences of integrating a GESI approach (Box 6.13).

- i. **GESI Integration from Design Phase Onwards:** Some of the projects had incorporated GESI from the design and planning phase ensuring the involvement of women and vulnerable groups. This helped to reach out to women and socially excluded groups and to improve their role from participation to decision making levels, and enhancing their ownership during whole project period. Women should not be looked as a passive beneficiary but a change maker thus; role and possible contribution should be incorporated from the designing phase.
- ii. **Following a Gender Responsive Approach:** Not all the projects that were reviewed had developed a gender strategy and action plan. Yet many were aware about gender integration in the project and followed a gender responsive approach: prioritizing gender issues and promoting gender equality during project implementation. For instance, the Nepal Climate Change Support Program has developed 100 gender-responsive Local Adaptation Plans of Action.
- iii. **Specific Gender Strategy and Action Plans:** Most of the projects in Nepal that were reviewed had put in tremendous effort to ensure GESI by developing various guidelines, manuals, strategies, procedures, flyers, posters etc. for integrating gender equality, women's empowerment, social inclusion and social mobilization in the project cycle. Half of the projects reviewed had developed specific gender strategies

and two gender action plans to guide the project to mainstream gender issues. These have helped to address gender issues both programmatically and institutionally in order to achieve specific objectives. The projects with a specific gender strategy, action plan, gender responsive budgeting was successful in addressing GESI issues throughout the project cycle.

- iv. **Gender responsive LAPA:** LAPA is a key mechanism to enhance resilience at local level by developing appropriate adaptation measures. For instance, ASHA project and NCCSP has developed gender responsive LAPA. This is a bottom-up and inclusive approach that create local ownership and help to make need based and realistic adaptation plans resulting into direct benefits to the poor and vulnerable communities and people.
- v. **Women Friendly Technologies:** Several projects put specific emphasis on the design, introduction and promotion of women friendly processing technologies such as Proso Millet and Finger Millet Threshers, ICS, Solar Water Mills, etc. These were a boon to women who are overloaded with work both at home and the field. Such technologies not only saved their time but reduced workload and increased access to non-polluting power.
- vi. **Longer Project Durations, Higher Impact:** Medium to long term projects is helpful to integrate learning's from earlier phase to the next phase and to allow time for the changes to materialize. For instance, Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology Project played a special role to identify, advocate and nominate a woman farmer representative from the project site to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of Nepal and raise the voices of women in conservation and the use of threatened mountain crop genetic resources. The project made good efforts to mainstream gender equality in programme implementation at the local and national levels. The Home Garden Project implemented by LI-BIRD ran for 16 years in four different phases, adding on new areas. This project is simple, effective and within the technical know-how of women and disadvantaged groups resulting in higher impact to the target group of women and other vulnerable groups.

Box 6.13: Key Themes Arising from GESI Integration Experiences in Nepal

Theme 1: The integration of successful technologies, tools, approaches or models generated by project/interventions into government policies, strategies and plans is critical for scaling up and achieving impact at scale.

Theme 2: Hands-on awareness raising and capacity building of key stakeholders, especially local political leaders, with regards to GESI, is key to secure their buy-in for scaling up technologies and approaches and to sustain project outcomes.

Theme 3: Gender sensitive climate /local financing for local adaptation: when local community groups, especially women-led natural resource management groups are given seed money, topped up by capacity strengthening support, they are able to leverage significant additional funds to achieve their adaptation goals.

Theme 4: Blending local knowledge and practices, with science and technology that generates tangible benefits to the local communities are most likely to be adopted, sustained and scaled-up.

Theme 5: While promoting technologies, tools and practices, the manner in which technologies are demonstrated, packaged/bundled, communicated and incentive mechanisms are negotiated can influence adoption and scaling up of technologies.

Theme 6: Targeting women and girls, addressing gender needs and monitoring gender impact of interventions is smooth and effective if GESI approaches are explicitly prioritized in project documents, funding, human resource and operational strategies.

6.4.2 Tools, Analytical Approaches and Technologies

Following is a list of tools and technology that were designed and used by different projects in Nepal to ensure integration of gender equality and address the socio-economic burdens of women and other marginalized groups (Table

6.7). Additionally, three “Good Practices” are also presented on institutional and programmatic efforts that have made its mark in the region and beyond.

Table 6.7: List of tools, technologies and practices used by various projects in Nepal.

Tools/Methods/Approaches	
1.	Gender Responsive Approach (http://www.fao.org/3/be879e/be879e.pdf)
2.	Farmer’s Field School Approach (http://www.fao.org/farmer-field-schools/overview/en/)
3.	Environment and Social Management Framework (https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework)
4.	Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment Tool (UCPVA) (https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf)
5.	Participatory Governance Assessment Tool (PGA) (https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf)
6.	Participatory Well-being Ranking Tool (PWBR) (https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf)
7.	Public Hearing and Public Auditing (PHPA) Tool (https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf)
8.	GPSE Conceptual and Operational Framework (https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/nepal/en/Gender_Poverty_and_Social_Equity_Mainstreaming_in_MSFP-EN.pdf)
9.	Climate Change Adaptation Tool (https://asha.gov.np/%)
10.	Vulnerability Assessment Tool (https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/learning_from_participatory_va_for_eba_iucn-tmi.pdf)

11.	Gender Responsive Budgeting and Auditing Tool (https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf)
Gender Friendly Technologies and Tools Developed and Used in Nepal (see Figure 6.3)	
1.	Hand held Corn Sheller: Hand corn sheller is a simple tool to separate maize seed from the cob. It is portable, inexpensive, easy to operate and available in the market. This machine is time-saving and reduces injuries and blisters for women farmers. http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=243
2.	Drip Irrigation: Drip irrigation system is one of the water-efficient and micro-irrigation technologies. It helps to save the water by dropping adequate amount of water directly into the root zone of the plants, thus minimizing evaporation. http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=414&origin=results&QS=QS&sortfld_221=Date&reversesearch=true&top_parent=221
3.	Solar Water Lifting Pump: Solar irrigation is environment friendly technology to pump water from underground, river or ponds (natural & artificial). http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=422&origin=results&QS=QS&sortfld_221=Date&reversesearch=true&top_parent=221
4.	Electric Millet Thresher: Millet thresher is useful tool for de husking the of millet Traditionally husking is carried out manually and it is time consuming
5.	Jab Planter: Jab planter is a seed showing tool. This machine can reduce people and livestock requirements for land preparation and seed showing. It is a light-weight and single women can easily handle it for showing in line.
6.	Farm Rake: Women are mostly responsible for cleaning animal shed, removing and cutting weeds. Farm rake is one of the tools for women to cut or remove weeds. This tool is equally useful in collecting cow/ buffalo dung in animal shed leaving women's hand clean and unwounded. http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=265#
7.	Yam in Sacks: Usually men are responsible to dig yams. The practice of cultivating yam in sacks at the base of the terrace wall is time as well as labor saving. http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=201 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330534477_Sustainable_Agriculture_Kits_SAKs_Reduce_Drudgery_and_Increase_Farm_Income
8.	Seed Grading Machines
9.	Processing Mills
10.	Improved Cooking Stoves
11.	Proso Millet and Finger Millet Threshers

Overall Conclusions

The Government of Nepal's commitment to integrate gender equality and addressing gender issues has been clearly reflected in all the national development plans, policies and strategies developed in the CC, BC and agriculture/food security sectors. The SDGs are also integrated into the long-term development plans and sectoral policies. All sectoral policies and legislation have adopted GESI as a crosscutting theme, emphasizing the involvement of women and other disadvantaged groups in decision-making and benefit sharing mechanisms. Separate GESI strategies and action plans have been adopted in agriculture, forestry and climate change to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed

at all stages of policies, institutions and interventions. Gender Responsive Budgeting has been in place for more than a decade and has attempted to narrow the gap between policy intentions and investments. These policies and budgetary arrangements form a solid basis for Nepal to integrate gender equality in sustainable development across the sectors and enhance role of women to achieve sustainable development.

However, GESI related provisions in the sectoral policies are not well implemented. Operational and implementation guidelines do not exist, hampering the implementation of the policies and where they do exist, there is limited coherence and consistency between the policy intentions and guidelines. The sectoral GESI



Jab Planter



Farm Rake



Electric Millet Thresher



Hand Held Corn Sheller



Fruit Picker



Yam in Sacks

Figure 6.3: Women friendly tools promoted by various projects in Nepal

mainstreaming strategies often exist in isolation as there is limited reference to these strategies in sectoral policies and guidelines and therefore GESI strategies are not fully implemented.

Concurrently, there are numerous government and non-government institutional mechanisms that have also tried to address the situation of gender discrimination. Many institutions have GESI strategies in place yet the lack of implementation and operational guidelines pose a big gap in developing a common understanding for implementation. Additionally, there are very limited inter-sectoral mechanisms that address issues of joint planning, coordination, and pooling of technical and financial resources, to avoid working in silos and duplication of efforts.

The lack of accountability measures, limited disaggregated data from an intersectional perspective and their uses, inadequate level of capacity for gender analysis and lack of space for women to participate in policy making processes are some key challenges. This has created a situation where despite policies and institutional mechanisms, the implementation of such policies and the monitoring and impact assessment of the outcomes are poorly managed.

Research and technology development have received the least priority in sectoral policies with a complete neglect of the need for gender responsive information, tools, methods and technologies that would help women to fully utilise their potential. Women are considered as a victim of natural resource loss and not as an important actor/agent for conservation and management of the resources. This further limit the scope of policies to address women's specific needs and priorities, and utilise their full potential. This requires changes in attitudes and strengthening the capacity of policy makers and bureaucracy that need to provide the leadership and impetus for change.

Development partners and non-government agencies have made noteworthy contributions in GESI policies within institutions and within programs. The development and use of different GESI responsive analytic tools and strategies, and the investment in women friendly technology have been commendable. Sustained financial and technical support over longer periods of time have allowed for implementation strategies to be refined, leading to highly effective approaches and outcomes that have become integrated into the governments framework with high potential of being applied across the country.

GOOD PRACTICES ON POLICY (NEPAL – 1)

Gender Responsive Budgeting: Ensuring Adequate Funds for Gender Transformation

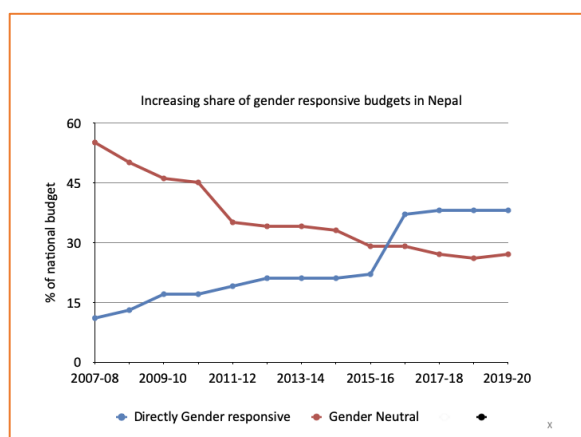
Nepal is one of the leading countries in Asia applying Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) system with a separate code in the annual budget. Introduced in FY 2007-08 by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the system ensures that the needs and interests of women are increasingly recognized and addressed in annual plans and budgets. In compliance with this system, all sectoral ministries including forestry, environment and agriculture categorize their annual programmes and associated budgets as 'directly gender responsive' (impacting more than 50 percent women), 'indirectly gender responsive' (impacting 20 to 50 percent women) and 'neutral' (impacting less than 20 percent women). The categorization is done based on five indicators: (i) women's participation in formulating and implementing programmes, (ii) women's capacity development, (iii) women's share in benefits, (iv) support to women in employment and income generation, and (v) quality reform in the time spent on and minimization of workload for women. Each indicator is assigned with equal weight of 20 percent. As a part of the broader efforts to institutionalize the system, a Gender Responsive Budget Committee (BRBC) is set up within MoF where sectoral ministries participate. The committee is mandated to develop GRB guidelines and methodologies, provide policy guidance and to monitor the budget allocations, public expenditure and the impact (MoF, 2013).

In a decade, the government machinery has improved capacity for adoption of GRB. Budget

forms, manuals and software systems have been revised that have been adopted in all government institutions, constitutional commissions, sectoral line ministries and departments. As a result, the share of annual budget directly benefiting women has been rising continuously from NRs. 19.09 billion (11.3 percent of the total budget) in 2008-2009 to NRs. 562 billion (38.18 percent in 2020-21²³⁶). The increase in share of gender responsive budget applies in all sectors.

Despite these efforts, the adoption of the GRB system in Nepal faces several challenges. First, the GRB process provides a tool to track the *allocation* of gender responsiveness but not the expenditure (and therefore gender impact). Therefore, GRB allocations under national plans and programmes are unable to provide evidence of equity in outcomes. Secondly, the GRB system is not yet mandated and implemented at the local level development planning. The knowledge gap that exists among policy makers and decision-makers affects implementation at local levels. This directly impacts planning and budgeting, integrating a clear gender perspective within budget allocations, effectively transferring knowledge, and spreading awareness about gender-responsive techniques and approaches (CDKN, 2020). Thirdly, in addition to the gender-responsive budget code, Nepal has also introduced a 'climate budget code' since 2013 to channel funds to climate actions. However, these two budget codes do not align, and there is no evidence that the GRB is being used in a way that also improves climate resilience of women.

Nevertheless, the GRB is gaining a higher level of political commitment, acceptance and momentum in Nepal. If the challenges specified above are addressed, GRB can be an effective tool to ensure that there is adequate level of financing and monitoring of the inclusion of gender approaches in development, including in actions to address climate change, ecosystem restoration and livelihoods.



Share of gender responsive budget in Nepal from 2007/2008 – 2019/2020)

236 <https://mof.gov.np/en/gender-responsive-budget-76.html>. Exchange rate: USD1= NRs. 119.3 (2 July 2021)

GOOD PRACTICES ON INTERVENTION (NEPAL – 2)

Community Forestry: An Empowering Approach to Ecosystem Restoration, Diversifying Livelihoods and Building Resilience

Community Forestry (CF) is a dominant forest management modality adopted in Nepal for over 30 years. It involves handing over a part of national forests to Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) with rights granted to develop, access, use, manage, protect and benefit from the forests independently in a sustainable way, following an operational plan approved by District Forest Office. Thus, CFUGs are autonomous bodies, governed by their own constitution. By end of 2019, a total of 22,266 CFUGs are managing nearly 2.3 million ha forests in Nepal -37 percent of the total forests area - engaging and benefiting nearly 3 million households.

Studies have confirmed significant environmental, economic and social benefits of CF contributing to multiple SDGs (Gilmour, 2016; FECOFUN, 2019). Significant successes of CF have been: (i) an increase in the natural capital base in the form of forest areas, its density, productive capacity and biodiversity; (ii) the establishment of legal framework and institutional norms in Nepal for gender equality in participation and access to benefits. The 2014 CF Guidelines has mandatory provisions of equal representation of women and men, in the executive committees and key decision-making positions. In 2013, at least 11,000 women were leading CFUGs and almost all CF groups had a representation of 50 percent women, including the Chairperson and Secretaries. (iii) CFUGs have also been a successful model for inclusiveness as they specifically target indigenous people, women and Dalits for leadership (FECOFUN, 2019). CFUGs have become training hubs for empowerment and capacity building of women and other disadvantaged groups, and for the adoption of GESI processes and outcomes.

CF has strengthened community's resilience to climate change and other natural/economic and external shocks through diversification of rural livelihoods, increased food security, leveraging of social capital and traditional knowledge, and regulation of microclimates.



Members of community forest user group discussing about their local forest management plan, Kapilvastu district, Lumbini Province, Nepal (Source: Fritz Berger, SDC and Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation)

In line with the CF Guideline, CFUGs have to allocate at least 25 percent funds for forest development and 35 percent to directly benefit women and poor members. CFUGs have made significant investment in restoration of forests and supporting the poorest members through leasehold forestry, income generation activities and forest-based enterprises. A recent study shows that CFs in Nepal have been contributing to 15 out of 16 SDGs directly and indirectly (FECOFUN, 2019). CFUGs have also been mobilizing social, finance and human resources during the COVID-19 pandemic for prevention, relief and recovery efforts. CF communications and coordination systems, and leadership have been applied to access and distribute information and supplies and to enforce travel restrictions. Finance and material support have been provided to local governments to build information, quarantine and isolation centers. Revolving credit and subsidy schemes have helped members with easy and low interest credit facilities and relief packages (RECOFTC, 2020). More importantly, the social capital that has been generated through membership and

mutual support, have provided members with confidence in times of difficulties.

CF in Nepal have been very successful in policy influencing and establishing micro-macro linkage in the areas of natural resource governance and protecting community rights. The Federation of Community Forestry Users (FECOFUN), a nationwide membership-based network of nearly 22,415 CFUGs has been actively protecting user rights through evidence generation, facilitating wider consultations and

dialogue between the users and policy makers and negotiation.

Learnings from the CF programme has been replicated and the modality scaled up across countries in the Asia Pacific, albeit in different forms and capacities (Gilmour, 2016). A total of 5.3 million people participate in CF and manage nearly 15 million hectares of land and forests in the region including in China, Cambodia, Thailand and Nepal (RECOFTC: <https://www.recoftc.org>).

GOOD PRACTICE ON INTERVENTION (NEPAL – 3)

Home Gardens: An Approach to Social, Economic, and Political Empowerment of Women and Disadvantaged Groups in the Nepal Himalayas

In Nepal, Home Gardens (HGs) (*Ghar Bagaincha* in Nepali) have been supported and mobilized successfully as a development intervention, contributing to social, economic and political empowerment of rural women and other disadvantaged groups by generating income, improving household food and nutrition, and building self-esteem and confidence in ways that are embedded in local cultures and traditions. They refer to the traditional land use systems around a homestead, where several species of plants, including small livestock, are grown/reared, with the products primarily intended for family consumption. For subsistence and poor farmers, crop varieties and cultivars adapted to particular micro-climate around homesteads are crucial and accessible resources, available to provide a secure livelihood. HGs are in relatively small areas (2–11 percent of total land holdings), and due of their small size, they are often overlooked as an important unit of food production, a source of accessible food and nutrition, and has therefore remained neglected from national agriculture research and extension.

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), with financial support from SDC/Nepal implemented the HG Program (HGP) in Nepal for over 16 years (2002–2018) comprising four distinct phases: (i) an initial formative research that focused on the characterization of indigenous HG system and an



Home garden is helping rural women in Nepal to improve their family food, nutrition and income security.

assessment of the potential of HG in improving women and disadvantaged household's food and nutrition security; (ii) the refinement of HG technologies, practices and implementation modalities; (iii) development of pathways for mainstreaming HG; and (iv) mainstreaming HG in national agriculture extension program. The key outcomes of HGP Phase IV included: formation of 1,852 HG groups comprising 55,800 households (79 percent women and 74 percent disadvantaged groups); 97 percent of these groups were registered in local government; HG participants consumed six additional

food types (cereals, root and tubers, legumes, vegetables, fruits and animal products) year round compared to the baseline of only three types; the average cash savings/household/year (from not having to buy vegetables) and an average income/household/year (from selling surplus HG products) amounted to NPR 5,088 and NPR 9,218 respectively; and over 80 women HG members are currently occupying positions in local governments. Based on these successes, the HG Program was successfully integrated into the national agriculture extension system, and in the course curriculum of the government's technical training center.

The HG Program is considered as one of the most successful programs in Nepal, and is a good example of how an NGO-led programme has had positive impact on national policy in terms of mainstreaming HG from pilot to national program. Key factors that contributed to the success of the programme were:

- Continued funding from SDC/Nepal for over 16 years allowed for systematically planning and implementing the project from an initial formative research → technology development, testing and dissemination → development of pathways for integration of HG into national agriculture extension system;
- Partnership arrangements included a combination of national and international NGOs, and government institutions to work closely in planning and implementation, leading to strong buy-in and ownership;
- HG technologies promoted were simple and within the technical know-how and managerial capacity of the farmers, especially women farmers, building on local knowledge and practices; the interventions improved household's food, nutrition and income, providing dietary diversity and family health value; improved self-reliance as access to market is difficult in remote mountain areas; and HGP facilitated farmers to experiment with domestication of wild edible plants in HGs.

- Women and disadvantaged HG group members worked together exchanging ideas, knowledge and learnings, thus building strong social capital that contributed to building self-esteem and confidence, as a result of which some women members successfully competed in local elections.
- HG interventions also served as a valuable part of the in-situ conservation method, but their importance for plant genetic resources conservation for food and agriculture is still not widely recognized in Nepal.

The HGP has the potential to contribute to multiple SDGs (1, 2, 5 and 13) and is currently replicated in parts of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka by local NGOs - UBINING and Green Movement - respectively. There is high potential to replicate the HGP in other mountain areas of Asia and beyond, that are often characterized by inaccessibility, marginality, vulnerability, and gender inequality, as in the case in Nepal Himalayas.

CHAPTER 7

THE CONTEXT OF THAILAND

7.1. Country Background

Geography of Thailand: Geographically, Thailand is located in the tropical area, 15 degrees above the Equator, in the center of mainland Southeast Asia that shares a border with Myanmar to the North and West, with Lao PDR to the North and East, Cambodia to the East, and Malaysia to the deep South.²³⁷ The country covers a total area is 513,115 square kilometers (Climatological Group 2015, 1) and is divided into five regions: North (West), Northeast, Central, East and South; and into 77 provinces of which Bangkok is the capital. The population is 69,950,850 (2021) (macrotrends 2021). Located wholly within the tropics, Thailand encompasses diverse ecosystems, including the hilly forested areas of the Northern and Western frontiers covering 107,552 square kilometers or almost 21 percent of total land area, the fertile rice fields of the central plains - known as “the rice bowl of Asia” - and fruit growing areas, the broad plateau of the Northeast, and the rugged coasts along the narrow strip of the Southern peninsula. Thailand is located in the monsoon region, although there are three distinct seasons: hot, wet and cool. The mean annual temperature is between 22-32 degrees Celsius, but Thailand has seen a marked increase in temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns over the past thirty years (Goway 2021; Keyes 2021; UNDP Climate Change Adaptation 2021).

Situations of Food Security and Climate Change: In terms of food security, Thailand placed at the 52nd rank on the 2019 Global Food Security Index (GFSI)²³⁸ (The Economist

Intelligence Unit 2019) and 51st out of the total 113 countries in 2020, which is higher than Nepal (77th) and Cambodia (81st) (The Economist Group 2021).²³⁹ In Thailand, the household food poverty line, on average in 2007 was at USD 22.58/person/month (779 Baht), or approximately 54 percent of total poverty line. Using the official food poverty line, 416,410 people in the country, accounted for 0.65 percent of Thais who were affected by food poverty. Food poverty is highly concentrated in the rural North and Northeast parts. Even though the poorest subsistence farmers generally consume more than half of their own production, all food needs cannot be met by their production²⁴⁰ (Isvilanonda and Bunyasiri 2009, 5). Food accessibility has become a more real concern in light of higher food prices and income reduction during the Covid-19 pandemic. The prevalence of high food prices is more severe in the North than in other regions, mainly because the food marketing structure varies between different parts of the country. Household debt, which has reached an all-time high of 86.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), affects the four pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability of the first three pillars (Treerutkuarkul 2021).

As climate change is affecting the region and the natural resources base that underpins agriculture, livelihoods and food systems have been significantly affected by conditions such as changing drought cycles, sea level rise and inundation that reduces availability of arable land, and ocean warming (Treerutkuarkul 2021). Thailand is highly vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change. The Climate Risk Index (CRI 2021)²⁴¹ analyzes and ranks 180

237 Since 1932, the Kingdom of Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy and all subsequent constitutions have provided for an elected parliament. But political authority has often been held by the military, which has taken power through coups. Later, parliamentary democracy steadily gained wider popular support. Although a crisis emerged in 2006, when the military, aligned with the monarchy, overthrew an elected government, new parliamentary elections were held - as promised by the interim government - in 2007 (Keyes 2021) and following militarized coups in the year of 2010 and 2014.

238 The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) is an annual assessment measuring food security through affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience. The GFSI considers these issues across a set of 113 countries around the world. It is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking

model constructed from 59 unique indicators that measure the drivers of food security across both developing and developed countries (The Economist Group 2021).

239 The overall of GFSI score for Thailand is 64.0, affordability is 82.8, availability is 55.3, quality and safety is 59.5, and natural resource and resilience is 50.0 (The Economist Group 2020).

240 See more details in (Isvilanonda and Bunyasiri 2009).

241 The CRI 2021 is based on the loss figures of 180 countries from the year 2019 and the period 2000 to 2019. This ranking represents the most affected countries (Eckstein, Künzel, and

countries that have been affected by impacts of climate change related extreme weather events (storms, floods, heatwaves etc.). Some of the direct impacts are direct losses and fatalities, and indirect impacts result in droughts and food scarcity. In the 2021 CRI, Thailand has been identified as one of the ten most affected countries over the last two decades (2000-2019) with its average weighted ranking (CRI score rank = 9th), which is worse than Nepal (CRI score rank = 10th) (Eckstein, Künzel, and Schäfer 2021, 13). In addition, Thailand is ranked as the 12th country in the “extreme risk” category in the Maplecroft’s Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI) (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017, 45).

Situations of Biodiversity and Ecosystems:

Thailand has all aspects of biodiversity - species, genetic and ecosystem diversity. It is one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in Southeast Asia with a ranking of the top 16 in the world. There are around 15,000 plant species, representing 8 percent of the world’s total. Faunas are vertebrates 4,722 species and invertebrates 124,526 species. In 1961, Thailand had a lush forest covering 53.35 percent of the country, but in 2009, this had decreased to 32.1 percent, with at least 18 percent comprised of conserved forests (The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning 2009; The Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity 2021).²⁴²

Thailand derives large benefits from its ecosystems. In particular, the country recognizes the important environmental role performed by watersheds, particularly highlands of the northern, western and southern parts, river basins and coastal areas, as well as their significance in supporting livelihoods linked to fisheries, recreation and tourism, among many others. For instance, a watershed with adequate forest cover provides water that supports lowland agriculture, sustains the supply of surface and ground water for domestic use, and prevents soil erosion and the siltation of coasts and water bodies. Likewise, the forest ecosystem provides ecological services that benefit agriculture, industries, water and power

needs (The Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity 2021).

However, most of biodiversity supported by a large variety of ecosystems, landscapes and habitats are greatly threatened by human activities within existing state’s social structure. Threatened species in Thailand are numerous, consisting of 121 mammals, 184 birds, 33 reptiles, 5 amphibians, 218 fishes and no fewer than 1,131 plants. The number of indigenous livestock is also decreasing due to the introduction of alien animals. The agricultural ecosystem in Thailand harbors a rich diversity of species. The country is a sanctuary for world rice species. However, at the moment, there is rapid genetic erosion of rice due to urban rice paddy cultivation and farmers preferring to grow prolific species (with less conservation of indigenous crops). A large number of indigenous cultivated plants have also disappeared following the destruction of farmed areas as a result of natural disasters, urbanization, industrialization and dam construction (The Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity 2021).

Socio-Cultural Aspects: In terms of ethnicity, Thailand is relatively homogenous where over 80 percent are descendants of speakers of Tai languages who have been dominant in the area since the late 13th century. The population also includes numerous non-Tai peoples and about 10 percent are of Chinese descent. Members of the largest indigenous minority speak a dialect of Malay who are Muslim largely inhabit the lower part of the country. Other significant indigenous minorities include speakers of Mon, Khmer, and other Mon-Khmer languages of the Austroasiatic family. Thai of Laos descent form a large part of the Northeastern or “Isan people”. In the uplands of western and northern parts are found ethnic minority groups called “hilltribes,” encompassing 925,825 people in total (2002), making up approximately 1.2 percent of Thailand’s population. These hilltribe communities are scattered across 20 provinces though 90 percent are concentrated in the Western and Northern Parts. They are Karen, Hmong, Mien, Lahu, Liao, Akha, Thin, Khamu, and Mrabri ethnics. The largest group of hilltribes is the Karen (Boschetto 2016; Diamond 2011; Rattanakrangsri 2020).

Schäfer 2021, 29).

242 Thailand possesses unique coastal and marine biodiversity. Along the coastline, mangrove forests comprise approximately 36 percent of the coastline (The Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity 2021).

Many of these marginalized “hilltribes” are not native to Thailand, but, rather, have migrated to the northern region of the country from China and Tibet through Myanmar and Lao PDR over the past two millennia (Boschetto 2016; Diamond 2011). Thailand’s hilltribes are historically semi-nomadic people, distinct from the Thai in their language, culture, and traditional pattern of life (Boschetto 2016). However, most members of indigenous and immigrant communities identify strongly with Thai national culture and are speakers of Thai (Keyes 2021). About 40-50 percent of ethnic members do not possess Thai citizenship, which stifles their employment prospects, political representation, and access to judicial processes (Boschetto 2016). Policy recommendations include increasing access to Thai citizenship and employment opportunities (especially for women) to create household food security for non-Thai nationals.

The highest rate of third-degree malnutrition for the nation was among the hilltribes of northern Thailand. They also have a large family size. The underlying cause of the pockets of malnutrition among the disadvantaged groups include limited breast feeding, inadequate health service coverage household food insecurity (especially on a seasonal basis), traditional food beliefs and restrictions as well as unsanitary environmental conditions that promote parasitism and infectious diseases (Kirjavainen 1999, 12). Members of hilltribes are at a higher risk of contracting and succumbing to malaria than other members of the Thai population. This is due to hilltribe members’ high level of poverty, poor access to hospitals, increased exposure to forests containing disease-carrying mosquitos, and a lack of protective equipment such as insecticide treated nets (Boschetto 2016).

Recently, economic issue is continuing shift of labor from industry back to agriculture due to the impact of economic crisis in Asia and Thailand during 1997-1999. Many companies failed and closed their doors thus increasing unemployment (Julian 2000).²⁴³ Many people

243 A report by the Ministry of Labor revealed that, in 1997, there were 33.6 million workers in the workforce, or 55.5 percent of the total population (60.6 million). According to the Far Eastern Economic Review, July 22, 1999, the Thai economy would shrink by 8.0 percent in 1998 followed by a further shrinkage of

returned to the rural areas, but continued drought, agricultural mechanization and the presence of vast numbers of illegal immigrants from Burma and Lao PDR²⁴⁴ that their prospects in rural areas were not promising either (Warr 1998, 33). Increasingly limited land has to be shared by many more in need. This provides a new challenge for agricultural and rural development policies and planning, as activities must be developed and programs revitalized further to provide for the increasing masses of people moving to the countryside (Kirjavainen 1999, 11).

Some of the emerging trends in the rural development agenda need special attention in Thailand. For example, the role of women in agricultural labor is remarkable, about 60 percent. Regarding land ownership and land titling, special attention needs to be paid to the changing ownership patterns that have taken place during recent years. Traditionally, in the Northern Thailand, land is inherited through the matrilineal lineage system, and women are mostly both *de facto* and *de jure* household managers even if men are seemingly the leaders. Although women and men possess equal rights to own lands and properties, many women, especially farmers do not own even a piece of land for their farming, partly due to the fact that men rather than women usually inherit lands and properties. Land is increasingly registered in the name of “head of household,” which means a shift into the hands of men (Kirjavainen 1999, 11; The Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development 2004, 16). Therefore, marginalized women do not have decision-making power and access to resources. This indicates that patriarchy is trying to take over, even within a matrilineal society, which is also related to discrimination against women in the area of matrimonial property management. This issue of women’s property rights is being raised by the women’s rights movement advocating for legal reform in the country (Somswasdi 2003).

0.5 percent in 1999. Moreover, many companies are expected to fail and close their doors thus increasing unemployment well beyond the 2 million mark (Thammavit 1998, cited in Diamond 2011, 1).

244 There are 3,005,376 registered migrant workers in Thailand, of which 1,291,722 or 43 percent are women, mainly from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar (UN Women 2021).

Political Economy of Poverty and Livelihoods Strategies:

Thailand is now an upper-middle income country that has nearly eradicated extreme poverty. In 2017, the extreme poverty rate in Thailand based on the International Poverty Line (USD 1.90 per day) was only 0.03 percent. Recent droughts and economic downturns have pointed to vulnerabilities in Thailand, as poverty increased in 2016 during a particularly poor agricultural year. With a rapidly aging population, a conflict-affected Southern region, and one-third of the labor force still employed in low-productivity agriculture (Yang 2019), between 2015 and 2018, the poverty rate in Thailand increased from 7.2 percent to 9.8 percent, and the absolute number of people living in poverty rose from 4.85 million to more than 6.7 million. The increase in poverty in 2018 was widespread - occurring in 61 out of 77 provinces (Kongrukreatiyos 2020).

Tackling poverty in Thailand will also mean focusing on ethnic minorities, regions lagging behind in mountainous and border areas, due to conflict, and fragility. However, poverty reduction has slowed down and has been uneven across the country, while Bangkok including other provinces in the central region has enjoyed the fastest pace of poverty reduction. But the North, Northeast, and South regions experienced the slowest pace of poverty reduction. These regions are poorer, fragile, less diversified, and more reliant on agriculture (Yang 2019). The average hilltribe family lives on an average income of under USD 500 a year (Boschetto 2016). Therefore, poverty and inequity remain relevant topics that Thailand needs to focus on (Yang 2019). Additionally, the undemocratic situation in Thailand and the Government's mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic is aggravating poverty and inequity.

Until the second half of the 20th century, Thailand was primarily an agricultural country, but since the 1960s increasing numbers of people have moved to Bangkok and other cities (Keyes 2021). Thailand's economic shift away from small-scale family farms to commercial production has increased pesticide usage negatively impacting the environment and household's abilities to secure local food sources. Moreover, this shift away from small scale farming has particularly affected women as it is their cultural role to

prepare food for the family. Statistics show an increase in female labor participation in informal sectors as women are working more to secure food sources (Diamond 2011, 1).

The Thai Government has also created hardships and roadblocks for hilltribes because of their perception of the "hilltribe problem": the notion that they pose a threat to national security, environmental efforts, and are the source of drug trafficking problems in Thailand. These claims excuse hilltribes as a convenient scapegoat for national crises. Part of this confusion over property rights has resulted from the Thai Government's forcible relocation of hilltribes in order to keep natural resources for the country's benefit (Boschetto 2016).

Recent socio-economic and political changes have brought to the hilltribe people roads, new cash crops as an alternative to opium poppy cultivation, schools and primary health facilities. They are experiencing drastic socio-economic pressure, particularly in terms of increased demand for material goods. While biodiversity and ecosystems, which are significant in supporting hilltribe people's livelihoods are threatened it impacts the food security of the hilltribes. The traditional subsistence farming system, as source of local biodiversity and restoration, is also facing a dramatic resource scarcity as there are government programs to prevent new settlements in forests and to decrease opium production. They are in the middle of transition (Kirjavainen 1999, 11).

Thailand is a male-dominated, patriarchal society, as political and corporate leadership has always been in the hands of men. On the other hand, the power of Thai women, especially in rural societies, lies in their domestic role as the mother-nurturer. Women in Thailand look up to the role of motherhood as an ideal. A woman's status changes to adulthood at the point of her childbirth, after which she is recognized semi-formally as "*mae*" or mother. Women's burdens are acknowledged in relation to childbearing and parenting responsibilities and women's specialization in economic-type occupations illustrates their powerful role in providing for the well-being of their families. The mother-nurturer role is also idealized in the female code of social and sexual conduct (Hays 2014). Despite the fact

that Thai women have held executive roles in public and private sectors, they are generally still underrepresented, especially in the parliament, government, judiciary and administration both at national and local levels (UN Women 2021).

The Thai Government committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 7 October 2015. It has a solid foundation for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that builds on the achievement in the Millennium Development Goals (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017, vi). The SDG Index tracks country performance on the 17 SDGs. In 2020, Thailand ranked the highest SDG ranking – 41st - among ASEAN countries, being on average 74.5 percent on the way to the best possible outcome across the all aspects of SDGs, which is higher than the regional average SDG score at 67.2 percent. Thailand has been facing major challenges in achieving SDGs 3 and 10, as well as significant challenges in achieving SDGs 2, 5, 6, 13 and 15 (Sachs, et al. 2020, 444-445).

In brief, food insecurity among hill tribe populations in Northern Thailand and refugees is not caused by itself. It is created by the same structural and behavioral problems that also cause poverty and powerlessness among these communities: low levels of education and literacy rates, inability to access Thai citizenship, lack of secure employment, gender/ethnic discrimination and conflicting ideologies between the late King Bhumipol and Parliament on how to scaling up the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP). Women and children are most affected by food insecurity and will continue to be if education and job opportunities do not become more readily accessible. In the larger picture, society will be negatively impacted as women, primarily responsible for the family unit, continue to experience vocational and educational disparity in comparison to men (Diamond 2011, 33-34).

The Context of Gender Equality in Thailand

The current Thai Government divided its policies into 3 levels: (1) National strategy level, that is the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037); (2) National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) level, that is 12th NESDP (2017-2021); and (3) supporting plans level that

includes ministerial policies and other law and regulations where Gender Equality (GE), Food Security (FS), Biodiversity Conservation (BC) and Ecosystems Restoration (ER), and Climate Change (CC) are put in different strategic plans.

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women:

Thailand has utilized the UN Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as guidelines for the national framework for development, in which gender equality and women's empowerment are integrated. Moreover, the CEDAW guidelines to address the discriminatory issues have been approved by the National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family Development (NCWF) and taken into actions that developed, for instance, the Women's Development Plan under the 9th NESDP (2002-2006) and now the **Women Development Strategy** (WDS 2017-2021) under the 12th NESDP (2017-2021). The major sector areas in which specific policies, strategies and/or action plans on gender equality and women's empowerment are developed include women in power and decision-making, violence against women, and women and the economy. Regarding women in power and decision-making, the Government has implemented projects to encourage women to participate in local administration and to strengthen their skills in political participation. Comprehensively, gender equality and the empowerment of women have been integrated in the national policies. Gender equality and women's empowerment and development are included in the draft of the National Strategy (2018-2037) on the part of social cohesion and equity, which has a goal to create fairness and reduce inequality in all dimensions. For the National Strategy (2018-2037), gender equality, food security, biological diversity and ecosystem restoration, and climate change are integrated in *Strategy on Social Cohesion and Equity and Strategy on Eco-friendly Development and Growth*, such as mitigating inequality and creating multidimensional justice, promoting social empowerment, promoting green growth and sustainable development, promoting sustainable climate-friendly based society growth.

Human and Gender-related Development: the UN development indices and rankings

indicate that Thailand belongs to the “high human development” group of countries, meaning: high life expectancy at birth, a high educational attainment and standard of living (Kirjavainen 1999, 2). In Thailand, women live with substantial gender disparities in terms of inequalities in achievement between women and men. There is increasing participation of women and men in the economic and political spheres of activity (Kirjavainen 1999,

2). In addition, in terms of gender inequality (reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market), there is a low inequality between women and men, and vice-versa (UNDP 2020, 338). Thailand’s ranking in the Human Development Index (HDI), Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), and Gender Inequality Index (GII) is presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Thailand’s HDI, GDI, GEM, GII Rankings - 1992, 1995 and 1999.

Index Ranking	1992 (Out of 130 countries)	1995 (Out of 102 countries)	1999 (Out of 189 countries)
HDI	48	46	79
GDI	33	38	-
GEM	54	60	-
GII	-	-	80

Source: (UNDP 1995, 76, 78, 84; UNDP 1998, 33; UNDP 2020, 362)

There is a list of 4 regions of Thailand, plus the capital city of Bangkok, by Human Development Index as of 2020 with data for the year 2018 (See Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Human Development Index for Regions within Thailand

Very High Human Development		
Rank	Region	2018 HDI
1	Bangkok	0.813
High Human Development		
2	Central Thailand (without Bangkok)	0.768
-	Thailand	0.765
3	Southern Thailand	0.755
4	Northeastern Thailand	0.749
5	Northern Thailand	0.747

Source: (Gyaanipedia 2021)

According to regions’ HDI, only Bangkok is in the “very high human development” category and other regions are “high human development”. It makes sense that there are disparities within Thailand, in which northern part is the lowest human development, comparing to other regions.

Thailand has transitioned to an upper-middle-income country where gender equality and women’s empowerment challenges remain, particularly for certain groups and geographical regions including women from ethnic minorities, migrant women and women in the Southern border provinces of Thailand in

which violent conflicts have hindered human development leading to serious human insecurity, inequality, deprivation, and socio-economic disparities. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains prevalent in Thailand and acts as a barrier to women’s empowerment (UN Women 2021). In response to that, the Cabinet approve the National Policy and Plan to Eradicate Violence against Women and Children in November 2000 as the campaigning month to end violence against women (Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development 2004).

A recent survey by the National Statistics Office in 2015 reported that unequal gender

roles in family still remain. Even in households where women work outside the home, women still shoulder the overwhelming burden of household tasks and caregiving responsibilities. As for health, adolescent pregnancy remains a challenge in Thailand. From 2000 to 2012, pregnancies among girls aged 15-19 years continued to rise; such trend improved slightly in 2013 and 2014 (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017, 21). Especially in remote areas, to access to justice, women of ethnic groups have to depend on leadership of men. When faced with violence and sexual violations, they are not able to stand up to protect their own rights. Most community leaders would prefer that perpetrators pay fines and cases are considered settled without filing lawsuits. In cases where the perpetrators are influential persons, it would be more difficult for the aggrieved party to access protection and remedy. Moreover, ethnic girls are encouraged to marry at young age by custom. In some

areas, the tradition of kidnapping a girl for marriage is still in practice. They are thus being deprived of the right and access to education (The Government of Thailand 2014, 10).

7.2. State of Gender Integration in Policies

7.2.1 Gender Equality Policies

Gender Equality Policy: During the last 5 decades, Thailand has been internationally committed to promoting gender equality and continuously integrating gender equality in areas of national development under the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) since 1997 (see Box 7.1).

According to these commitments, Thailand has made significant efforts to integrate the international principles and instruments into its national legislation (See Table 7.3).

Box 7.1: International Commitments of Thailand Adhering to Gender Equality and Development

1. Ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on August 9, 1985 and signed its Optional Protocol on June 14, 2000. Reporting status: Initial report examined at 9th Session, 1990; Combined 2nd and 3rd reports examined at 20th session, 1999; Combined 4th and 5th reports examined at 34th session, 2006; Combined 6th and 7th reports due September 2010. Shadow reports: Thailand's Second NGO Alternative Report submitted by CEDAW NGO Report Working Group.
2. Endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995
3. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, in 2006
4. The Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture, in 2007
5. The Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in 2008
6. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2008
7. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 2012
8. The Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, in 2012
9. Endorsed the SDGs in 2015

Source: (1) Constitution of The Kingdom of Thailand (Office of the Council of State 2017), (2) "Thailand" (UN Women 2021b), Thailand: National Voluntary Presentation (NVP) (UN 2021)

Table 7.3: National Legislation Related to Gender Equality, Thailand.

Name and Date of Act/ Plan	Key Features
Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 (6 Apr 2017)	Section 4 states that “Human dignity, rights, liberties and equality of the people shall be protected. The Thai people shall enjoy equal protection under the Constitution.” Section 27 states that “... <i>Men and women shall enjoy equal rights</i> . Unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of differences in origin, race, language, sex, age, disability, physical or health condition, personal status, economic and social standing, religious belief, education, or political view which is not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, or on any other grounds shall not be permitted.” Section 71, paragraph 3 states that “The State should provide assistance to children, youth, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigent persons and underprivileged persons to be able to have a quality living...”
20-Year National Strategy B.E. 2561-2580 (8 Oct 2018)	It enacts as a long-term national framework that envisions security, prosperity and sustainability and will be steering tools for effective budget allocations. It has six strategies including: (1) National Strategy on Security, (2) National Strategy on Competitiveness Enhancement, (3) National Strategy on Developing and Strengthening Human Capital, (4) National Strategy on Social Cohesion and Equity, (5) National Strategy on Eco-Friendly Development and Growth, and (6) National Strategy on Public Sector Rebalancing and Development.
The 12 th NESDP B.E. 2560-2564 (29 Dec 2016)	This national plan adopts SEP as the core principle of development framework to achieve the SDGs. It prioritizes people-centered development as well as people’s participation and empowerment to achieve an all-inclusive and equitable social and economic development.
Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558 (8 Mar 2015)	Committee to Promote Gender Equality (CPGE) was established to enact legal policies and mechanisms to advance gender equality.
Act for Prevention and Solution of the Adolescent Pregnancy Problem B.E. 2559 (30 Mar 2016)	It aims to ensure that teenage mothers are allowed to continue their studies at school following pregnancy.
Name and Date of Act/ Plan	Key Features
Women Development Strategy B.E. 2560-2564 (26 Sep 2017)	This strategy focuses on the protection of women’s economic, social and cultural rights. The National Commission on the Policy and Strategy for the Improvement of Status of Women is the central mechanism tasked with steering the country’s policy on women. At the parliamentary level, two different committees on women, children, youth and the elderly are established at the Upper and Lower Houses, collaborating with gender experts to work closely with parliamentarians and senators. At ministerial level, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MoSDHS) is responsible for promoting gender equality and advancing women’s empowerment and development in line with the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) framework that the relevant government agencies can adopt strategies to formulate a guideline for the development of the gender equality master plan of each agency.
Family Development and Protection Act B.E. 2562 (19 May 2019)	It enacted and replaced the earlier Domestic Violence Victim Protection Act, B.E. 2550 (2007) that makes several material revisions to the earlier law to enable victims of domestic violence to better protect themselves through easier prosecution of criminal complaints, immediate police protection for victims, and pathways for behavioral rehabilitation in lieu of incarceration.

For gender equality, demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods was 89.2 percent (2016), ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received was 93.8 percent (2018), and seats held by women in national parliament was 15.8 percent (2020) (Sachs, et al. 2020, 444-445). The results of the General Election in 2019 show a three-fold increase in women's representation as female Members of Parliament increased from 5.4 percent in January 2019 to 16.2 percent. The National percentage remains lower than the average of women MPs in Asia (20.5 percent), Pacific (16.6 percent), and the Middle East and North Africa (17.5 percent), as well as far below the global average of 24.9 percent. For representation in the Senate (Upper House) out of 250 representatives, only 26 are women (10.4 percent) while 224 are men. The percentage of women in provincial and local governments is much lower than that of the national government. Women account for only 23.9 percent of high-ranking civil servants, and gender equality in senior leadership positions has risen by just 3 percent in the last fifteen years. There is only one female governor, out of 77 provinces (1.32 percent). Female Chiefs of Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAO) and Sub-district (Tambon) Administrative Organizations (TAO) account for 8 percent and 6.45 percent respectively. In the mid-market companies, women hold 32 percent of senior leadership positions, is higher than the global average of 27 percent as well as the Asia-Pacific average of 26 percent. There is 24 percent of CEOs / Managing Directors are women, compared to 20 percent worldwide and only 13 percent in Asia-Pacific (UN Women 2021).

7.2.2 Sectoral Policies and State of Gender Integration

For Thailand, FS, BC, ER and CC Adaptation and Mitigation have not been crystalized into a single legal and policy framework. The Government has made up of committees and strategic frameworks and master plans at the different ministerial mandates.

Policy on National Food Security

The National Food and Nutrition Plan (FNP) was included in the NESDP since 1977 that aims at tackling major nutrition challenges and at improving the population's nutrition status. Under the National Food Committee Act (2008),

the Thai National Food Committee (NFC) was authorized by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to propose a policy and strategy on food security, create an action plan and food alert system and make suggestions on specific areas that need to be temporarily protected for the benefit of food security (Thai National Food Committee 2012). The NFC has developed the 1st **Strategic Framework for Food Management in Thailand** (SFFM 2012-2016) and the 2nd SFFM (2018-2036) as guidelines for maintaining national food production and for attaining food security at the community level. The 2nd SFFM (2018-2036) has 4 strategic themes; food security, food quality and food safety, food education, and food management. Within Food Security Theme, ten key elements of Food Security Strategy are including Accelerate land reform and agricultural area protection, Manage water and land resources for agriculture and community forests, Find a balance between food crops and energy crops production, Improve food production efficiency, Create motivation for agricultural as an occupation and increase the number of young agriculturists, Promote food access among households and at the community level, Develop and improve logistic systems for agricultural and food products, Create collaboration between governmental agencies, the private sector and the Thai people for food security protection, Research and develop technologies and innovations at every step of food production, and Create an emergency plan for food security during emergencies.

The MoAC has envisioned the 20-year **Agriculture and Cooperatives Strategy** (ACS 2018-2037) in consonance with the 20-year National Strategy (2018-2037) and the 12th NESDP (2017-2021) to secure farmers livelihood, to proper agricultural sector and to sustain agricultural resources. However, the limitation of agricultural land tenure (land reform), land degradation and soil erosion, water scarcity (land and water protection), community forests, and chemical use (organic agriculture) on the mountainous areas are the key elements of the guidelines (Thai National Food Committee 2012). However, gender concerns have not been integrated into this Food Security Strategy, lacking gender equality mainstreaming in the SFFM (2018-2036) framework.

Policy on Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystems Restoration:

Based on SDG#15, the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) framework contains a **Green Growth Strategy** which aims to protect and restore all types of forests, prevent deforestation, promote sustainable management of forests and enhance cooperation on natural resources and environment (MoFA 2017, 52). The Thai Government attaches importance to conserving and restoring deteriorated upstream forests and preventing soil erosion to maintain the healthy ecosystems and the balance of nature as well as the 12th NESDP (2017-2021) sets out a goal to restore 40 percent of overall forest areas in Thailand²⁴⁵ (MoFA 2017, 24, 53). The government has also signed up to a number of global commitments related to biodiversity conservation (Box 7.2).

In compliance with Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Thailand has formulated the **National Policy, Strategies and Action Plan on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity** (1998-2002, 2003-2007, and the **National Policies, Measures and Plans on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Biodiversity** (NPMPCSUB 2008-2012). The NPMPCSUB 2008-2012 has stated its main target and specific targets/indicators that specify strategies as guideline to implement this policy. Thereafter, under the MoNRE, the **Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning** (ONEP) developed the **Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management** (MPIBM 2015-2021) along with the National Biodiversity Targets and the Action Plan on Biodiversity Management (2015-2016).

²⁴⁵ Government estimated that Thailand's forest cover declined from 273,600 square kilometers (53.3 percent of the total land area) in 1961 to 163,648 square kilometers (31.62 percent of total land areas) in 2014. At present, the total conserved area for biodiversity protection is approximately 116,800 square kilometers (22.76 percent of total land area) (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017, 24, 53). For this reason, the government of Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha who took position as state sovereignty conduct the "Forest Reclamation Policy" that people living in and utilizing their lands have been forced to return utilized lands identified as forest lands back to the state. In this sense, Thailand has greater number of forest restoration, but it causes negative impact to the poor and hilltribes.

Box 7.2: Biodiversity-related International Obligations and Agreements of Thailand

1. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), since 21 January 1983
2. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), since 29 January 2004
3. Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets
4. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, since 8 February 2006
5. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR), signed on 4 November 2003 but not ratified
6. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), signed on 1 August 2004 but not ratified
7. The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, signed on 31 January 2012 and becoming a Party to the Protocol
8. The Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, signed on 6 March 2012 and becoming a Party to the Protocol
9. The development of international mechanisms and legal frameworks for protection of traditional knowledge, genetic resources, and traditional cultural expressions under the frameworks of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Source: Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management B.E. 2558-2564 (2015-2021) (The ONEP 2015b)

The MPIBM (2015-2021) consists of four strategies; inclusive management, conservation and restoration, national interest protection and benefits increasing and sharing, and knowledge and database development (MoFA 2017, 12). According to the MPIBM (2015-2021), the **Biodiversity Management Action Plan** (BMAP 2017-2021) has been operationalized to transmits strategies and measures of the master plan to action by determining ten action plans in consistency of strategies that integrate biodiversity value and management into the involved government agencies at all levels: (1) Action plan to raise awareness

and educate on biodiversity, (2) Action plan to integrate and promote participation in biodiversity management. The BMAP (2017-2021) determines 25 targets and indicators to implement ten action plans. However, “*Measures to promote the participation of communities and various sectors*” did not include gender criteria of its targets. Therefore, there is no any specific guidelines for gender implementation on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration.

In addition, the 12th NESDP (2017-2021) has prioritized promotion of women’s participation in decision-making at national and sub-national levels for greater contribution to national socio-economic development. The Government has tried to acknowledge women on natural resources management as well as to increase women’s participation in environmental conservation. The Technology Transfer Plan for the Local Natural Resources Protection has been implemented with the aim to provide people in local communities with knowledge and understanding on how to use technology for natural resources protection that the ONEP is the main agency to take action. Women, especially those in local communities whose lives are closely connected with the environment, play an important role in environmental protection. Environmental surveillance system and natural resources management are mostly maintained by women (OWAFD 2004, 13).

However, the Government has less progressive gender perspectives in its forest policy which is considered gender-blind. It has not recognized the importance of gender equality in its forest laws and strategies yet. A number of forest policies have been enacted in Thailand which have provisions focused on protecting and preserving the forests. The National Forest Act (1941), the National Park Act (1961), the National Forest Reserve Act (1964), the National Forest Policy No. 18 (1985), the Forest Plantation Act (1992) and their provisions have focused on protection and preservation of natural resources and prohibit the collection and exploitation of such resources for any direct or indirect benefit of any party, whether the state or local communities. These laws make it illegal for people to harvest timber or NTFPs from forests. As women are the primary users

of NTFPs for both subsistence and income generation, this denial of access affected their consumption patterns and livelihoods. Despite a commitment towards promoting gender equality across all sectors, an acknowledgement of women’s participation and representation as key stakeholders in forest management and decision-making remains absent in these laws and acts (The Center for People and Forests 2015, 8-9). In addition, communities have engaged in managing of forest in Community Forests, establishing community forestry sites inside and outside protected areas.

Policy on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Since Thailand became a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and to the Kyoto Protocol in 2002 (Box 7.3), it has continuously worked with the global community to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere and to adapt to adverse impacts of climate change while enabling sustainable economic and social development. Under the Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on Climate Change (2007), the National Committee on Climate Change Policy (NCCCCP) has authorized to propose the strategy and plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation that first formulated the **National Strategic Plan on Climate Change** (NSPCC 2008-2013) as a framework for planning. Recently, the Government developed the **Climate Change Master Plan** (CCMP 2015-2050) to serve as a long-term comprehensive framework to ensure the continuity of state actions for all concerned agencies to address climate change in all aspects, establishing practical indicators and evaluation systems for progress allowing Thailand to develop short and long-term goals in harmony with the action plans of other countries (ONREPP 2015a).

Thailand’s **National Adaptation Plan** (NAP) was approved by the NCCCCP in 2018. It set out guidelines and measures for action on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), laying the foundation, preparing and supporting relevant operations. The guidelines and measures are divided into six main sectors as crosscutting issues; Water management, Agriculture and Food Security, Tourism, Public health, Natural

resource management, and Settlement and human security. Basically, the concept of Community-based Adaptation is applied in the NAP to develop the strength of local communities to create the ability to cope with and mitigate climate change vulnerability by encouraging to integrate its plan with sustainable local development processes or facilitating and implementing community participation adaptation that prioritizes local knowledge and appropriated community technology.

Box 7.3: International Environmental Laws and Climate Change-related Obligations of Thailand

1. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer on July 7, 1989
2. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on December 28, 1994
3. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) on November 9, 1996
4. Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal on November 24, 1997
5. Kyoto Protocol on August 28, 2002
6. Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) in 2009
7. REDD+ Preparations in 2011
8. Paris Agreement on September 21, 2016
9. The Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin on April 5, 1995

Sources: (1) "Environmental Laws" (Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs 2021), (2) "Thailand Submits NAMA" (United Nations Climate Change 2015), (3) Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin 5 April 1995 (Mekong River Commission 1995)

The Government has integrated CCA into its agricultural sector and developed the **Agriculture Strategic Plan on Climate Change** (ASPCC 2017-2021) as a guideline to implement the NAP which envisions that "Thailand's agriculture has climate resilience and contributes to mitigate climate change problems under the sustainable development pathways." On resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters,

Thailand has also integrated the **National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan** (NDPMP 2015-2019) into the CCMMP (2015-2050) that develops prevention and preparation system and enhance resilience through enriching knowledge, strengthening resilience and monitoring capacity at community level, and promoting co-existence with nature under the resilience concept of being "mindful, adaptive, inclusive recoverable, and sustainable." The NDPMP (2015-2019) mandated each province to formulate their own provincial disaster risk reduction plan (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017).

For **Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation** and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+), the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) under the MoNRE is a focal point of REDD+ partnership to represent Thailand in negotiation with the international REDD+ and distribute its knowledge to the relevance organizations in the country. Thailand was found its position as the Cluster 5 countries characterized by low percent remaining forest and low rates of deforestation or net reforestation (LFLD) that is not receiving funding support to the national program. Moreover, it is in the process of discussing gender mainstreaming into its domestic climate policies in order to improve the planned measures to address the needs of vulnerable groups and support gender equality (Thai-German Cooperation 2020).

However, gender concerns have not been integrated in the NAP, the ASPCC 2017-2021, and the implementation of REDD+ Preparation and Initiatives.

In terms of policy and implementation, Thailand has advanced gender mainstreaming into the WDS on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as a guideline (developed by the NCWAFD – the national women's machinery), to steer all the efforts towards ensuring gender equality. As well as international partnerships, for instance UN Women, has supported the Thai Government to convey the NCWAFD's strategic plan to action in developing the programs/projects design at national and sub-national levels. However, gender mainstreaming into

the SFFM on Food Security, the MPIBM on Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystems Restoration and the CCMP on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation are still far from international standards. These policy frameworks remain less than satisfactory in that gender equality has not adequately been addressed and integrated in these policies.

7.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Food Security: The principle of Food Security Theme in the SFFM framework is ensuring a sustainable food security and effective management of food production resources by active stakeholders' participation. However, M&E system is not put in the chapter of the SFFM (2018-2036) that leaves all involved sectors to do in accordance with their action plans and indicators. The MoAC does not take gender transformation into consideration; its Annual Report 2020 provides quantitative data of outputs, such as increasing number and percentage of organic farmers' families or young agriculturalists, but sex disaggregated data are not available. There is no M&E conducted with quantitative or qualitative information to assess changes in gender roles and responsibilities.

Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Restoration: The ONEP assigned the Thailand Environment Institute Foundation to conduct the M&E on the BMAP (2017-2021) at the mid-term in 2019 to assess the factors affecting operations and obstacles. The report recommended that the success factors in driving the country's biodiversity management in the next phase include knowledge promotion, raising awareness and integrating the participation of all sectors, especially the community and the people. The study reported that the development of a central database for biodiversity management encourages the community and the public to play a greater role. However, the obstacles in driving the country's biodiversity management include - inadequate the numbers of personnel/lack of a clear workforce structure, insufficient budget, lack of knowledge and expertise among officials, unclear information technology in the administrative and management system, unclear policy and strategy of the agency.

Moreover, the ONEP does not take gender transformation into consideration and there is no sex disaggregated data available. M&E is conducted without quantitative or qualitative information to assess changes in gender roles and responsibilities.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation:

Under the CCMP 2015-2050, the ONEP as the national focal point will make 2.5-Year Progress Report and the 5-Year Evaluation and Revision Report that assesses 4 issues; main Ministries' implementation and response to the CCMP's goals, readiness of local government organizations, knowledge and understanding of the various sectors involved in the Climate Change, and problems and obstacles of implementation. M&E system is stated in the NAP and implementation evaluation includes 4 phases – preparation (2021), mechanism development and ability construction progress (2026), operation progress (2031), and operation success (2047). However, the ONEP does not take gender transformation into consideration in M&E process and there has no sex disaggregated data available, which M&E is conducted without quantitative or qualitative information to assess changes in gender roles and responsibilities.

7.2.4 Key Policy Issues, Lessons and Challenges

Based on the review of key policies and guidelines within FS, BC, ER, and CC adaptation and mitigation and the integration of a gender perspective within them, the following can be identified in terms of successes, gaps, and challenges:

Successes

- Gender equality and the empowerment of women have been established in the national policies and FS, BC, ER, and CC are integrated into the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037), particularly in the *Strategy on Social Cohesion and Equity and Strategy on Eco-friendly Development and Growth* and the 12th NESDP (2017-2021), as well as the National Reform Plan (2018, revise 2021) in two areas - natural resources and environment, and society.

- The Government has addressed Food Security as a national agenda and has formulated the 2st SFFM (2018-2036) as guidelines for maintaining national food production and for attaining food security at the community level.
- For BC and ER, the NBSAPs is formulated as the key national policies, measures and plans for conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity. The ONEP has developed the MPIBM (2015-2021) as the master plan that consists of strategies to manage, protect national interests, increase and share benefits, and develop knowledge and database. Additionally, the BMAP (2017-2021) has been operationalized as an action plan.
- The NSPCC (2008-2013) is formulated as a strategic framework for Climate Change planning that the CCMP (2015-2050) has developed to serve as a long-term comprehensive master plan. The NAP has set out guidelines and measures for action on CCA, developing the strength of local communities to create the ability to cope with and mitigate climate change vulnerability.

Gaps

- Persistent gender gaps remain in relation to women's representation in political life. Indigenous women and young girls are targeted by recruiters to prostitution and forced labor. No statistics of indigenous women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation is available.
- Gender concerns have not been integrated into the FS Strategy and gender equality mainstreaming is lacking in the SFFM (2018-2036) framework and the M&E system.
- Gender concerns have not been integrated in the NAP, the ASPCC 2017-2021, and the implementation of REDD+ Preparation and Initiatives, and the M&E system.

Challenges

- Gender inequalities tend to be exacerbated for women of rural, indigenous, migrant and/or ethnic, religious and sexual minority backgrounds.
- FS, BC, ER, and CC have not been crystalized into a single legal and policy framework and it has been difficult to integrate gender equality into these issues.

- Implementation of the National Strategy of land ownership distribution or property rights in the conflict highlands identified as protected forest areas is impossible, due to the forest laws and conservation policy. Moreover, Community Forests can be entitled only outside the protected forest areas, such as national park, where hill ethnic communities have been prohibited to live in and establish community forests, according to the Community Forestry Bill (2019).

7.3. State of Gender Integration in Institutional Context

At national level, the Thai Government has formed specific institutions and committees within the sectors of FS, BC, ER, CC, gender equality and sustainable development.

7.3.1 Major Institutions

Institutions related to Sustainable Development

The National Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD) has been formed since 2015 under the OPM to oversee SDGs and the Secretariat office is the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) (later Council). There are about 36-40 committee members, Chaired by the Prime Minister and the Secretariate from the NEP, with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the OPM serving as Vice Chairpersons. Members include representatives from the government agencies, the research institutes and foundation, private sectors, and experts. Therefore, it has not independent bodies and women's CSOs in this committee structure and no information of integration of SDG#5 (gender equality) into other SDGs is available.

There are 19 organizations under the UN working to cover all areas of SDGs in Thailand and UN Thailand also supports activities to increase women's participation in political decision making and to openly accept marginal people in society, particularly LGBTI communities.

Institutions related to Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Promotion Committee has a duty to promote gender equality within all

public and private entities in the central, regional and local areas. The Committee's duties involve designing plans, policies and other measures for government authorities to promote gender equality, including working with other sectors to encourage cooperation and raise awareness among all sectors of society about gender equality, as well as provide the Cabinet with policy recommendations and proposals for improving laws, rules and regulations. Mechanisms responsible for promoting the policy are detailed as follows:

- i. The National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family Development (NCWF) is the national mechanism at the highest level, which coordinates the implementation of the Women's Development Plan among all agencies in both public and private sectors and proposes recommendations and measures for gender equality to the Government. It is responsible for the issues of concern specified in supporting plans or strategies through its member representatives of government organizations and NGOs.
- ii. The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) was established in 2003 under the MoSDHS²⁴⁶ to serve as the secretariat of the NCWF and the focal point for the promotion of gender equality and the strength of the family institution²⁴⁷. It is the core mechanism responsible for developing and implementing plans and projects regarding women's affairs in many areas, such as gender mainstreaming, gender advocacy, women's empowerment and research on gender equality development, implementing policies, measures and mechanisms to support other public and private sector units in their own policy implementation to promote women's economic potential, their rights, and gender equality and equity in relation to the UN framework defined.

246 The OWAFD is the re-structured form of the National Commission on Women's Affairs that was institutionalized in 1989 under the Office of the Prime Minister.

247 The establishment of Chief Gender Executive Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in governmental agencies since 2001 and a master plan of each agency, proper number of qualified women appointed to national committees in 2002, mobilization of women's issues and gender equality as priorities to be addressed by concerned government agencies in 2004 (Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development 2004).

- iii. The Chief Gender Executive Officers (CGEOs) are high-ranking officials in all Ministries and Departments to integrate gender perspective into projects and programs of all agencies and to develop a Master Plan on the promotion of gender equality of their agencies.
- iv. Gender Focal Points (GFPs) are established in every Ministry and Department to ensure gender equality in the operation of all Ministries and Departments.

Moreover, quasi-governmental organizations have played an indirect supportive role in women's rights issues as follows:

- i. The **Senate Standing Committee on Social, Children, Youth, Women, the Elderly, the Disabled and the Underprivileged Affairs** is a high-level mechanism to monitor the implementation of agencies in both public and private sectors on issues relating to children, women and the elderly.
- ii. The **Standing Committee on Children, Young People, Women, the Elderly, Persons With Disabilities, Ethnic Groups, and LGBT People** in House of Representatives is a high-level mechanism to monitor the implementation of agencies in both public and private sectors on issues relating to children, teenagers, women, the elderly, **persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, and LGBT People**.
- iii. The **Thai Women Parliamentarian Caucus** was established in 1992 that includes female members of the House of Representatives and the Senate to be members.
- iv. The **National Human Rights Commission** (NHRC) is a semi-governmental, autonomous entity to submit an annual evaluation of the human rights situation, propose policies and recommendations to the National Assembly for amending laws, promote measures to educate citizens on human rights, and investigate human rights abuses.

Other women's civil society organizations, academic institutes include the National Council

of Women of Thailand, the Association for the Promotion of Status of Women, the Gender and Development Research Institute, the Association of Women Lawyers of Thailand, the Friends for Women Foundation, the Foundation For Women, the Empower Foundation, the Women's Studies Center of Chiang Mai University, the Thai Women's Watch Foundation, the Foundation for Women, Law, and Rural Development, the Women and Youth Studies Program of Thammasat University, the Women's Movement in Thai Political Reform (We-Move), the Hotline Center Foundation, the Women Workers' Unity Group, the Women's Health Advocacy Foundation, the Women's Studies Program under the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, the Institute of Population Research Center, Mahidol University (Tantiwiranond and Pandey 2008).

Furthermore, the network of active grassroots ethnic women organization in Northern Region is the Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT). It was founded in 1996 to provide a gender perspective to development activities affecting indigenous communities in Northern Thailand (IWNT and AIPP 2017).

Institutions related to Food Security

The Thai National Food Committee (NFC) supports different agencies to create an effective national food management system, to promote the cooperation and integration of budgetary and other resources during normal times and emergencies. At the national level, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) of the MoAC are

mandated as secretariate offices to develop the 5-Year **Strategic Framework for Food Management** in Thailand (SFFM) in 2012.

There are 14 Ministries, over 30 units, and 30 Acts involved in food management in Thailand. Organizations involved in the SFFM are mainly government agencies and their relationships in the committee structure tend to be vertical without NGOs' participation (see Table 7.4).

Furthermore, Thailand has adopted the **ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action in Food Security** (2013-2020) to be the backup conceptual framework to formulate its own FS strategic plan. The MoAC appointed the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAF) as the main agency to oversee food security in agriculture sectors. FS has been integrated in the **5-Year Agriculture Development under the 12th NESDP** (2017-2021) as guideline to implement its policy in line with the SFFM. MoAC's Food Security Strategic Plan (2017-2021) was formulated on May 3, 2017 as fundamental of FS projects and activities during 5 years ahead.

At the policy level, the **Agriculture and Cooperatives Planning Board** under the 12th Plan (2017-2021) has the MoAC Permanent Secretary as its President, with Secretaries of the MoAC serving as the Board's Vice Presidents. Members include representatives from agencies outside of the MoAC, the private sector, the National Farmers Council, and heads of agencies under the MoAC. The duties of the Board are to set up strategies, measures, guidelines and directions for agricultural and cooperatives development under the 12th Plan (2017-2021).

Table 7.4: Involved organizations in the SFFM's Committee Structure

Sector	Name of Organization
Ministries	Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Tourism & Sports, MoAC, Ministry of Transport, MoNRE, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, MoPH, Ministry of Industry
Governmental Offices	National Security Council, National Research Council of Thailand
Research Organizations	Thailand Research Fund, Agricultural Research Development Agency (Public Organization)
Banks, Businesses and Industrial Organizations	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, Thai Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Thai Industries.

Institutions related to Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration

The government agencies involved in these areas, include the Natural Resources and Environmental Management Division within the ONEP under the MoNRE, the Office of NESDB, and the Biodiversity-based Economy Development Office (a public organization). The ONEP is the principal agency for mobilizing implementation of the strategies under the Master Plan, and mechanisms at national, provincial and local levels are as follows:

- i. **National Committee on Conservation and Utilization of Biodiversity** (NCB) is responsible for mobilizing implementation of the Master Plan at national level, and providing policy advice and suggestions in coordinating and integrating implementation of the strategies under the Master Plan in order to achieve its targets.
- ii. **Sub-committees and Working Groups**, including the Sub-committee on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Multilateral Advisory Sub-committee on Protected Areas, and the Sub-committee on Promotion of Business Sectors' Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Utilization, have roles in coordinating and integrating implementation of the strategies in relation to their responsibilities by integrating and pushing for implementation across stakeholders from public, private societal and local sectors, including research communities and academic institutes.
- iii. **Agency-Level Biodiversity Committees** have roles in coordinating annual action plan formulation in accordance with the Master Plan and in pushing forward implementation of agency level plan.
- iv. **Agencies and Sectors Undertaking Biodiversity Works** at national, provincial and local levels collaborate and network to push for implementation of the Master Plan through participation at all levels.

International NGOs involved in BC and ER include the WWF Greater Mekong Programme working in the Mekong Sub-region since 1980s. IUCN has supported several projects for many years. Green Net, a social business organization, promotes organic agriculture and fair trade in Thailand. It consists of two departments: Green

Net Cooperative, and Earth Net Foundation. For civil society participation, there are people forums, seminars and online media to exchange for knowledge and information.

NGOs also play a role to integrate gender and environmental perspectives. Prominent female agricultural leaders are awarded as role models in this area by NGOs. Moreover, a lot of working groups of Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN), a women's network of APEC, deal with the issue of women and the environment. Thailand, as one of the APEC member economies, thus, integrates gender issues into environmental protection through the implementation of these working groups' policies (The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development 2004, 13-14).

Institutions related to Climate Change

At the national level, Thailand established the **National Committee on Climate Change Policy** (NCCC) in 2007, Chaired by the Prime Minister with members from the public and private sectors, and academic institutions. The NCCC has the mandate to define national climate policies. It is composed of four Sub-committees; Climate Change Policy and Planning Integration, Climate Change Knowledge and Database, Climate Change Negotiation and International Cooperation, and Public Relations and Actions for Climate Empowerment.

Forestry and Agriculture are priority areas of CC Mitigation, with which the MoNRE and the MoAC are involved as below:

- The MoNRE, as a national focal point of Climate Change, has launched the national plan of action (Strategic Plan). For REDD+ Preparation and Initiatives, the Government established the REDD+ Task force in 2011 as an inter-ministerial and multi-sectorial committee, Chaired by the Director-General of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) of MoNRE. The REDD+ Task force comprises of various stakeholders from government and non-government agencies including NGOs, local forest-dependent communities, private organizations and research institutions.
- In 2019, the MoAC was supported through the **Integrating Agriculture in National**

Adaptation Plans Program (NAP-Ag), a multi-country support programme led by the UNDP and FAO, and financed by the Government of Germany (BMU), to enhance the technical capacity of M&E within climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector. In addition, private sectors, such as Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group, participated in capacity building process (UNDP 2019). There are different ten Departments are involved with the Agriculture Sub-committee on Climate Change as representatives, including the OAE, Department of Agriculture, Department of Fisheries, Royal Irrigation Department, Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO). These Departments also participate in the M&E adaptation in agricultural sector, as well as the ONEP of the MoNRE.

- Relevant agencies have also integrated the CC aspect into their policies and plans such as the Alternative Energy Development Plan 2015-2036, the Energy Efficiency Plan 2015-2036, the Power Development Plan 2015-2036, the Thailand Smart Grid Development Master Plan 2015-2036 and Environmentally Sustainable Transport System Master Plan (MoFA 2017).

At present, the Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization (Public Organization), together with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has established the Climate Change International Training Center (CITC) to be a technical and training center as well as a networking platform for Thailand and other countries in the Asia-Pacific Region to address climate change.

Thai NGOs, led by the Thai Working Group for Climate Justice (TCJ), submitted civil society's position at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009. In the document, they assert that developing countries should not be forced to cut emissions but should voluntarily adopt a more sustainable, low-emission development path while ensuring popular participation. They also argued that the agricultural sector should not be forced to cut emissions since its emissions are part of the natural carbon cycle. They also believe that developed countries need to help developing ones adapt to climate

change (Marks 2011, 245). The Thai Government has encountered limitations and thus would need to strengthen its policy implementation mechanisms. Measurable and verifiable data collection system is also required for an effective implementation. Enhancing public understanding and awareness, especially among children and youth, is its upcoming priority tasks, as well as challenges in improving preparedness and capacity of all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure full participation of all sectors (MoFA 2017, 46-47). Therefore, policy and action on gender-sensitive and child-centered CCA is urgently needed to support the girls and young women who facing extreme vulnerability and poverty (Johnson and Boyland n.d., 3).

7.3.2 Human Resource, Capacity and Budgetary Provisions

For Gender Equality, FS, BC, ER, and CC, there are many departments who are directly responsible for each sector such as:

- The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) of the MoSDHS:** The Gender Equality Promotion Division of the OWAFD take a role to mobilize key stakeholders that will play a role in implementing gender equality policy and action plan. In FY 2020, the OWAFD had 664 staff: male 170 and female 494. The proportion of women staff are almost three time of men. Women account for 90 percent of 20 high-ranking positions for FY 2021 (administrators, specialists, directors). The budget received from the Government had reduced by 0.0035 percent of the GDP (see Table 7.5).
- The ONEP of the MoNRE:** The ONEP is a focal point agency to mobilize key stakeholders that will play a role in implementing CC Adaptation and Biodiversity Management Policies and action plans. In FY 2020, the ONEP had 589 staff - no sex-disaggregated data available. Women account for 63.63 percent of 22 high-ranking positions (administrators, experts, directors). The budget received from the Government which was 0.0060 percent of the GDP (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Government Budget for the Department and Offices related to Gender Equality, FS, BC, ER, CC between the FY 2019 and 2020, (Unit: million USD, exchange rate 1 USD = 35 Baht)

Department/ Office	2019 GDP = 485,714.29 (17 trillion Baht)		2020 GDP = 509,142.86 (17.82 trillion Baht)	
	Expenditure Budget	% of GDP	Expenditure Budget	% of GDP
OWAFD	19.46	0.0040	17.70	0.0035
ONEP	23.08	0.0048	30.36	0.0060
RFD	159.54	0.0329	150.40	0.0295

iii. **The Royal Forest Department (RFD) of the MoNRE:**

The RFD used to run women-related programs with the help of ESCAP, implementing a Women's Development Program to promote agriculture, forestry and conducting research and development a model for energy use from wood grown in the community firewood reforestation project since 1980s. In 1982, there was a project to develop women to support forestry work in Buriram province, Northeast Region (Lekawiwatanakun, Rungsrisawat, Wayaboon and Praekthong n.d.). In FY 2020, the RFD has 11,540 staff - no sex-disaggregated data available. Women account for 16 percent of 25 high-ranking positions (administrators, directors). The budget received from the Government had reduced by 0.0295 percent of the GDP (see Table 7.5).

iv. **The ACFS of MoAC:** With the FDA of the MoPH, the ACFS is a co-share secretariate office of the NFC that coordinates with government sectors in driving the country's SFFM in order that Thailand can product food safety and food security in a sustainable way. For FS, the NFC emphasizes economical agriculture zoning, precision farming – eco-friendly farm, smart farmer, and partnership of smart office. However, the main task of the ACFS is on promotion and strengthening of agricultural standards, accrediting and standardizing agricultural products and foods. Therefore, it focuses more on agricultural products than agricultural production, such as organic standard that is related to organic farming. There was no budget data available in the 2019 Annual Report.

7.3.3 Mechanism of Gender Mainstreaming within institutions

All 20 Ministries in Thailand should to appoint their CGEO and GFP to promote gender equality in their organization. On the capacity, knowledge and skills of government agencies and human resources in conceptual understanding of and implementation capacity for gender integration/mainstreaming, the DWF by Division of Gender Equality is a central coordinator that has addressed the CGEOs, chaired by the Permanent Secretary or Deputy Director-General of Ministries who received gender mainstreaming and gender advocacy training, and GFPs' advancement. The MoSDHS has developed an introductory manual on promotion of gender equality in order to create knowledge for CGEOs and GFPs' staff.

In addition, the MoSDHS determines to be a model organization of gender equality promotion. Under the MoSDHS, the DWF set two positions of expert on women and family in its organizational structure. Under the DWF, the Report on the Implementation of the Promotion of Gender Equality among Government Agencies in 2019 According to the WDS (2017-2021) done by the Division of Gender Equality (2020) is given in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6: Implementations of the Promotion of Gender Equality among Government Agencies in 2

Strategy of the WDS (2017-2021)	No. of Government Agencies	No. of Projects
1. Empowerment Measures	62	231
2. Paradigm Shift Measures	67	162
3. Enabling Condition Measures	36	60
4. Protective and Corrective Measures	24	57
5. Strengthen WID Mechanism and Processes	22	45
Total Government Agencies 138	No. of Government Agency Reported 114	

For the Strengthen WID Mechanism and Processes, the most projects had been implemented by emphasizing improvement of the mechanism of CGEPs and GFPs within ministry and department levels. In addition, in June 29, 2020, the DWF held a workshop on development of GFPs to enhance knowledge and awareness of gender equality issues, in which 45 CGEOs and GFP staff of all Departments under the MoSDHS participated.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

For SDGs implementation, the total budget that the Government approved for 2019 is 3 trillion Baht (approximately USD 85.71 billion) and 3.2 trillion Baht (Approximately USD 91.43 billion) in fiscal 2020. The amount of the FY 2019-2020's annual budget was set aside for the Departments are shown in the Table 7.5 above. Gender budgeting is still too far-fetched to achieve in Thai budgeting system. By the setting up of Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in the public sector, it is expected that gender budgeting will be carried out in the near future (OWAFD 2004).

Gender budgeting in Thailand started in 2006. The OWAFD and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung jointly organized several workshops on gender budgeting to promote knowledge creation and recognition of gender budgeting for CGEOs, GFPs, government officials, academics, women leaders and others who are interested in using gender budgeting in their organizations. The Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWF) developed a Gender Responsive Budgeting Handbook for Government Agencies in 2015.

For implementation of gender budgeting, the DWF and the Office of the Education Council will examine methods and approaches for implementing gender budgeting across the government agencies.

The 2017 Constitution set out a commitment to introduce gender budgeting. The Budget Bureau has asked spending Ministries to indicate on their budget request forms whether individual budget requests have a gender impact. Therefore, key stakeholders include: **National Committee on the Policy and Strategy for the Advancement of Women** (NCPSAW), the **Committee for Promoting the Improvement of the Status of Women** (CPISW), the DWF, and the CGEOs and GFPs exist across Ministries. Other institutional stakeholders involved in gender budgeting, include the Budget Bureau, the DWF and line Ministries. The DWF will revise the Gender Responsive Budgeting Handbook in 2020 to align with the Budget Bureau's new direction for gender budgeting (OECD 2019).

The gaps in gender budgeting and recommendations for improvement outlined in the report, **Thailand: Gender Budgeting Action Plan** (OECD 2019) are as follows:

Gaps

- The tools of implementation for gender budgeting are little developed, and there is limited understanding across government officials of what gender budgeting is and how it can be implemented.
- There is a lack of awareness that other government programs can have a direct or

indirect impact on gender equality.

- There are key gaps in the availability of gender-disaggregated data, important for understanding gender needs and informing policy development.

OECD's Recommendations

In the short term:

- The Budget Bureau should have responsibility for setting out instructions for line Ministries, developing requirements for gender tagging of budget programs and setting out the roles for the NCPSAW and the CPISW and DWF in delivering gender budgeting.
- The DWF should update the GRB Handbook to align with the Budget Bureau's new direction for gender budgeting and provide training across government.
- The Government should seek to update the National Gender Data Plan and the National Statistics Office will play a key role in helping plug existing data gaps.

In the medium term:

- Gender equality targets and indicators set out in the next iterations of the NESDP and the Women's Development Strategy should align more closely.
- Ministries and their departments and agencies should integrate a gender dimension to performance setting and set gender goals for those policies and programs that have been identified through the aforementioned tagging exercise.

In the longer term:

- The Government may wish to codify specifics of gender budgeting in the organic budget law.
- Ministries should undertake Gender Impact Assessments for these policies and programs and these assessments should accompany budget requests.

The glaring gap between the planning and implementation of the CC plan and other environmental regulations further weakens the government's current capacity to respond (Marks 2011, 244). This gap has emerged for several reasons:

- i. The ONEP is the focal point of CC but does not have enough authority or influence to command other agencies to implement

CC policies. The ONEP also lacks human resource, with only 11 staff working on CC and funding. As a result, it is often let down by other Ministries have not given much priority to CC policies.

- ii. There is a lack of coordination among Government Ministries: each agency has its own jurisdiction, plans and budgets and often resists sharing information with other Ministries.
- iii. Frequent changes in government impede the implementation of clear and consistent CC policies.
- iv. Local governments have authority to implement environmental regulations but lack financial support from the central government and necessary technical knowledge.
- v. Officials do not strongly enforce existing environmental laws, such as those pertaining to environmental quality control and natural resource management. These laws are also not integrated into any comprehensive framework on CC.

7.3.4 Achievements, Learnings and Challenges within Thai Institutions

The major achievements and challenges faced by Thai institutions related to FS, BC, ER, and CC and the integration of gender equality within these institutions are outlined in Table 7.7 below.

Table 7.7: Major Achievements, Learnings and Challenges within Thai Institutions

Major Achievements	Challenges
1. Thai National Food Committee (NFC) National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), MoAC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NFC has developed strategic guidelines to support FS in Thailand: 1st Strategic Framework for Food Management in Thailand (SFFM 2012-2016) 2st Strategic Framework for Food Management in Thailand (SFFM 2018-2036), including 18 indicators that cover agriculture, food processing, food consumption for health, and sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved Departments considering to make their own plans/projects to integrate between and across Ministries and Departments are complexities to do so. Food security strategic theme is not direct duty of the ACFS of MoAC but needed cooperation from other Ministries and Departments, particularly the RFD and the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, the MoNRE. For the 20-Year ACS 2018-2037 in relation to FS, MoAC has faced some limitations is property rights and land tenure, land degradation and soil erosion, water scarcity, Community Forests Bill, and chemical agriculture. Gender concerns have not been integrated into this SFFM (2018-2036) framework.
Major Achievements	Challenges
2. MoAC - Office of Agricultural Economics (OAF)	
Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans Program (NAP-Ag)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sectoral Plans to enhance the technical capacity to M&E CCA in the agriculture sectors supported by UNDP and FAO and Government of Germany (BMU) is still lack of gender perspective.
3. The National Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD), Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), MoNRE	
<p>The CSD has developed many legislations, policy documents and plans to support the CC Mitigation and Adaptation, BC and ER, in Thailand, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Policy, Strategies and Action Plan on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (1998-2002) National Policy, Strategies and Action Plan on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (2003-2007) National Policies, Measures and Plans on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Biodiversity (2008-2012). Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management (2015-2021) National Biodiversity Targets and the Action Plan on Biodiversity Management (2015-2016) Biodiversity Management Action Plan (2017-2021) Drafting the Biodiversity Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 12th NESDP (2017-2021) sets out a goal to restore 40 percent of overall forest areas in Thailand that cover highlands where ethnic people living. The DNP has a policy to establish more 25 National Parks by preparing to integrate preserve forest lands into national park territory that will affect to ethnic communities. Local ethnic traditional practices in the conservation lands and their community rights tend to be ignored by the government sectors. The government agencies in line Ministries need to train its staff on gender sensitivity. Lack of quantitative and qualitative studies on the impacts of CC to women, children, and vulnerable groups and administrative data and information from government agencies are not collected and classified by sex, age group, ethnicity or administrative areas. There is no clear information on how expertise of CSOs would be utilized in SDGs implementation and what budget would be allocated.

Major Achievements	Challenges
<p>4. The National Committee on Climate Change Policy (NCCC), Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), MoNRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NCCC has the mandate to define national climate policies and plans, for example; • The Screening Committee for Project Financial Support under the International Framework • Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2050 • Drafting the Climate Change Act • REDD+ Preparation and Initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sub-committee on Climate Change Policy and Planning Integration is pushing forward an integrated budget allocation system on climate change that is needed to include GRB. • Pushing guideline for implementation of the effective regulatory, monitoring and evaluation processes that mentioned in Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2050 into practice. • The REDD+ initiatives' implementation in protected forests is related to park and people debates
<p>5. The National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family Development (NCWF), Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD), MoSDHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women's Development Strategy (WDS 2017-2021) under the 12th NESDP (2017-2021) • CGEOs and GFPs as mechanisms to promote gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGEOs and GFPs' mainstreaming gender equality is only within their organization, not further to service recipients. • There are frequent changes in CGEOs and GFPs that limit their experiences of mainstreaming gender equality in project designs
<p>6. Women's Civil Society Organizations, Academic Institutes, and Ethnic Women Coalition</p> <p>Gender Equality has been mainstreamed in line MoSHS that gender mainstreaming, gender advocacy, women's empowerment and research on gender equality development are prioritized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and political mobilizations have often been prohibited. • Funding limitation

7.4. State of Gender Integration in Sectoral Interventions

This section provides information of programme interventions/projects implemented by government and non-government agencies in relation to mainstreaming gender into FS, BC & ER, and CC sectors and to identify good practices, lessons learned and tools used. The

recent projects/programs of FS, BC & ER, and CC where gender concerns have been integrated are presented in Table 7.8.

7.4.1 Major Projects and Interventions

Following are selected programmes/projects being implemented in relation to the study sectors. For more projects refer to Annex 7.

Table 7.8: Programs Implemented by Government and Non-Government Agencies in Relation to FS, BC, ER and CC in Thailand.

Food Security
<p>1. Extension Project for Home Economics for Food Security in Household and Community Funding: Government Budget Duration: FY 2019</p> <p>The project aimed to promote and develop knowledge, ability and skills of housewife farmer groups, create a quality food source and enhance the body of knowledge and increase the efficiency of the staff. It had been operated by the Housewife Farmers and Home Economics Section, Farmer Development Division under Department of Agriculture Extension of the MoAC.</p>
Biodiversity Conservation & Ecosystem Restoration
<p>1. Voices for Mekong Forests (V4MF) Project Donors: EU Duration: 2017-2021</p> <p>Participating Countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam Organizational Partners: RECOF-TC, WWF Germany and Greater Mekong</p> <p>The project recognizes that many national, regional and global initiatives offer opportunities for non-state actors (NSA) to become actively involved in government-led forest landscape dialogues and decision-making processes. Therefore, the project leverages and contributes to these initiatives, particularly the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade - Voluntary Partnership Agreements initiative and REDD+, by helping to ensure they are built on multi-stakeholder processes, and that civil societies have the capacity to effectively engage on issues, present their concerns to policy makers, and organize themselves to share information and strengthen negotiating positions. One of the objectives of the project was: By 2020 NSAs have strengthened rights in conjunction with increased capacity to improve gender and socially inclusive forest governance.</p>
Climate Change
<p>1. Risk-Based National Adaptation Plan Project Donor: GIZ Duration: 2015-2021</p> <p>The project aimed to develop a national Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), integrate climate risks and NAP measures into sector policies/strategies and subnational planning processes, and align financing instruments and budgeting system with the NAP framework to enhance the implementation of adaptation measures. Five Pilot Areas at sub-national level were studied: Chiang Rai Province on robust tourism strategy for tourism industry, Nakhon Sawan and Mahasarakham Province on CC & Health Impact Assessment, Udonthani city on resilience spatial planning and institutional arrangement to support CCA, Upper Chao Phraya Basin on robust agriculture system for rice-based agriculture system, and Andaman Coastal Area on robust development planning.</p>
<p>2. Climate Justice (CJ) Program Donors: Sida, Norad, EU, FJS Duration: 2019 Budget: USD 155,854.57</p> <p>Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) has launched the CJ Program, focusing on building the capacities of the women's movement and co-creating resources that are based on the gendered effects of climate change as well as women's knowledge on climate resilience and climate justice. The programme conducts Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) with grassroots women's organizations and their communities, and mobilizes cross-movements collaboration to co-create a Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future.</p>
<p>3. Forestry and Climate Change (FOR-CC) Program Committed by: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Lead Executing Agency: ASEAN Duration: 2015-2017</p> <p>Women, as one of the more vulnerable groups within society are particularly at risk. This Project aimed to improve the cooperation and joint positioning of ASEAN member states on key climate change issues in the areas of agriculture and forestry.</p>

7.4.2 Relevant Tools, Approaches and Technologies

Most of the project interventions reviewed were not gender aware and did not promote equal participation of men and women in the project activities, except for the “Climate Justice Program” which implemented a gender transformative approach in the sector of CC. The has been implemented by APWLD in the Asia Pacific region. The program’s approach is to use the Global South feminist perspectives to critically analyze public participation and its intersectionality for climate action, plugging a massive gap that is currently present at multilateral diplomatic processes.

This programme has focuses on building capacity of the women most affected by climate change and collecting evidence on the impacts faced by communities and advocacy aims to ensure that the voices and demands of Asia Pacific’s women for climate justice are integrated in policies at local, national, regional and international levels, towards advancing sustainability and women’s human rights. CC campaign, for example the climate strike action was organized by APWLD in Chiang Mai, along with young climate change activists that raise awareness on climate justice as a feminist issue.

The programme has conducted a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) with grassroots women’s organizations and their communities to engage at the UNFCCC. It contributes to critically evaluating and influencing country specific climate change ambitions. Under the program, APWLD launched the 3rd Climate Justice FPAR on the theme of ‘Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Futures Sub-Grants for Nationally Determined Contributions Monitoring and Equity’, engaging seven partner organizations from the region - Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, Nepal and Vietnam.

Scaling up the FPAR: As a collective research process, FPAR strengthens solidarity and aims to empower women to work collectively for long-term structural change. Through FPAR communities can develop deeper analysis of the problem being analyzed, documentation skills, advocacy and campaigning skills, and leadership and movement building capacity. The

‘knowledge’ or research should be collectively authored and owned by the community. The authorship of the research gives the community a platform to advocate for change. Through FPAR grassroots women and women activists locate opportunities to utilize the knowledge and engage in evidence-based policy debates in Thailand and Asia Pacific region.

7.5 Overall Conclusion

The Government of Thailand has made different committees, strategic frameworks and master plans for FS, BC, ER and CC, but the proper integration of gender in these policies and action plans is a hard task and difficult commitment for implementation. The National Food Committee has developed strategic guidelines to support FS in Thailand. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives by the Office of Agricultural Economics has integrated the Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans Program and enhanced the technical capacity for M&E Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in the agriculture sector. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment by Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning has formulated the National Committee on Climate Change Policy to define national climate policies and plans. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security by the Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development has played an important role in mobilization and implementation according to the Women Development Strategy. The Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development with partnerships and support from relevant Ministries and Departments, institutions and partners, has attempted to stimulate gender equality in key strategic policies in Thailand. However, there are still gaps on how to translate the policies/strategic plans into implementation at the sub-national level. These institutional arrangements are responsible for their own particular purposes; the integration of gender through mechanisms of Chief Gender Executive Officers and Gender Focal Points has been questioned. In addition, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in these sectors in Thailand has mainly been done through the external projects/ programs by Civil Society Organizations and institutions supported by international development partners.

CHAPTER 8

OVERALL FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Findings and Lessons from the Policy Context of the Region

This study reviewed the policy context, the institutions and different mechanisms, and selected interventions in some mountain countries in Asia - Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand. The review focused on four areas – climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security and how gender equality had been integrated in order to facilitate meeting the SDGs. The review revealed that the countries have made a lot of investments, and have had some success but there are also continuing challenges in successfully integrating and mainstreaming gender equality, as well as inclusion of other vulnerable and marginalized populations within the countries, which could affect the fulfillment of the SDGs as well as the principle of leaving no one behind. This chapter presents a summary of the key findings from the review and makes recommendations to help improve and strengthen efforts at ensuring integrating gender equality in a manner that will bring transformation in gender inequality, strengthen equal opportunities, and realize the basic human rights of all.

8.1.1. Regional Outlook of Sectoral Policies and Gender References

All the five countries studied, are at different stages in their attempt to integrate gender equality in sectoral policies. There are different approaches being adopted and the outcomes also varies to some extent. The review has also uncovered a number of lessons learnt and challenges that remain to be addressed.

BHUTAN

Gender equality, climate change and environmental sustainability are identified as important issues in Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan and the Gross National Happiness (GNH) screening tool for national policies. The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) has developed a gender

mainstreaming guideline including a checklist to apply - from situation analysis to planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring. A separate National Plan of Action for Gender Equality is developed that promotes gender mainstreaming across all policies, programmes and projects making capacity building and use of gender disaggregated data mandatory across all sectors. However, these gender equality frameworks remain in isolation and there is no specific budget and resources allocated for implementation and monitoring of the plan. The major gender equality provisions in key policy frameworks for addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security are summarized below.

References to gender equality in key policies and strategies related to CC, ER, BC, FS in Bhutan

1. National Climate Change Policy 2020

- Identify gender issues/gaps in addressing CC and develop gender responsive climate actions
- Promote identification and transfer of appropriate technologies to support gender responsive mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Develop guidance and tools for assessing, planning, integrating and implementing adaptation and mitigation measures at all levels including gender equality considerations
- NCWC has the mandate to provide support in mainstreaming gender responsive climate actions

2. National Environment Strategy 2020

- Adopt a gender responsive approach to address gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of development, including environment policies and programmes
- Promote gender equality by giving women a greater voice in the management of the land they own for better business

opportunities and access to an effective secondary and higher secondary education along with skills training

- Rural women are recognised as one of the constituencies of capacity building, considered as provider and recipient of capacity development activities
- Promote climate resilient water harvesting, storage and distribution system that saves time for women and children

3. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014

- Safeguarding women and the vulnerable who are dependent on biodiversity and ecosystem services for their livelihoods is one of the guiding principles
- Provision to develop and implement strategies to safeguard key ecosystems and vulnerable groups including women and children

4. Food and Nutrition Security Policy of Bhutan (2014)

- Gender sensitivity and inclusivity is one of the guiding principles of the policy
- Implement micro-credit programmes directed at women and youth to enhance incomes and diversify sustainable rural and urban based livelihood options
- Improve sustainable access to micro-credit to small holders, in particular women and youth
- Recognises women as one of the vulnerable groups as food insecurity among women can result in fatal malnutrition and low birth weights (50 percent of women and girls suffer from Anaemia)

5. Agriculture Research Strategy (2018-2028)

- Gender equality is considered as one of the guiding principles and core values
- Ensure technology development that addresses gender concerns and cultural sensitivity
- Conduct farm mechanization research to design, modify and promote efficient and gender friendly agricultural tools and implement

6. Agriculture Extension Strategy (2019-2028)

- There are objectives to ensure gender mainstreaming into extension service delivery (as well as poverty, disaster, environment and climate change mainstreaming too)
- A guiding principle is to provide special attention and support to gender and youth specific needs
- Establish an Agriculture Machinery Centre to provide six services including 'promote environmental and gender friendly machinery'
- Ensure gender mainstreaming in planning

7. National Gender Equality Policy 2020

- Mainstreaming gender in all disaster and climate change related initiatives through acknowledgement of the differential impacts of disaster and climate change on women and men and the positive roles that women can play in adaptation and mitigation efforts

8. National Plan of Action for Gender (2008-2013)

- Out of seven critical areas of action towards gender equality, agriculture and nutrition are explicitly mentioned under economic development and health themes
- Three out of the seven priority actions planned are: (i) strengthening capacity of GFPs, GNHC and the NCWC; (ii) strengthening collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender-related information; and (iii) integrating gender into monitoring and evaluation.

9. Second Nationally Determined Contributions 2015:

- This does not have gender specific analysis and responses.

CAMBODIA

The Ministry of Women's Affairs in Cambodia has the mandate to provide overall policy guidance on gender mainstreaming, and has developed National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Additionally, a Gender and Climate Change Committee (GCCC) and Gender Mainstreaming Action Group (GMAG) have been established under

the Cambodia National Council on Women (CNCW) to facilitate the gender mainstreaming across all the sectors. Despite these broader frameworks, the review of policies shows gender integration is inadequate in the sectoral policies. The major gender equality provisions in key policy frameworks for addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security are summarized below.

References to gender equality in key policies and guidelines on CC, ER, BC, FS in Cambodia

1. Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (2014-2023)

- Recognises women and the poor as the most vulnerable to climate change and recognizes the importance of addressing gender issues
- There is a separate strategic objective on gender 'focused on reducing sectoral, regional and gender vulnerability and health risks to climate change impacts'
- There are specific interventions to 'prioritise women's needs in climate change adaptation and mitigation'

2. Gender and Climate Change Strategic Plan (2013-2023) (along with Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (2014-18) and Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2018-2030)

- There are specific objectives to promote gender equality in processes and policy implementation related to climate change, green growth and disaster management
- Focus on improving capacity in adaptation planning and investments
- Focus on in-depth research, learning and sharing the progress made, analyse the needs and gaps, recommend robust approaches

3. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020)

- Facilitate awareness targeting women to enhance biodiversity conservation related understanding
- Places mechanisms for monitoring improvement of ecosystem services and their impact on women

- Strengthen capacities of indigenous and local women to handle access to and benefit sharing issues through negotiation

4. National REDD+ Strategy (2017-2021)

- Envisions a separate gender group formally structured under REDD+
- Gender equality is one of the guiding principles and is within the M&E guideline

5. National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (2019-2023)

- The strategy recognises undernutrition, overweight and obesity issues among women and children
- Gender is taken as one of the crosscutting themes
- Specific objective 'to improve nutrient absorption and reduce disease among children, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescents through increased access to safely managed drinking water, improve hygiene and sanitation behaviours and facilities at household level'.

6. Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework 2016-2020

- Recognises problems faced by rural women including women being left out from the rapid process of modernisation of agriculture; increased drudgery of women; low education and literacy, under representation in community-based organizations and lack of access to resources necessary for economic empowerment.

7. Nationally Determined Contributions

- Strengthen institutional capacity to integrate gender responsiveness in CC policies, plans & budgets
- Enhance M&E system of sectoral ministries to track gender outcomes
- Separate coding on Gender Responsiveness on climate adaptation actions
- Capacity development of GCCC and sectoral ministries on gender analysis and integration
- Technical guideline on gender mainstreaming
- Support rural women to make market supply chain climate resilience

CHINA

China has a number of major policy instruments such as the Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (Five-Year Plan), the Report of the National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the No.1 Central Document, and the State Council's Government Work Report. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women (2005) has officially established gender equality as a fundamental national policy. The country has now over 100 separate laws and regulations leading to the development of women specific plans and programmes. China also has a National Plan on Tackling Climate Change (2014-2020) and a National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (2013-2020). The NDC in 2020, also specifies increased targets and interventions for addressing climate change, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2030) has been developed and is being implemented. However much of these policies and strategies lack specific provisions related to gender equality or specific means and measures aimed at empowering women.

However, there is significant progress for gender integration in food security and poverty alleviation in recent years. The National Nutrition Plan (2016-2030) has been formulated, with specific indicators, intervention actions and projects targeting malnutrition of pregnant women, children, the elderly and other key groups. Women groups, together with ecological conservation and restoration, have been included in national and local poverty reduction plans, such as the Program for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China's Rural Areas (2011-2020).

References to gender equality in key policies and strategies related to CC, ER, BC, FS in China

1. **China National Plan on Tackling Climate Change (2014-2020)**
2. **National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (2013-2020)**
3. **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2030)**
4. **Nationally Determined Contributions 2015 (updated 2020)**

- While all four of these policies are technically very comprehensive there are no specific gender references or women specific mentions/plans/measures in the strategies.

5. National Nutrition Plan (2016-2030)

- Identifies women as one of the vulnerable groups
- Sets specific indicators, intervention actions and projects targeting malnutrition of pregnant women, children, the elderly and other key groups.

6. Program for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China's Rural Areas (2011-2020)

- Identifies women as one of the key actors
- Requires poverty reduction programmes to focus on women, along with other vulnerable groups
- The State Council's plan focuses on strengthening vocational skills training and employment guidance services for women from poor families

7. National Program for Women's Development (2011-2020)

- Adopts gender equality as main principle and advocates to implement advanced gender culture and realize women's rights and interests
- Out of 57 major targets, 26 are related to basic public services the government provides for women

NEPAL

Nepal too has a host of policies for addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security, as well as gender equality. The Ministry of Women, Children and Elderly Citizen, responsible to coordinate gender equality matters, has developed an overarching Gender Equality Policy (GEP 2021) that provides a mandate for all sectoral ministries for gender integration. In addition, there are gender mainstreaming strategies developed in each, climate change, environment and agriculture sectors. The major gender equality provisions in these key policy frameworks are summarized below

References to gender equality in key policies and guidelines on CC, ER, BC, FS in Nepal

1. National Climate Change Policy 2019

- Considers gender equality as one of the crosscutting themes
- Addresses disproportionate impact on women through climate change strategy and targeting, promotion of local knowledge, skills and technologies
- Enhance access of women to weather related information
- Emphasis on research/climate smart technology development, but no specific gender considerations

2. National Environment Policy 2020

- Considers mainstreaming gender in policies, plans, budget and implementation
- Investment in capacity building

3. LAPA 2019

- Considers GESI as one of the working approaches
- Emphasis on participation in Vulnerability Risk Assessment, awareness and capacity building
- Prioritising gender specific plans and budget
- Resilience building and income generation activities targeted to women
- Enhance access to information, knowledge and climate friendly technology, weather forecast and skill-based training

4. Forest Policy 2019

- Targets for 50 percent women's participation in all forestry related groups and organizations
- Considers integrating GESI perspectives in planning, and budgeting and improve equitable benefit sharing

5. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2020)

- Considers adoption of gender responsive policies and strategies
- Emphasis on equitable participation in policy formulation and implementation, gender disaggregated data, capacity building and development of guidelines in different languages

- Evaluation of projects and programmes from gender access and ownership perspectives

6. National Agriculture Policy 2004

- Encourages 50 percent participation of women in all agriculture production related interventions, institutions and organizations for gender equality;
- Conducts mobile training camps to reach women
- Ensures women's participation and access to information
- Considers use of disaggregated data and information

7. Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035)

- Addresses food & nutrition security of disadvantaged groups, including pregnant/lactating women;
- Considers developing a GESI strategy in agriculture
- Targets increasing women's land ownership from 10 to 50 percent by 2035
- Promotes women's organizations/cooperatives and women's participation in agriculture projects
- Encourages women's agro-entrepreneurship and jobs through value chain
- Capacity building and training targeted to women on financial and organization management

8. National Agro-Biodiversity Policy 2007 (revised 2014)

- Considers inclusion of women in exploration, promotion and utilisation of traditional knowledge and in implementation of job-oriented income generation activities IGA
- Considers special programmes for the poor, women and Dalits for the establishment and development of agro-enterprises

9. Nationally Determined Contributions 2020

- Considers gender equality one of the four cross cutting themes
- Sets targets to develop action plans on gender integration
- Encourages meaningful participation in policy making, negotiation, and gender disaggregated data

- Emphasis on technology development, equitable benefit sharing and specific budget to safeguard needs of women and disadvantaged

THAILAND

The 2017 amendment of the Constitution of Thailand has provisioned gender budgeting in section 71 saying: in allocating the budget, the state shall take into account the different necessities and needs with respect to genders, ages and conditions to ensure fairness. Following this provision, the government has developed a gender budgeting action plan. The country has a separate Gender Equality Act (2015) that mandates all sectoral ministries to develop policies and mechanisms to advance gender equality. A Women's Development Strategy 2017 also provides a framework for the protection of women's economic, social and cultural rights. The 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) requires all government agencies to formulate and adopt the gender equality master plan for the sector. The major gender equality provisions in key policy frameworks for addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security are summarized below.

References to gender equality in key policies and guidelines on CC, ER, BC, FS in Thailand

1. Climate Change Master Plan (2015-2050)

- Engender transparent and sustainable public participation in conservation of forests and ecosystems
- Engender awareness and willingness to participate in the practical fulfillment of the action plan

2. Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management (2015-2021)

- Raise awareness of the importance, and the roles of local communities and traditional knowledge, especially women's role in conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity
- Takes into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities in process of ecosystem restoration and safeguarding

3. Agriculture and Cooperative Strategy (2018-2037)

- Fostering gender equality and women's empowerment as one of the principles to promote public private partnership and motivating Responsible Agriculture Investment

4. National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan (2015-2019)

- Gender is one of the factors taken into account in damage and needs assessment, and meeting the needs of disaster affected people
- Vulnerable group including women will have the first priority of evacuation

5. National Adaptation Plan 2018

- No gender references

6. Agriculture Strategic Plan on Climate Change (2017-21)

- No gender references

7. Strategic Framework for Food Security

- No gender references

8. Nationally Determined Contribution (2020) - No gender references

8.1.2. Key Policy Issues and Lessons Learned

Across the region, most of the policies in CC, BC and FS have recognised the disproportionate impact of climate change and biodiversity loss on women, so policies treat women as one of the vulnerable groups. The policies increasingly recognise the importance of addressing gender concerns, and demonstrate gender responsiveness. In most cases gender equality is considered as a crosscutting theme. But the sectoral policies have inadequate level of gender analysis and policy response. Following are the common issues observed in sectoral policies in the region from a gender integration perspective.

- Policies are in place but there are limited guidelines, resource mobilization and internalization.** Policies and strategies in all the countries reviewed, increasingly acknowledge the important role of women in addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, agriculture production and food security albeit at different levels. Across

the region, there is an increasing trend of considering gender as one of the cross-cutting themes or guiding principles and/or approaches in policies and strategies. But only few policy provisions have been backed up by sectoral guidelines, plans and budget. Similarly, much of the policies also lack guidelines on gender integration so that the few gender provisions that exist in policies are inadequately internalised, funded and implemented. As the Bhutan review points out the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests has carried out many gender-related initiatives through project-tied activities; yet gender integration into plans, programmes and policies has always been a challenge due to lack of proper knowledge and skills (UNWomen/MoF RGB, 2013).

- ii. **There is limited recognition of the specificity of mountains.** Most of the sectoral policies lack an understanding of the mountain specific opportunities and challenges. This has resulted in only partial attention being paid to mountain issues and lack of interventions that suit mountain contexts. More resources, investment and research are needed to strengthen the understanding of the linkages and to generate mountain specific solutions.
- iii. **Gendered barriers are increasingly recognized but not adequately analyzed.** Policies and strategies increasingly acknowledge the important role of women but lack proper gender analysis and understanding of what enables and what disables women to participate, contribute and benefit from the policy provisions and interventions. Gender barriers such as traditional gender roles that require women to take entire responsibility of unpaid care work; lack of education, training and exposure; lack of land ownership, access to credit and technologies; gender norms constraining mobility, access to public space and decision making; and more importantly the intra-household power relations; all of these factors constrain women's ability to access to and benefit from available policies and incentive schemes. Such gender barriers are hardly recognized and addressed in policies, guidelines and

incentive schemes; the intersection of gender with other key markers such as age, class, caste, ethnicity, geographic location, disabilities, etc. also need to be taken into consideration. This has resulted in the lack of recognizing gender differences in needs, priorities and capacities in sectoral policies.

- iv. **Women's assets are recognized in the light of exacerbated impact.** Existing policies have increasingly recognized the disproportionate impact of climate change, loss of biodiversity and food insecurity on women and consider women as one of the vulnerable groups. Though limited, attempts are made to protect women from the vulnerability and minimize the adverse impact. This is a welcome policy move. But domination of this perspective in policy making has resulted in a complete neglect of women's agency and the important role they have been playing in sustainable development as an actor and agent. Because of women's direct exposure to nature and their gendered roles, women hold vast knowledge, skills and capacity for conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, mainly land, forests, water and biodiversity. Achieving sustainable development is not possible unless these important assets that women hold are valued, recognized, protected, enhanced and promoted for replication and adoption at wider scale. The sectoral policies across the region, are silent on these important aspects. The domination of vulnerability perspectives in policy making has resulted in the lack of provisions and funding to empower women for more effective engagement and contribution, as change agents, in the different sectors.
- v. **Cross-sectoral coherence is necessary in technical and gender matters.** One of the common gaps across the region is the lack of consistency and horizontal/vertical coherence within and between the sectors. In most of the policies, gender equality has been considered as a cross cutting theme and guiding principle. But in reality, gender equality provisions are treated in isolation and there is lack of consistency and coherence between and

within the sectors on gender integration. For example, in Thailand, despite the Constitutional provisions on Gender Budgeting and a separate Act on Gender Equality, the sectoral policies show very limited gender integration. The NBSAP of Bhutan has a separate section on gender mainstreaming, but the 6th National Report to the CBD 2019 lacks a gender focus. In Nepal, Thailand, Bhutan and Cambodia, agriculture and/or climate change sectors have sectoral gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans that have proper gender analysis and policy response. But these strategies and plans exist in isolation, i.e., they are not funded, not aligned and not reflected in sectoral plans and budgets for implementation. In addition, the interplay or the nexus between gender, agriculture, ecosystem and climate change has rarely received policy attention.

- vi. **There are limited instances of women's voices in decision-making.** Climate smart technologies and practices are adopted more successfully when they are appropriate to women's interests, resources and demands (Huyer, 2016). This requires participation of women in policy-making processes. But in reality, except in Nepal that has consistent emphasis on effective participation of women from policy making to planning, implementation and monitoring, the sectoral policies of the other countries lack provisions for women's participation. In Bhutan for example, several committees are provisioned in the policies to oversee the implementation of policies, but there are no mandatory provisions for participation of women and their organizations. The same applies to Cambodia and Thailand where policies have completely neglected women's participation in decision-making, planning and implementation. The gap often results in a lack of women's perspectives in policies and plans.
- vii. **There is limited investment in women friendly tools and technologies.** Research and technology development have received the least priority in sectoral policies with a complete neglect to the need for

gender responsive information, tools, methods and technologies that would help women to fully utilise their potential. As a result, existing policies give insufficient priority on research and development for developing information, capacity and technology relevant for women. There are very few policies with explicit provisions on development of women friendly tools, methods and technology needed in the sectors. For example, Bhutan has recognised the need for technologies, tools and methods for women to improve effectiveness and efficiency of their engagement. However, such provisions are scattered and not consistent across the sectors, nor backed up with action plans and guidelines.

- viii. **There is a need for disaggregated data:** Gender transformation requires attention on understanding who has been impacted and how have the roles, responsibilities and power relations is being changed or transformed. This requires data that is disaggregated by sex. Yet there is no single category of "women" thus, the intersectional differences – age, caste, ethnicity, race, class, abilities and capabilities, languages – are also necessary to ensure that the most marginalized and discriminated also has equal access, voice and are engaged in the decisions that affect their lives. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data, participatory monitoring and evaluation systems need to be in place. In all the countries, the emphasis on the use of gender disaggregated data is inadequate. Systems, tools, and practices need to be institutionalized to address this gap so that 'no one is left behind'.
- ix. **The SDGs are a priority in all the countries studied.** Their national legal frameworks also have commitments and provisions to advance gender equality. Most of the policies have recognized women as a 'victim' of climate change and ecosystem degradation and the provisions are focused towards protecting women from vulnerability. But women's agency and contribution to achieve sustainable development, especially in climate change,

ecosystem and food security is poorly understood and is less recognized. This gender neglect is evident in most of the sectoral policies that also explains limited focus and investment on gender friendly information, knowledge, tools, technologies and capacity building.

8.2. Findings and Lessons on the Institutional Context in the Region

Appropriate national and local policies help to focus on specific goals for sustainable development, and provides guidance and directions to a large extent to achieve those goals. But it is the institutions – government, non-government and private – that need to be instituted and mobilized in order to implement the policy directives, monitor and evaluate the outcomes and processes and support the refinement of the policies. ‘Institutions’ often mean the ‘rules of the game’ as well as ‘organizations’; in this study we have focused more on the different organizations which have functions of planning, implementation, administration, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and learning²⁴⁸ (Chang, 2006). However, when it comes to the element of gender integration and mainstreaming into policies, institutions, and programs, the role of the ‘informal institutions’ – the socio-cultural norms, values, attitudes and practices – have an equal or even more important role to play in ensuring equitable socio-economic development for all segments of the population. This section summarizes the learnings from the review of institutions conducted in Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand.

8.2.1 Institutional Arrangements, Mechanisms and Gender Integration

- i. **Planning Commissions, Ministries, Departments and Divisions:** In all the countries studied, there are adequate numbers of such institutions at the central and other levels of government to formulate policies, make plans, allocate

budgets and support the implementation of programs, in the four sectors – climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in Bhutan covers all four sectors supported by different Departments that focus on key sectors. Gender Focal Points at all levels within the Ministry and the Departments are responsible for overseeing the integration of gender equality in all policies and programs. In Nepal, two Ministries – Forests and Environment, and Agriculture and Livestock Development - cover the four sectors. In Cambodia, the National Council for Sustainable Development is the policy-making body providing overall management and leadership within the four sectors. Similarly, Bhutan has the Gross National Happiness Commission - the apex agency for all policies and planning in the country. China has the National Leading Group on Climate Change, Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction, and the Ministries of Ecology and Environment, and Agriculture and Rural Affairs, that are responsible for the study sectors.

In Nepal, there has been relatively slow progress in the transition into a three-tiered federal system since 2015 particularly in delivering the required regulatory and institutional frameworks, which has created challenges in the ability of local and provincial governments to deliver and manage public services.

- ii. **Implementation and monitoring of the SDGs:** In most of the countries the Planning Commissions are the agencies engaged in this responsibility through a number of supportive high-level committees. In Thailand the National Committee for Sustainable Development is the focal agency, while in China it is the Administrative Centre for China’s Agenda 21.
- iii. **Instituting Gender Responsive Governance:** Cambodia and Nepal have a specific Ministry, while Bhutan and Thailand have a high-level Commission that focus on providing strategic guidance to institutionalize a

248 Understanding the Relationship between Institutions and Economic Development: Some Key Theoretical Issues. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23547666_Understanding_the_Relationship_between_Institutions_and_Economic_Development_Some_Key_Theoretical_Issues [accessed May 31 2021].

gender responsive governance system in all the different government agencies at all levels. In Cambodia, at the sub-national levels, there are Women and Children's Consultative Committees which are important actors in the implementation of social policies, dialogue and negotiation. However, these Committees are mainly consultative bodies; they focus on health and education services for women and children, they lack decision-making power and have inadequate budget for programming. The National Working Committee on Children and Women in China organizes, coordinates, guides, supervises and urges departments concerned in promoting gender equality and women's development.

iv. **Mechanisms for Coordination:** In Nepal, there are a number of coordinating institutional mechanisms primarily for climate change which also covers issues related to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, as envisioned by the National Adaptation Plan including a "GESI, Livelihoods and Governance Thematic Group". There was limited information about such mechanisms in other countries. For food security and nutrition, a High-Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee and the National Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee have been established in Nepal, though they have not been very effective. In Cambodia, the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development is the coordinating body for food security and nutrition activities. It has its own structures and mandates, however, there is no assigned staff responsible for promoting gender mainstreaming and implementation into the food security sector. Despite the fact that there are close inter-linkages within the four sectors (CC, BC, ER and FS) there do not seem to be any inter-sectoral coordination committees or other mechanisms in any of the countries.

v. **Non-Government and Research Organizations:** In most of the countries there are a number of national and international non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and networks that work in different sectors with financial and technical

support from bilateral, multilateral and other donor agencies. They play an important role in service delivery, building capacity, advocacy for policy formulation and reforms, and advocacy for gender equality and inclusion of the most marginalized segments of the population.

In China, there are also two major non-governmental sources of funding for scientists – the National Social Science Fund of China and National Natural Sciences Foundation of China - to carry out research in areas such as women's employment rights, social security, resource allocation, physical and mental health, opportunity allocation, public services, etc.

In Nepal, the majority of I/NGOs, CSOs and networks are development oriented with policy advocacy as their top agenda, but they are yet to demonstrate the impact, primarily due to a weak system of evidence-based policy formulation. Hence their role in policy reform has not been too visible nor has it been well recognized in the cases where there has been some work done. Additionally, in Nepal, there are very few CSOs working towards the 'research – development continuum' in the study sectors, hence the evidence (scientific data/information/knowledge) required for meaningful policy discourse is a serious constraint.

8.2.2 Human Resources, Knowledge, Skills and Capacity

i. **Catalysts, such as Gender Focal Points/ Persons, for transformative change is critical.** Though most of the countries have provisions for Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) in sectoral ministries that are responsible for gender mainstreaming, often they have limited space to participate in policy making, and they also lack the mandate, skills, resources and authority to perform their tasks. It is important for the governments across the region to strengthen role of such GFPs and build their capacity across the sectors to integrate gender equality in the formulation and review processes of existing policies, programmes and projects

on climate change and related sectors. Gender mainstreaming checklists can be used and the policy formulation and review process can be expanded by involving internal and/or external gender expertise available throughout. The important but undervalued contributions that women make to climate change mitigation/adaptation, ecosystem restoration and ensuring food security in households, communities and larger society need to be acknowledged and recognized, including in the national accounting system. This might also explain gender neglect and lack of consistency in policy documents.

Bhutan has Gender Focal Points appointed in ministries and other agencies to carry out gender mainstreaming initiatives. However, the institutionalization of these GFPs and ensuring accountability still remains a challenge. There is high turnover rate of GFPs across the agencies and Dzongkhags. A national level Gender Expert Group provides technical backstopping to the National Women's Commission in carrying out gender initiatives. But there are many bureaucrats who do not have adequate knowledge or skills to integrated gender equality. In Nepal too, many of the federal level ministries have a Gender Focal Person, and some have dedicated units with specially trained staff and systems to monitor results. However, in many cases these staff/units have been unable to deliver effectively due to multiple reasons – lack of adequate mandate, limited or no resources for gender related work, and a continuing absence in any institutional linkages between their gender mandate and the main work of the Ministries.

Thailand is the only country that has Chief Gender Executive Officers - high-ranking officials in all Ministries and Departments to integrate gender perspective into projects and programs of all agencies and to develop a Master Plan on the promotion of gender equality of their agencies. Additionally, Gender Focal Points are established in every Ministry and Department to ensure gender equality in the operation of all Ministries and Departments.

- ii. **Capacity in Gender Integration:** In Cambodia, there is no responsible working group/department for the promotion of integration of gender equality into CC and BC under the direct leadership of National Council for Sustainable Development. Additionally, the capacity of sub-national administrations is weak; they only have basic ability to identify climate-related challenges and to propose and implement basic responses. Also, understanding of gender mainstreaming into CC, the nature of global climate change, and the expected long-term consequences, is limited. This limited understanding has led to gender responses initiatives within climate change not being prioritized at the sub-national levels.

In Nepal, there is an overall lack of qualified, technical staff especially at the provincial and local levels; there has been some deployment of staff but there are still significant gaps between the needs and existing capacity at all levels of government. This is applicable to knowledge and skills in gender analysis and integration of gender equality into programs, despite the fact that many line agencies have their own GESI strategy and some have guidelines. There have been numerous trainings and orientations on gender integration, but when donor assisted programs are being implemented, external experts are hired, and thus the bureaucrats do not get to practice much of what they know.

- iii. **Representation of Women in Decision-Making/Bureaucracy:** There are significant gaps in the representation of women and marginalized caste and ethnic groups in the bureaucracy in Nepal, overall, as well as in the four study sectors. Numbers of women in senior level technical positions are very low compared to more junior and administrative positions. Reservation policies in the bureaucracy and in political representation at all levels of the government for women and marginalized caste and ethnic groups promises to bring changes in the coming days as the quotas are being filled.

- iv. **The Deeper Challenges of Informal Institutions:** Informal institutions –the patriarchal system, paternalistic behavior towards women, strict conventions, norms and values– continue to influence attitudes, behaviors and mindsets within the bureaucracy and political institutions. This continues to influence deep-rooted discrimination against women, creating barriers for equal opportunities and safe working environments in most of the countries studied though in some of the countries, these issues are not explicitly discussed. This condition is present in all the countries covered by the study though not all country reports are explicit in highlighting this issue. While legal provisions will help create a safe and supportive environment for women to access opportunities within institutions and at the community level, without changes in mindsets and behaviors, actual transformation will be difficult to achieve.
- v. **Gender Responsive Budget–Allocation, Tracking and Impact:** Nepal instituted the Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) code in FY 2007/08, aimed at integrating a gender perspective in policies and planning so that public resource allocation is responsive towards gender equality. The transition to federalism has created some challenges in harmonizing the allocation and tracking, and an overall impact evaluation of the appropriate coding and the effectiveness of the budgeting has not been taken up so far. In Bhutan, gender responsive planning and budgeting is institutionalized through the budget call circular. Gender is mainstreamed into budgeting system; however, the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting has not progressed. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Economic and Finance allocates the national budget to the line ministries for gender responsive activities for the major sectors, and provides guidelines to prepare an action plan and progress report to reflect the output of gender mainstreaming in the sector. The Thai Constitution made a commitment to GRB in 2017 but the tools are not well development, there is limited understanding across government officials

of what gender budgeting is and how it can be implemented; there is a lack of awareness that other government programs can have a direct or indirect impact on gender equality; and there are key gaps in the availability of gender-disaggregated data, important for understanding gender needs and informing policy reform.

Additionally, in all the four sectors being studied there are limited gender responsive budgets which hinder the progress and achievements of gender mainstreaming targets.

8.3 Gender Responsive Strategies, Tools, and Technologies within Programs Interventions

The approaches, tools and methods used to integrate gender equality and to reach, benefit and empower women varies depending on nature of the interventions and their focus areas. Some interventions have integrated gender equality consistently at all stages while for others, integration of a gender perspective is not consistent.

8.3.1 Key Themes Arising from the Analysis of Interventions

The key findings and lessons emerging from the review of selected projects in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Nepal and Thailand, are summarized below within six key themes²⁴⁹. The details of all the Nepal Projects referred to in this section can be found in Annex 6.

Theme 1: The integration of successful technologies, tools, approaches or models generated by project/ programme interventions into government policies, strategies and plans is critical for scaling up and achieving impact at scale.

The different projects/programmes reviewed have used different tools, approaches, technologies and models for gender integration; many have been fairly successful in terms of contributing to gender equality. But projects/ programmes, especially implemented by non-government sectors, are usually implemented

²⁴⁹ This section draws heavily on the experiences from Nepal, since there was limited information on different projects from the other countries.

for short periods of time in a specific location. Therefore, the results may have limited replicability and sustainability. For wider scaling up of effective technology, tools and methods, it is important that the learning is reflected and incorporated in the government policies, strategies and plans. For example, the Home Garden (HG) Project in Nepal (Project #3, Annex 6) was originally designed and implemented in few districts of Nepal and targeted to improve traditional food production system around homestead. The project helped smallholder women and other disadvantaged groups to improve their household food and nutrition security, and improve diversity in home gardens and conservation of agrobiodiversity (LI-BIRD, 2018). Most importantly the project contributed immensely in women's social, economic and political empowerment. It worked closely with government organizations at both policy and local government levels, and advocated for the integration of the HG approach into agriculture policies and programmes. As a result, the HG approach has been fully integrated into government's national regular agriculture extension programme benefitting tens of thousands of women, and other disadvantaged and ethnic minorities across Nepal. It has also been integrated into the government's technical education course curriculum. A project duration of 16 years allowed the HG project to generate learning, demonstrate the effectiveness and influence policies and plans of the government (also refer to the 'Good Practice' on the HGP in Chapter 6).

Similarly, the Hariyo Ban (HB) Program in Nepal (Project #4) has taken a 'Landscape and/or River Basin Approach' (e.g., Terai Arc Landscape/TAL and Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape/CHAL) to design and implement CCA, BC, ER and FS programme interventions (WWF Nepal, 2017). The TAL runs east-west in the low-lying Terai, and CHAL covers a vast altitudinal gradient from the Trans Himalayan region north of the Annapurna range to Chitwan in the Terai. These two landscapes have high biodiversity value and support about 10 million people from diverse ethnic groups that are dependent on forests, subsistence agriculture and livestock farming. Both landscapes suffer from widespread poverty and environmental degradation, which together create a potent

mix of threats to both people and biodiversity, and are highly vulnerable to climate change and people, especially women. The project's interventions in the two landscapes focus on effective conservation of natural resources and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The approach adopted by this programme has now been endorsed by the government of Nepal and they stand as a national strategy for CCA, BC, ER and FS programme interventions in these two landscapes.

The Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP) (Project #11) also had an approach of working closely with the government and influencing policies and strategies. The multistakeholder approach provided space for different perspectives and skills of local organizations to be recognized and used in programme implementation. The development and implementation of inclusive forest sector strategies, policies and plans were one of the four outcomes of the project. GESI integration within MSFP was a core mandate with strong policy mandates for targeting and disaggregation (MSFP, 2016a; IOD/PARC, 2015). It supported the review of the GESI strategy in the forestry sector for wider coverage and sustainable impact. But the project ended in four years and it could not achieve many of the policy reform objectives. Thus, influencing policies and creating wider impact requires a longer project duration and this applies to the integration of GESI approaches as well.

Theme 2: Hands-on awareness raising and capacity building of key stakeholders, especially local political leaders, with regards to GESI, is key to secure their buy-in for scaling up technologies and approaches and to sustain project outcomes.

Scaling up of good practices and sustaining the outcomes require that the interventions, especially the strategies, tools, methods and technologies used by the projects are owned and integrated into the government's plans and budget system. The Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Project in Nepal (Project # 12) used a 'Travelling Seminar' (TS) approach that involved the deliberate engagement of political leaders, mostly women, at federal, province and local levels, and building capacity through orientations, exposure and on-site interactions

with communities and project beneficiaries (LI-BIRD, undated). It not only resulted in the increased awareness and confidence among political leaders on GESI approaches but also helped the integration of CSA and Climate Smart Village (CSV) approaches in government policies, plans and programs, especially in Gandaki and Province 2. Additionally, women political leaders who took part in the TS were successful in advocating for, and instituting the 'Chief Minister's Model CSA/CSV Program' in Gandaki Province with a budget worth approximately USD 17.5 million/year, which is currently in its 3rd year of implementation, and now stands as the Province's flagship agriculture program. Local stakeholders, mainly government representatives and political leaders, are key actors in the development of local level plans and budget allocation in agriculture and environment sectors (as well as other sectors). Building their knowledge and capacity in such a hands-on manner helped to build their confidence and trust; it also equipped them to advocate for integration of GESI approaches in plans and budgets resulting in the scaling up of GESI approaches at wider scale and contributing towards sustaining the outcome.

Theme 3: Gender sensitive financing for local adaptation is a catalyst. When local community groups, especially women-led natural resource management groups are given seed money, topped up by capacity strengthening support, they are able to leverage significant additional funds to achieve their adaptation goals.

Projects usually have limited funds for a specified time frame. Community groups (especially with a majority of women), most often lack funds, human resources and technical expertise to start new activities. When NRM women's groups are supported with seed money and technical support to implement new activities targeted towards gender equality, the confidence of the members is bolstered and their networks are strengthened in order for them to successfully leverage additional resources. LI-BIRD piloted the concept of 'Local Financing for Local Adaptation' where a number of women-led NRM groups were identified, trained, and supported to develop their local climate adaptation action plans (Project #12). A total of approximately USD 75,434 was provided as 'Seed Money' to 10

different groups. Results showed that with the seed money and the capacity building support provided by the project, these groups were able to leverage significant additional funds at the range of approximately USD 55,970 (74 percent of the seed money) culminating in a total of USD 130,530 to achieve their adaptation goal that also contributed towards the empowerment of local communities, especially women (Paudel, et al., 2016).

The MSFP also worked with 3,990 Local Forest Groups (LFGs) in 23 districts and provided them with technical support for sustainable forest management and a matching grant for livelihood improvement for the poor and disadvantaged members, including women. A study of 20 LFGs of three project districts showed that the LFGs collectively leveraged around a total of USD 32,747 against the matching fund of USD 1,642 per user group provided by the project to implement the livelihood improvement programme. If all user groups that receive matching funds allocated at least five percent of the funds for livelihoods improvement activities, the leveraged amount in all 23 districts would have been around USD 6.5 million – a hugely significant amount to help improve the livelihoods of the poor. The enhanced capacity of the LFGs to leverage external funds made a significant contribution to ensuring the sustainability of the livelihood improvement programme for poverty alleviation (MSFP, 2016). The abilities of local NRM groups to leverage funds shows a huge potential for scaling up and sustainability of outcomes if accompanied by a grant or seed money, and appropriate capacity investment.

Theme 4: Blending local knowledge and practices, with science and technology that generates tangible benefits to the local communities are most likely to be adopted, sustained and scaled-up.

Technology is an important component of addressing climate change and ecosystem restoration. A review of the interventions that focused on the development of climate smart, environment friendly and gender friendly technologies suggest that smallholders and people from marginalized groups, including women, tend to adopt technologies and solutions that are simple and affordable.

The community-managed 'Community Seed Bank' (CSB) (Projects #10 & 12) is promoted in Nepal as an effective CSA technology and/or approach to help farming communities to adapt to climate change. CSB is helping farmers to strengthen local seed systems, address environmental adversities through the provision of climate resilient local crop variety seeds, and is also helping to conserve agriculture biodiversity that are rapidly being lost from the farmers' field. Local seed system knowledge held by farmers is rapidly being replaced by improved crop variety seeds promoted by commercial seed companies. In case of the 'Scaling Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal' (CSA) Project implemented in three districts, results show that 22 CSBs have conserved 1,400 varieties of 75 local crop species; they are producing approximately 250 tons of seeds annually, which is accessed by >10,000 farming households each year; and the annual turnover through seed transaction amounts to approximately USD 128,419, and the CSBs are generating full and part-time local employment. As a result, the demand for CSB continues unabated.

In Nepal, the construction of community managed water recharge ponds is a traditional practice based on local knowledge. However, given undulated hilly terrain, utilization of water from ponds is often a challenge as settlements and crop land are usually located in upland areas. The introduction of solar technology is helping local communities pump water for irrigating upland crops, with increased productivity and crop diversification that is reducing women's workload and improving household food security. As a result, the demand for solar irrigation technology is gaining momentum with increased adoption rate and is being promoted across the projects (Projects # 5, 7, 8 and 12, Annex 6).

The promotion of improved cookstoves is another example where traditional practice that produced a large amount of smoke has been replaced with improved technology. A number of projects like the Nepal Climate Change Support Programme, Adaptation for Small Holders, and MSFP (Projects # 5, 6, and 11) promoted smokeless oven that not only saved biomass energy but more importantly reduced

drudgery and health hazards of women and girls.

Similarly, Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond the Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihood in Agriculture Sector, a GEF funded project, established 120 Farmers Field Schools (FFS) to encourage women farmers and local NRM groups learn about climate adaptation skills. The FFS is a learning center where local people learn the positive and negative aspects of existing farming methods in light of climate change impacts, and introduce improved methods for adaptation. Out of the 3,484 farmers who participated in FFSs, 74 percent were women. The 'Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension Project' in Cambodia (Section 4.4) also worked with smallholders and used the FFS. Experiences from the project lead to the development of a 'Gender Roles and Women Economic Empower in Agriculture Guidelines' which was integrated into the Farmer Field School Guidelines of FAO.

Another project, 'Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas (Project #10) introduced a similar approach of learning by establishing Diversity Field Schools where women's participation is more than 60 percent. A large number of women participants compared to men also indicate that locally managed farmers schools are more accessible and affordable to women, compared to attending training outside of the village and run by external facilitators.

Theme 5: While promoting technologies, tools and practices, the manner in which technologies are demonstrated, packaged/bundled, communicated and incentive mechanisms are negotiated can influence adoption and scaling up of technologies.

Experiences from Nepal show that the manner in which technologies are demonstrated and packaged (e.g., single versus a bundle of technologies) and incentive mechanisms are negotiated can have a profound influence on its adoption and scaling up. One of the reasons for the success of Community Seed Banks and solar irrigation technology in Nepal relates to

how these technologies are demonstrated and packaged for dissemination. The CSB is promoted as an 'Anchor Technology' to introduce other technologies for the conservation of agrobiodiversity. Similarly, solar irrigation is also similarly promoted to facilitate the introduction of a portfolio of CSA technologies and practices that is helping local farmers to diversify their farm production systems and enhance on-farm agro-biodiversity in the face of the changing climate.

Theme 6: Targeting women and girls, addressing gender needs and monitoring gender impact of interventions is smooth and effective if GESI approaches are explicitly prioritized in project documents, funding, human resource and operational strategies.

Project documents, funding and operational strategies shape the way interventions target the beneficiaries and develop mechanisms to reach, benefit and empower them. If GESI outcomes and approaches are explicitly prioritized from the design of the project and reflected in the project document, then it provides direction to plan for and address them through interventions. In Nepal, the projects such as AFSP, HGP, HBP, MSFP, and ASHA have targeting and benefiting women as one of the priority approaches mentioned in the project outcomes and in the planning documents. AFSP (Project #2) developed a Social Management Framework and a gender strategy that guided its interventions. The project reached and directly benefited 656,245 poor households, 91 percent of whom were women. It introduced corn shellers, seed grading machines, processing mills, and improved cooking stoves - all aimed at reducing women's workloads. The HGP (Project # 3) adopted a GESI framework and followed equity and inclusion throughout - in targeting, designing interventions, implementation and monitoring. The project used the Work Force Diversity approach, recruited 50 percent women, maintained 80 percent women beneficiaries through improved HG practices and income generation, introduced women friendly low-cost agricultural practices and built women's leadership.

Half of the projects including ASHA, MSFP and EBA-II developed a specific gender strategy

and action plans, which guided the project for targeting, increasing women's access to decision-making, enhanced their leadership, provided direct benefits and maintained disaggregated data for monitoring throughout the project. In addition, ASHA and HB used Gender Responsive Budgeting and Auditing, and MSFP used Fund Flow Analysis to track the proportion of the development budget and spending that directly benefitted women. These strategies, tools and systems designed and adopted from the design phase and translated in all stages of project cycle made gender integration smooth and effective.

Other projects in the region, for example, the 'Living Landscapes-Securing High Conservation Values in South-Western Bhutan' and 'Food Security and Agriculture Productivity Project' (in Bhutan, Section 3.4), 'Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems to Support Climate-Resilient Development in Cambodia Project', and the 'Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project' (in Cambodia, Section 4.4) have used a gender lens in the programme design, and is backed up by a comprehensive gender action plan to guide the implementation phase and ensure allocation of adequate resources. Conducting a gender analysis in the design phase has become mandatory for many donor-assisted projects in the more recent years and they are most often followed by gender responsive implementation and M&E plans. Yet in most of the projects reviewed in all the countries, gender responsive monitoring has primarily focused on sex disaggregated data or on efforts in empowering women. Interventions and M&E have still not been able to dig deeper into assessing changes in the gendered power structures and thereby real transformation.

The provision of staff with knowledge and skills in integrating gender equality within projects is also crucial to provide technical support, build capacity and ensure each phase of the project is gender responsive and is accountable. Many of the projects in Nepal have such staff with clear responsibilities, and the Food Security and Agriculture Productivity Project (Bhutan) also has a full time Gender Expert to oversee the gender aspects of the project. On the other hand, many projects like the Climate Justice Program (CJP) (in Thailand and other APEC countries) and

the EmPower Project in Cambodia (as well as Bangladesh and Vietnam) focuses on building individual leadership among women as well as women's groups. The CJP focuses on building the capacities of the women's movement and co-creating resources that are based on the gendered effects of climate change as well as women's knowledge on climate resilience and climate justice. Whereas the EmPower project also works on transforming policies and institutions, amplifying evidence and voices and fostering regional commitment in relation to harnessing renewable energy to build resilient livelihoods for women in rural areas.

8.3.2 Selected Tools/Methods/Approaches for Integrating GESI across the Region

Following is a list of tools and technology that were designed and used by different projects in the case countries to ensure integration of gender equality and address the socio-economic burdens of women and other marginalized groups.

BHUTAN

1. Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines:

This is a set of guidelines developed by National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and it contains approaches and procedures for gender mainstreaming in each sector, with checklists for planning and implementation, law and policy development. The guideline aims to ensure sectoral benefit from gender integration in their projects and plans. The key purpose of the guideline is to: (i) establish a common approach to gender mainstreaming in sectors; (ii) to provide a basic step by step approach to gender mainstreaming; and (iii) to support optimal utilization of resources and services equally for both male and female citizens of Bhutan. (<https://www.ncwc.gov.bt/publications/Gender%20Mainstreaming%20guideline.pdf>)

2. Mainstreaming Reference Group:

Mainstreaming Reference Groups (MRG) are an approach to mainstream crosscutting issues such as gender, environment, climate-change, disaster and poverty, into all aspects of plans, policies and programs at local government level. The MRG comprise sectoral heads in districts. It basically serves as the entry point for

integrating gender into the sectoral plans and projects. MRG was formed in ensuring strategic integration of gender considerations into diverse sectors at local government level. It is the intermediate level which serves as a bridge between the policy makers and implementers at local level. (https://www.unpei.org/files/pdf/mainstreaming%20gecdp%20into%20development%20policies_%20plans%20and%20programmes%20in%20bhutan.pdf)

3. Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting in Bhutan:

Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) is an initiative to incorporate gender perspectives in public finance management and budget allocation systems. GRPB is a means to strengthen the implementation of actions from a gender perspective. The GRPB Working Group is chaired by the Director of the Department National Budget. Other members of the working group include representatives of key sectors; NCWC, GNHC, DLG, one representative each from a CSO, and the UN. The GRPB initiative was piloted in three ministries - Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forest in 2016. The annual budget call notification clearly directs the three pilot agencies to include narrative policy statements and budget on gender. (<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/10.%20Bhutan.pdf>)

4. Gross National Happiness (GNH) Policy Screening Tools:

The GNH screening tool is used to screen all policies submitted by the respective sectors. Gender is one of the indicators while screening policies. (<https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/policy-formulation/>)

CAMBODIA

1. Women's Resilience Index for Cambodia (Climate Change):

The WRI was developed through household interviews with 696 households from the project target areas in 2019. The WRI can be scaled up by interviewing more respondents to represent the countrywide perspective. The results from WRI survey can be used for advocacy on women in CC in Cambodia. The index is available with the Action Aid International Cambodia.

2. The Watershed Environmental Services Tool (WESTool) (Biodiversity and Ecosystems): This tool was developed for general users and can be used for women only as well. But it is a very technical tool which the women in rural areas will find hard to understand.

3. The Gender Roles and Women's Economic Empower in Agriculture Guidelines (Food Security): These guidelines can be scaled up countrywide for promoting gender into the food security/agriculture sector as the ASPIRE project is also a national government project.

CHINA

Though most of national strategies, programmes, and plans on climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration are not gender sensitive, they do offer valuable experience and lessons learnt that can be applied for designing and implementing gender-related interventions in various sectors. These include at least:

- **Problem-driven and systematic planning:** For each strategy and programme, clear policy targets are set for a specific interval of time (e.g., five years) and pathways to achieve them are proposed.
- **Phased and regionally-differentiated implementation:** Establishing pilots and demonstrations to test out good practices for up-scaling is effective. It is also necessary to take into full account differences among regions so that the practices are customized to local circumstances and thus achieve higher sustainability.
- **Effective compensation and community participation:** There are many ways to engage and benefit local communities in lasting efforts such as ecological conservation, that can include eco-compensation mechanisms, market-based mechanisms and business models that can help to motivate the community resulting in improved livelihoods outcomes.

NEPAL

1. Gender Responsive Approach (<http://www.fao.org/3/be879e/be879e.pdf>)
2. Farmer's Field School Approach (<http://www.fao.org/farmer-field-schools/overview/en/>)
3. Environment and Social Management

Framework (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>)

4. Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment Tool (UCPVA) (<https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf>)
5. Participatory Governance Assessment Tool (PGA) (<https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf>)
6. Participatory Well-being Ranking Tool (PWBR) (<https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf>)
7. Public Hearing and Public Auditing (PHPA) Tool (<https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf>)
8. GPSE Conceptual and Operational Framework (https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/nepal/en/Gender_Poverty_and_Social_Equity_Mainstreaming_in_MSFP-EN.pdf)
9. Climate Change Adaptation Tool (<https://asha.gov.np/%>)
10. Vulnerability Assessment Tool (https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/learning_from_participatory_va_for_eba_iucn-tmi.pdf)
11. Gender Responsive Budgeting and Auditing Tool (<https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf>)

Gender Friendly Technologies and Practices Developed and Used in Nepal

1. Hand-held Corn Sheller (http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=243)
2. Drip Irrigation (http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=414)
3. Solar Water Lifting Pump (http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=422)
4. Farm Rake (http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=265#)
5. Yam in Sacs (http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=201)
6. Electric Millet Thresher
7. Jab Planter
8. Seed Grading Machines
9. Processing Mills
10. Improved Cooking Stoves
11. Proso Millet and Finger Millet Threshers

THAILAND

Feminist Participatory Action Research

(FPAR): FPAR is the action research initiative by APWLD which is currently being implemented in Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam, and Thailand. As a collective research process, FPAR strengthens solidarity and aims to empower women to work collectively for long-term structural change. Through FPAR communities can develop deeper analysis of the problem being analyzed, documentation skills, advocacy and campaigning skills, and leadership and movement building capacity. The 'knowledge' or research should be collectively authored and owned by the community. The authorship of the research gives the community a platform to advocate for change. Through FPAR grassroots women and women activists locate opportunities to utilize the knowledge and engage in evidence-based policy debates in Thailand and Asia Pacific region.

8.3.3 Gender Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation

In most countries, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks and practices are usually enforced to meet donor requirements. In other cases, some level of analysis is done in the programme documents but is not followed through in the implementation and especially not so in monitoring and evaluation.

As has been mentioned earlier, gender transformation requires attention on understanding who has been impacted and whether the roles, responsibilities and power relations have changed or not. However, in all the countries, even though gender equality policies and strategies are in place, monitoring their implementation is very weak, partly due to the lack of clear and specific guidelines and adequate capacity at all levels of staff. Additionally, the lack of an M&E system that allows for the collection, and analysis of data that is disaggregated by sex and by other key markers of differences (age, caste, ethnicity, race, class, abilities and capabilities, languages, etc.) is also a big gap in all the countries. Sex disaggregated data and in some sectors caste/ethnicity disaggregation (in Nepal) is growing

but they remain to the extent of head counts. There are limited systems, tools, and practices in place to measure changes in gender roles, power relations, meaningful participation of women and marginalized where their voices are heard and acted upon.

In Cambodia, the Climate Change M&E Framework addresses gender equality, gender-sensitive performance in climate change responses and gender mainstreaming in climate change responses. However, on the data portal²⁵⁰ data on the vulnerability of different geographic provinces and the numbers of families affected by climate hazards is available but sex disaggregated data is not available. Gender and youth, environment and equity are cross-cutting issues in the Cambodian National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition M&E Framework, however, there is no information on how the sex disaggregated data will be monitored and utilized.

China has created a comprehensive *gender statistics system* and improved women's health, well-being and development indicators and gender-disaggregated indicators, which have been included in the routine statistics and statistical surveys undertaken by relevant departments. The statistics-based monitoring report for the *National Program for Women's Development (2011-2020)*, provides statistic data and information on the progress of programme implementation in the fields of health, education, economy, decision-making and management, social security, the environment, and law.

In Nepal, government policy is limited to meeting targets of women's representation (33 percent mandated by most policies) in programmes and projects rather than addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in the wider rural economy and quality of participation.

Gender Sensitive Performance Monitoring:

There are no annual performance monitoring systems in place to assess skills, knowledge and application of GESI in practice, among government institutions in Nepal. This is true for even within the planning divisions, where the Gender Focal Points are housed and tasked with mainstreaming GESI.

²⁵⁰ <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/dcc/data-portal>

8.4 Recommendations to Strengthen Gender Equality within Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystems Restoration and Food Security for Sustainable Development: The Context of Policies, Institutions and Interventions

i. **Gender integration is necessary in all sectoral policies and strategies, as well as in all stages of the project cycle.**

The practices of separate, sector specific GESI strategies and policies are useful in the short term to highlight its importance, but a separate document can easily remain as an afterthought. With limited resources and technical ability, a separate sector specific GESI strategy or policy is likely to not receive adequate resources that are needed. Therefore, all sector specific policies and strategies need to have integrated principles and applications of gender equality and social inclusion, based on a thorough GESI analysis, and those strategies need to be backed by implementation guidelines and plans.

The ability to mainstream gender equality (and social inclusion) in all programs/projects start with an in-depth understanding of the structural barriers and constraints in the particular context. Thus, project designs need to start with a gender (or GESI) analysis which will then guide the project implementation, action plans, and monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks. Checks and balances need to be put in place to strengthen accountability of gender mainstreaming through the programme/project cycle.

ii. **Allocation and tracking of Gender Responsive Budget is important for improved impact and accountability.**

Equal distribution of resources and opportunities should be ensured by a gender responsive budget. This is important to mainstream gender dimension into all stages of the budget cycle. It should be considered in planning, approving, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive

way. This is important in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

iii. **Improved understanding and developing capacities for gender integration needs to be backed up by opportunities for action, authority, and resources.**

All policies need to be informed by a proper analysis of women's and men's knowledge, roles, and abilities, as well as the constraints and barriers they face, along with their coping strategies. Such understanding provides a solid basis for policy and programmes to address and combat the differentiated impacts on both genders as well as realize the potential contributions they make. In most of the countries, Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) are designated with responsibility of mainstreaming gender in policies, plans and monitoring. In practice however, they lack capacities as well as mandate, resources, and authority to do so. They need to be mandated with resources, authority and skills for gender analysis and to design policy responses that support in-depth gender analysis, planning, implementation and M&E.

Development partners (donors, I/NGOs, CSOs) are relatively better advanced at gender mainstreaming in programme policies, strategies, human resource (capacity, knowledge and skills), and budgets. Thus, capacity building of government counterparts in identifying the appropriate concepts, tools and methods for instituting and scaling up gender equality measures is critical. Training and capacity building should be conducted over a period of time covering the entire program/project cycle, with periodic follow up and opportunities for the application of the knowledge and skills, that are backed by some level of authority and financial resources.

iv. **Changing mindsets, recognition and deployment of women's knowledge and capabilities is absolutely necessary.**

The important role that women play in the management of natural resources and in productive and reproductive activities at the household and community levels

puts them in a position to make concrete and practical contributions to achieve sustainable development goals more effectively. Women's knowledge and capabilities can and should be deployed at every stage from policy making to implementation and monitoring. It is high time that women are acknowledged and treated as 'actors' and 'agents' – not only as a part of a vulnerable group or target recipients/beneficiaries.

v. **Space for women's participation and decision-making needs to be expanded.**

Increased participation of women in policy processes at different levels allows for the integration of their needs and priorities, the removal of barriers and constraints, and identification of opportunities across the planning and execution cycles of policies and projects. Having their voice in these processes will help to incorporate their skills and knowledge, creating mutual benefits and greater contributions across the SDGs. Sharing of critical information on climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, agricultural practices, food security and beyond, in an equitable manner (language, access) is an important first step. Mandatory inclusion of women would expand such space and allow women to participate and contribute.

vi. **There is a need for a nexus approach - sectoral coordination in policies, strategies, guidelines and budget with vertical and horizontal linkages.**

It is imperative that existing policies and strategies for climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and food security, need to establish coherence among the institutions, and ensure inter-sectoral consistency since these areas are all closely interlinked. Moreover, sectoral guidelines for gender mainstreaming are necessary and they need to be able to influence the annual plans and budget. There is a need for stronger coherence between policies, strategies, plans and budgets. Establishing inter-sectoral mechanisms will ensure that strategies and plans are aligned, are complementary, do not duplicate resources but rather contribute towards the

planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities that are critical. Climate change, biodiversity, ecosystems and food security are highly interlinked; but other sectors are also equally important such as health, education, infrastructure, etc. Hence a culture and practice of inter-sectoral planning, coordination and implementation in lieu of working in sectoral silos is very important.

vii. **Increased investments in gender responsive information, technologies, tools and methods is critical.**

Women's efficiency and productivity can be increased, if they have access to, and are equipped with information, technologies, tools and methods. Existing technologies and tools have been designed to suit needs and priorities of men that hardly address the needs and priorities of women. Given the increasing feminization of agriculture and time poverty, women are in need of time saving, labor saving technologies. Policies need to acknowledge the gender gap and increase investment and focus on research, development and dissemination of gender responsive information, technologies, tools and methods.

viii. **Policy provisions and actions need to ensure building up the asset base of women.**

Livelihood assets (physical, financial, human, social and environmental) largely determine the extent to which people are affected by and can respond to climate change, degradation of ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and/or loss of food production system. Strengthening the economic empowerment of women and building their adaptive capacities need to incorporate interventions that increase women's productive and reproductive resources, enhance their assets including land, access to credit, entrepreneurial skills/capacities, leadership training and social capital. Interventions and incentive schemes that are implemented at household levels need to ensure that women's assets are built up in the long run for adaptation capacity and improved resilience.

ix. **Mechanisms for accountability in gender responsive performances need to be built and put in place.**

Building measures of accountability for adopting and implementing a GESI sensitive approach – within performance management systems and program/projects – is highly recommended. Measures for monitoring and accountability need to be built into the performance review system, as well as in policy and programme implementation. As long as qualitative indicators are not included in the monitoring system (personnel and programs), changes in gender roles, relations and power relations cannot be measured and rewarded or punished.

x. **Strengthening GESI integrated monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks and systems for policies, institutions and interventions is imperative.**

A system for monitoring, evaluating and learning about the performance and impact of gender responsive measures in the policies, institutions and programs, is imperative for a transformation in gender relations, reducing discriminatory barriers and structures, and reducing the gender and other inequality gaps. This calls for disaggregated data by sex and other key socio-cultural, economic and geographical categories which address the status and conditions of key excluded groups. Within each country, a clear understanding and agreement on the key set of categories of people to be tracked, will help in creating uniformity across all sectors as well as track changes over time. Policies should provide indicators that requires the collection, analysis and use of gender disaggregated data.

Changes in gender relations need an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural values, norms and practices on how they are influencing changes in power relations and structures; and how policy and programmatic measures are influencing changes in agencies, self-confidence and self-esteem among marginalized groups including women across all groups. This requires building capacity for qualitative data collection to complement the

quantitative data and have a conducive environment to accept and use the data for refining policies and programs. This needs to be complemented with a culture and system for learning – understanding the disaggregated data, looking into it from an intersectional perspective, analyzing it in relation to the local and national context and finally, there needs to be clear provisions for the learnings and results to contribute towards evidence-based policy feedback, annual planning and review processes.

xi. **Tackling the deeper challenges of informal institutional mechanisms is fundamental.**

Changing informal institutions requires a new socialization process that is linked with socio-cultural values related to gender equality. But a “code of conduct” for GESI sensitive and responsive attitudes, behaviors and practices in all government institutions at all tiers, targeted towards changing discriminatory socio-cultural norms can become an important step. More male gender champions among higher level government officials can also help change mindsets. Thus, strategies for increasing awareness, changing mindsets, and establishing new, more equitable norms, need more investments, and should be backed by accountability measures that reward and punish subsequent behaviors of staff.

xii. **There is a need to prioritize vulnerable but important landscapes.**

Vulnerable geographic locations such as mountainous areas have their own specificities which need to be identified and addressed in policies and programs. Similarly, a landscape approach for policies, strategies and programs can help address the horizontal and/or vertical interlinkages within the landscape in a coherent manner, with greater impact. Such an approach may also require working beyond political boundaries (e.g., trans-boundary projects/ programs) especially where countries have shared ecosystems. This is an area where more investment by the national governments and development partners are required, as well as more regional cooperation, dialogue and investments can bring in greater returns.

- xiii. **Development partners need to continually focus on capacity development in gender equality processes and outcomes.** Development partners (donors, I/NGOs and CSOs) are relatively better advanced at gender mainstreaming in both institutional and programme policies, strategies, human resource (capacity, knowledge and skills), and budgets. Thus, capacity building of government counterparts and CSOs, in identifying the appropriate concepts, tools and methods for instituting and scaling up gender equality measures is critical. Training and capacity building should be conducted over a period of time covering the entire program/project cycle, with periodic follow up and check ins, and hands on practice in developing and using appropriate tools, guidelines, and methods.

8.5 Preparedness and Action for a Sustainable and Resilient Post COVID-19 Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic presents some opportunities for opening a window for sustainable transformation necessary for a more resilient and inclusive growth particularly for hard hit, marginalized mountain communities (ICIMOD, 2020; Pradhan, et al., 2021). Some of the considerations for building back better from COVID-19 with particular reference to gender equality may include the following:

- Targeted gender responsive measures are critical for designing post COVID-19 recovery actions that generate tangible benefits to women as well as help them recover from this pandemic and build resilience for other pandemics and/or disasters in future.
- Appropriate policies and guidelines need to guide all stakeholders on preparedness, relief and response after any disaster (natural or others) to build back communities and households. The impact of climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems degradations will have a huge impact on the livelihoods of a majority of the population in the mountain areas of Asia, thus all vulnerable and at-risk communities need to have a consolidated disaster risk management strategy and plan, where a gender and community sensitive approach is fully integrated.
- Additional investments/resource mobilization in programming needs to be allocated by the governments and international aid agencies, ensuring coordination and complementarity between the different sectors. Economic recovery and food and nutrition security needs to receive top priority. Increased government and inter-government investments will be needed particularly for mountains in inclusive and accessible health services and infrastructure, agricultural support, and sustainable and low carbon development (ICIMOD, 2020).

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ANNEX 1

List of National and International Experts Consulted

National and International Experts

1. Andrew Taber, PhD, Team Leader for Social Forestry, FAO
2. Anu Rajbhandari, Environmental Specialist, World Bank Nepal
3. Basundhara Bhattarai, PhD, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Lead, Institute for Study and Development Worldwide
4. Bhawana Updhayay, Gender and Inclusion in Climate Change Specialist, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
5. Bimbika Sijapati-Basnett, PhD, Senior Advisor - Gender and Social Inclusion at PROSPERA - Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Development
6. Chanda Gurung Goodrich, PhD, Senior Gender Specialist, ICIMOD
7. Dibya Gurung, Coordinator, WOCAN
8. Drona Ghimire, Environmental Specialist, World Bank Nepal
9. Hemanta Ojha, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Canberra
10. Jaya Sharma, Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank Nepal
11. Kanchan Verma Lama, Independent GESI Expert/Consultant (Forestry and Agriculture)
12. Narendra Pradhan, PhD, Program Development Specialist, IUCN Nepal
13. Purna Bahadur Chettri, Senior Agriculture Specialist, World Bank Nepal
14. Prahlad Thapa, PhD, Country Representative, IUCN Nepal
15. Purna Chandra Rajbhandari, Country Project Lead, CARE Project, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
16. Ram Chandra Khanal, PhD, Evaluator & Programme Manager, Climate & Knowledge Development Network
17. Shabnam Shivakoti, Province Secretary, Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative, Gandaki Province
18. Suman Subba, Senior Social Development Officer, Asian Development Bank
19. Sushila Chatterji Nepali, PhD, Freelancer

Bhutan

1. Deki Yangzom, Assistant Program Officer, National Commission on Women and Children (Lead Author for Bhutan Review)
2. Nima Om, Gender Focal Point, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Bhutan: Deputy Chief Legal Officer
3. Tashi Yangzom, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Bhutan (Gender Focal Point at Ministry)

Cambodia

1. Peuvchenda Bun, Independent Consultant in Asia, Cambodia (Lead Author for Cambodia Review)
2. Sopheap Ros, Founder and Executive Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia

Thailand

1. Paiboon Hengsuwan, PhD., Lecturer, Department of Women's Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand (Lead Author for Thailand Review)

Key Nepali Experts Who Provided Technical Inputs

1. Keshab Raj Goutam, PhD, Technical Advisor, Ecosystem and Forest Types Mapping Program Forest Research and Training Centre, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal.
2. Krishna Yogi, World Food Program, Kathmandu, Nepal
3. Maheswhar Dhakal, PhD, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment Gandaki Province, Nepal
4. Radha Wagle, PhD, Joint Secretary, Chief of Climate Change Division, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Nepal
5. Raju Chettri Pandit, Executive Director, Prakriti Resources Center, Nepal

ANNEX 2

Regional Initiatives Related to Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ecosystems, Food Security and Gender Equality

1. Name of the Project: Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CARE) for South Asia Project

Region: South Asia Region

Countries: Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan

Donor: World Bank

Project Duration: 2020-2025

Implementing Agency: Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia

Aim:

To contribute to an enabling environment for climate resilience policies and investments in agriculture, transport, water, and policy, planning and finance sectors in South Asia. With a regional outreach, the national-level activities will initially be implemented in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. It also seeks to promote the transformation of policies, standards and institutional capacities for climate-resilient development across the key sectors.

Integration of Gender Equality:

The project has espoused integrating gender perspectives in its activities as a cross-cutting theme. The overall objective of gender mainstreaming is to contribute to an enabling environment for gender-responsive, climate-resilient policies and investments in the sectors of public policy and finance, climate smart agriculture, integrated water resources management and resilient transport infrastructure in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

CARE for South Asia's strategy has adopted the following four strategic action areas: (i) Policy review and mapping, and assessment of the current gender landscape in relation to climate-resilient development in key sectors; (ii) Capacity development for gender-responsive climate-resilient strategies and guidelines for key sectors; (iii) Development of gender action plans for mainstreaming gender into climate resilient key sectors; (iv) Knowledge generation and dissemination - Promoting knowledge products on gender-responsive climate action and supporting South-South learning on gender issues through existing climate fora for policy dialogue. A combination of strategic and integrated gender approaches hopes to improve access to gender-related information in relation to climate change in key sectors, together with enhanced capacities. This will enable governments in the project countries to take gender-informed decisions for policymaking and planning of the multiple initiatives and investments

Reference Links:

- https://www.adpc.net/igo/category/ID1689/doc/2021-qULx50-ADPC-GD_Brief.pdf
- <https://www.adpc.net/igo/contents/Publications/publications-Details.asp?pid=1689#sthash.9w70sv2P.LjiIH35C.dpbs>
- <https://www.adpc.net/igo/contents/Publications/publications-Details.asp?pid=1700#sthash.QYnY8bjT.dpbs>

2. Name of the Project: Empower – Women for Climate Resilient Societies

Region: Asia and the Pacific

Countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia and Vietnam

Donor: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Project Duration: 2018-2022

Implementing Agency: UN Women and UN Environment

Aim: Strengthen gender equality and human rights in climate change and disaster risk actions in the Asia and the Pacific region. EmPower works at the nexus of gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction and women's entrepreneurship in renewable energy. The project seeks to:

- Encourage women and marginalized groups to participate in the decision-making process
- Generate, analyze and use sex, age, and diversity disaggregated data to inform policy
- Improve gender responsiveness in climate and disaster risk reduction policies
- Enable women to use renewable energy as economic resources for resilient livelihoods
- Improve regional mechanism, processes and knowledge on climate change and disaster risk reduction to include gender and human rights

Integration of Gender Equality:

SDG Links: 1 (Poverty), 5 (Gender Equality), 7 (Affordable & Clean Energy) & 13 (Climate Action)

EmPower is partnering with regional organizations and CSOs to foster greater awareness and collaboration for gender equality, climate change, and DRR-related policies and programmes. By facilitating dialogues, leveraging existing platforms, building greater evidence on the links between these themes, EmPower seeks to influence regional decision-making, strengthen gender-responsive climate and DRR policies and decisions and promote a greater exchange of innovative solutions that women, men and marginalized groups can lead in the region.

Five Pillars of EmPower's Work: The Project targets climate decisions and investments in the Asia-Pacific region to be more gender-responsive and human-rights inclusive. The five pillars of the project are:

1. Voice and Leadership: Enabling women's CSOs to understand, participate and influence climate change and DRR decision-making processes. Promoting women's leadership in governments and civil society for climate action and DRR. Developing training modules, best practices, peer learning, exchange visits for CSOs and joint dialogues among government stakeholders and civil society.

2. Data for Decision Making: Engaging statistics offices and regional organizations to generate, collect and use sex-age-diversity disaggregated data to better understand the gendered impacts of climate change and disasters. Understanding data needs and identifying tools for climate policy makers to use disaggregated data for policy decisions. Building capacity, through trainings, regional expert groups on gender statistics and climate change, among national governments.

3. Gender Responsive Climate Policies: Supporting national institutions to integrate gender equality and human rights in climate change, DRR, energy policies and processes. Enhancing coordination between gender and climate change machineries. Designing tools and building institutional capacity among policymakers to ensure GE and HR are well considered in climate and DRR policy making.

4. Renewable Energy For Resilient Livelihoods: Tapping into women's entrepreneurship so they are able to use renewable energy for climate-resilient livelihoods. Enhancing policies and provincial plans to support women's entrepreneurship in the renewables sector. Providing skills development and institutionalizing financing instruments to support women's access to renewable energy technologies and demonstrating on-the-ground options of alternate climate-resilient livelihoods for women.

5. Regional Engagement: Ensuring that regional policies and processes on climate change, DRR and energy are inclusive and recognize everyone's needs, perspectives and knowledge. Leveraging knowledge products, South-South exchanges, tools and engaging the ASEAN Secretariat to influence civil society and intergovernmental processes on climate and DRR at a regional level.

Reference Links:

- <https://www.empowerforclimate.org/en>
- <https://www.empowerforclimate.org/en/about-us>
- <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/gender-and-climate-change>

3. Name of the Project: WAVES - Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality

Region: Asia-Pacific Region

Countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Project Duration: 2019-2022

Implementing Agency: RECOFT

Aim: Influencing gender equality in climate change, REDD+ and forestry, law enforcement, governance and trade policies and processes

Integration of Gender Equality:

Built a network of 31 Gender Leaders who are influencing gender equality in climate change, REDD+ and forestry, law enforcement, governance and trade policies and processes in seven countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Through the WAVES initiative, WAVES leaders are applying the guiding call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: to leave no one behind as development marches on. They believe that women and men must access and benefit from the world's resources fairly and equally and in ways that improve their well-being and that of their communities and the environment.

Results and benefits

- i. The leaders' concurrent circles will provide ripples of change that shift attitudes about gender and forest landscapes, both informally and formally.
- ii. Equip key actors in the region with the knowledge and capacity to understand, design and implement gender equality measures in forest landscapes
- iii. Build women's leadership skills to support gender equality across public agencies, private sector and local and ethnic communities
- iv. Integrate gender equality into climate policy, monetary investments and actions.

Reference Links

- <https://www.recoftc.org/stories/turning-gender-work-gender-waves>
- <https://www.recoftc.org/waves-weaving-leadership-gender-equality>

4. Name of the Project: Forest Landscape Restoration for Improved Livelihoods and Climate Resilience (FLOURISH)

Region: Mekong Region

Countries: Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam (three landscapes in three Mekong countries)

Donor: The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

Project Duration: May 2018 - April 2022

Implementing Agency: RECOFT

Aim: Enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation potential of forests in Greater Mekong Subregion countries through innovative and production-driven forest landscape restoration'

Integration of Gender Equality:

FLOURISH is an innovative four-year forest landscape restoration initiative that uses market forces combined with community forestry to combat climate change, restore degraded forests and improve the well-being of forest communities. It is strategically aligned with national priorities and plans of the project focal countries, which will allow it to continuously build on the experiences in the forest landscapes and stimulate for cross learning throughout all integrated actors in the Greater Mekong Subregion countries. FLOURISH contributes to achieving the goals and targets of several international agreements and initiatives: UNFCCC, United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration on Forests (i.e., REDD).

Reference Links

- <https://www.recoftc.org/projects/flourish>
- <https://www.recoftc.org/projects/flourish/stories/under-recoftcs-new-project-partnership-will-flourish>
- https://archive.recoftc.org/sites/default/files/uploaded_files/Brochure_Flourish.pdf

5. Name of the Project: Harnessing Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to Benefit Women

Region: Asia Pacific

Countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam

Donor: Nordic Development Fund, Water Financing Partnership Facility

Project Duration: 2018-2020

Implementing Agency: ADB

Aim: Improve enabling environment for gender-sensitive climate change mitigation policies and finance.

Integration of Gender Equality:

The project outcomes were: (i) gender specific goals and targets were incorporated in the Climate Change Action Plan (2013–2020) for Lao PDR; (ii) climate change mitigation actions were integrated in the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework (2016–2020) in Cambodia; and (iii) both gender and climate change mitigation actions were integrated into the Action Plan for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Vietnam.

The Regional Technical Assistance (RETA) supported human resource and technical capacity development for implementing agencies to integrate gender analysis in national/sub-national climate change policy frameworks, strategies, and action plans and screening of emission reduction projects; for women's groups to gain co-benefits from appropriate emissions reductions technologies; and national/sub-national ministries/agencies supporting gender mainstreaming to engage in and promote more equitable benefit distribution of climate change projects and finance in dialogue with government agencies managing national climate change responses. The RETA built on existing donor partner and/or private sector investments and NGO interventions by piloting a model to develop low carbon technology projects linked to gender-equality benefits to demonstrate how climate financing can provide benefits to women for their contributions to GHG reductions in addition to productive industries. The RETA complements existing interventions by providing them with focused support to engage women's groups as agents of change and access climate finance.

The RETA worked with host projects, private sector companies, and national programs such as - Light Engineering Solutions and African Clean Energy Limited in Cambodia, SNV's Improved Cook Stove National Program, Lao Disabled Women's Development Center, and Association for Rural Mobilization and Improvement in Lao PDR, and the National Biogas Program in Vietnam – to act anchors. It also built stronger implementation partners at the local level in women's groups as well as supporting these groups to access climate financing. ADB will increase development impact and benefit shares for women to the existing clean energy value chains on several levels, including: (1) support policy level engagement through bringing stakeholders together and supporting ministries mandated to oversee climate change responses to create a better enabling environment for projects with gender responsive sustainable development impacts; (2) inform principles and rules of revenue sharing from climate finance projects; (3) mobilize women's participation through support to women-led SMEs along the clean energy value chain; and (4) incorporation of successful elements in replication as national and sub-national programs are scaled up. The Project provided support to develop baselines and monitoring schemes which show concrete emissions reductions, making projects eligible for climate finance. Design of pilot projects to be implemented by women's group helped to increase social inclusion and gender benefits.

Reference Links

- <https://www.wocan.org/list-of-projects/>
- <https://www.adb.org/projects/45039-001/main#project-pds>
- <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/45039/45039-001-tcr-en.pdf>
- <https://www.recoftc.org/projects/flourish/stories/under-recoftcs-new-project-partnership-will-flourish>
- https://archive.recoftc.org/sites/default/files/uploaded_files/Brochure_Flourish.pdf

6. Name of the Project: Capacity Building for Women's Leadership in Farmer Producer Organizations in Asia and the Pacific Region

Region: South and South East Asia

Countries: Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Lao PDR

Donor: IFAD Asia

Project Duration: 2012-2014

Implementing Agency: WOCAN

Aim: The purpose of this project is to create a culture of women's leadership and advocacy of change in countries where performances of gender issues have been poor and rural sector performance in women's representation in the government is low.

Objectives: (1) Strengthen the capacities and competencies of rural women leaders in a sustainable way; (2) Build support from their male colleagues and counterparts for gender equality and women's leadership; (3) Strengthen the competencies of key members of project stakeholders and representatives of beneficiaries in IFAD project areas to allow them to express themselves, choose their leaders appropriately and hold them accountable, and manage their own organizations effectively.

Integration of Gender Equality:

The program contributed to strengthen rural representation of women and men in policy processes, improve rural farmers' skills, information and knowledge with the ultimate goal of improving food security and decreasing rural poverty. The major focus of the project was to conduct training workshops and prepare the participants to rollout the trainings in their respective project sites. Four major types of training workshops were conducted (1) Gender Integrated Planning, (2) Reframing Leadership for Women and Men, (3) Training of Trainers and (4) Women's Leadership for Planning (Producer Group level). The project attempted to assist the performance and impact of IFAD projects in Lao PDR, Maldives and Sri Lanka, through the provision of a focus on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. This is performed through capacity building efforts for partners and stakeholders within the enabling environment, to heighten leadership skills, in civil society and Government. women-led SMEs along the clean energy value chain; and (4) incorporation of successful elements in replication as national and sub-national programs are scaled up. The Project provided support to develop baselines and monitoring schemes which show concrete emissions reductions, making projects eligible for climate finance. Design of pilot projects to be implemented by women's group helped to increase social inclusion and gender benefits.

Reference Links

- <http://www.wocan.org/sites/default/files/WOCANProRepJanJune2013.pdf>
- <https://www.wocan.org/list-of-projects/>

7. Name of the Project: Developing Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices in South Asia

Region: South Asia

Countries: Nepal, Bangladesh, India

Donor: Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, CGIAR Trust Fund, Irish Aid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, New Zealand Foreign Affairs Trade, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, EU, IFAD, UKAID, USAID

Project Duration: Ongoing (dates NA)

Implementing Agency: CCAFS

Aim: The key objectives of this project is to develop and mainstream fully validated climate-smart agriculture portfolios across a diversity of farming systems and to implement those portfolios within CCAFS Climate Smart Villages. The project aims to increase the capacity, knowledge and skills of nearly 200 key decision-makers by generating and disseminating evidence-based knowledge of the impact of climate-smart agriculture

Integration of Gender Equality

This project uses participatory approaches (combining seasonal climate forecasts, historical weather analysis, and crop/soil modelling) to identify adoptable and gender sensitive climate-smart agriculture practices. Portfolios are designed around a wide range of indicators including food security, economics, adaptive capacity, gender and social equity, and mitigation indicators. They are tailored to the needs of individual Climate-Smart Villages in different regions of South Asia. The project involves participation of at least 40 percent women and other socially-differentiated groups in project activities through specific targeting, gender-responsive capacity building and demonstrations of the climate-smart agriculture portfolios. Promoting and mapping gender equity with emphasis on CSAPs contributing to the improved livelihoods, food security and environmental sustainability.

- Nearly 200 training events organized involving both men and women.
- Participation of around 10,000 participants across years involving approx. 4,000 women

Reference Links

- <https://ccafs.cgiar.org/research/projects/developing-climate-smart-agricultural-practices-south-asia>
- <https://ccafs.cgiar.org/research/climate-smart-technologies-and-practices>

8. Name of the Project: Climate Services for Resilient Development in South Asia (CSRD)

Region: South Asia

Countries: Nepal, Bangladesh, India

Donor: USAID, UK AID, the UK Met Office, ADB, the Inter-American Development Bank, ESRI, Google, the American Red Cross, and the Skoll Global Threats Fund

Project Duration: Not available

Implementing Agency: The CSRD consortium in South Asia is led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in partnership with the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), Bangladesh Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), International Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), University de Passo Fundo (UPF), and the University of Rhode Island (URI).

Aim: CSRD in South Asia aims to have impact by increasing climate resilient farm management, indicated by increased use of climate services and climate information to inform farmers on how to better manage their production systems. CSRD also aims to develop and validate models for agricultural climate services that can be replicated in other regions with similar farming systems and climate risks, while also fine-tuning weather and climate advisories to be most useful to farmers' decision-making.

Integration of Gender Equality:

Each of the work streams in CSRD focus on providing actionable climate information to smallholder farmers and other stakeholders in agricultural systems. In order to meet this goal, CSRD in South Asia has undertaken research to better understand farmers' decision-making processes, and preferences and priorities for climate information and crop and livestock management. Both qualitative focus group and quantitative survey methods are being used to collect data. Within these efforts, explicit emphasis is placed on understanding the gendered preferences of farmers for climate and agricultural information, and to better understand the ways in which this information can be used inform men's and women's decision making. In addition, CSRD works to 'translate' highly technical climate and weather information so it can be easily used by farming communities. This emphasizes pre-testing and adapting meteorological bulletins, mobile phone apps, radio messages, and other mass media to reach farmers. This is accomplished through a reflective process of evaluation by key informants and gender-representative meteorological- and climate-product focus groups.

Reference Links

- <https://ccaafs.cgiar.org/index.php/research/projects/climate-services-resilient-development-south-asia>

9. Name of the Project: Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme (ARBCP)

Region: Southeast Asia and neighboring China

Countries:

Donor: USAID

Project Duration: 2020-2025

Implementing Agency: Winrock International Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (apan)

Aim: Since 2005, Winrock International's Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Program has been supporting initiatives to encourage conservation and sustainable natural resources management in Southeast Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), a globally important hotspot of biodiversity. The overarching goal of the ARBCP is to help partner countries develop the capacity to improve landscape level ecosystem connectivity and biodiversity habitat function in multiple-use forests and to improve the management of natural resources and biodiversity in Southeast Asia and neighboring China

Integration of Gender Equality:

USAID projects try to have a significant impact on social and gender equity and equality and advancing women's empowerment by conducting gender analyses and using their findings to influence the design, implementation, and management of its programs. A gender-sensitive approach goes beyond disaggregated data collection, identifying how different groups within a community use resources and determining how specific management practices may foster sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity or ecosystems.

Within the Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme, the following programs are examples of working on regional cooperation to support the improvement of management of natural resources and biodiversity in Southeast Asia and China.

- Asia's Regional Response to Endangered Species Trafficking Program
- U.S. Coral Triangle Initiative
- Payment for Forest Environmental Services: A Case Study on Pilot Implementation in Lam Dong Province, Vietnam 2006-2010

Reference Links

- <https://www.usaid.gov/asia-regional/documents/asia-regional-biodiversity-programs-fact-sheet>
- <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USAID%20Biodiversity%20Policy%20-%20June%202015.pdf>
- <https://winrock.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/PaymentForForestEnvironmentalServicesARBCPCaseStudy.pdf>

10. Name of the Project: HI-AWARE Initiative (Himalayan Adaptation, Water and Resilience)

Region: Asia

Countries: Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Donor: DFID, IDRC

Project Duration: March 2014-Oct 2018

Implementing Agency: HI-AWARE Consortium: ICIMOD in Nepal; The Energy and Resources Instituted in India; Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies in Bangladesh; Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Pakistan; and Wageningen Environmental Research, Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands. The consortium members worked with strategic partners in their respective study basins, including: Future Water in the Netherlands; Practical Action in Nepal; Leadership for Environment and Development in Pakistan; and Megh Pyne Abhiyan, and The Mountain Institute and Centre for Ecology Development and Research in India.

Aim: Its overall goal is to contribute to enhanced climate resilience and adaptive capacities of the poor and vulnerable women, men, and children living in these river basins by leveraging research and pilot outcomes to influence policy and practice to improve their livelihoods.

Objectives: Generate scientific knowledge on the biophysical, socio-economic, gender, and governance conditions and drivers leading to vulnerability to climate change; Develop robust evidence to improve understanding of the potential of adaptation approaches and practices, with an explicit focus on gender and livelihoods; Develop stakeholder-driven adaptation pathways based on the up- and out-scaling of institutional and on-the-ground adaptation innovations; Promote the uptake of knowledge and adaptation practices at various scales by decision-makers and citizens; and Strengthening the interdisciplinary expertise of researchers, students, and related science-policy-stakeholder networks.

Integration of Gender Equality:

HI-AWARE adopted a comparative, participatory, cross-scalar, trans-disciplinary, gender-inclusive and integrative approach to look at short- and long- term climate trends, physical and social vulnerabilities, and adaptation strategies at various scales. It built on existing initiatives and mobilized the strong research and policy networks of the consortium members. It engaged key stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners and policy makers, at all levels, from the beginning, so that they have a right mix of incentives, tools, and capacity to use HI-AWARE-generated research findings and pilot-tested outcomes to contribute to improving the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in the region. HI-AWARE enhanced the adaptive capacities and climate resilience of the poor and vulnerable women, men, and children living in the mountains and flood plains of the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra river basins through the development of robust evidence to inform people-centered and **gender-inclusive climate change adaptation policies and practices** for improving livelihoods. The project organized **gender-sensitivity training sessions** and climate change vulnerability and adaptation workshops in the sites for stakeholders to foster common understanding of critical HI-AWARE issues, including challenges and opportunities.

Reference Links:

- <http://hi-aware.org/approach/>
- <http://hi-aware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/KM9.pdf>
- http://hi-aware.org/publications_category/highlights-report/

11. Name of the Project: The Himalayan Climate Change Adaptation Programme (HICAP)

Region: South Asia

Countries: Nepal, India Pakistan, China (Five sub-basins of major Himalayan river systems: two sub-basins of the Brahmaputra and one each of the Indus, Ganges, and Salween-Mekong)

Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Project Duration: September 2011 – December 2017

Implementing Agency: CICERO, ICIMOD, and GRID-Arendal

Aim: Contributing to enhanced resilience of mountain communities, particularly women, through improved understanding of vulnerabilities, opportunities, and potentials for adaptation.

Integration of Gender Equality:

HICAP is a pioneering collaboration among three organizations – CICERO, ICIMOD, and GRID-Arendal – aimed at contributing to enhanced resilience of mountain communities, particularly women, through improved understanding of vulnerabilities, opportunities, and potentials for adaptation. Women in the region have important responsibilities as stewards of natural and household resources and are therefore well positioned to contribute to adaptation strategies; but they are more vulnerable than men to climate change as they face more social, economic, and political barriers limiting their coping capacity.

HICAP is organized around seven interlinked components: Climate change scenarios, Water availability and demand scenarios, Ecosystem services, Food security, Vulnerability and adaptation, Communications and outreach including Gender and Adaptation. This component focused on the differentiated relationship between and among women and men, and their ability to adapt to climate change in highly dynamic environments and different socio-cultural contexts across the region. It also examined how planned adaptation measures and policies can take into account women's prominent role and gendered knowledge and contribute to more equitable access to and provision of development resources.

The components are interrelated in that climate change impacts on water resources can have far-reaching implications for both ecosystem services and food security, which in turn can lead to increased vulnerability of mountain communities, including women, to drivers of climate change, thereby making actions on the adaptation front both urgent and necessary. The main challenge of HICAP was to integrate not only 'gender' across all components but also the findings of the different components at appropriate scales, and communicate them to the wider public, including policy- and decision-makers at all relevant levels as well as the mountain communities of the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. The main outputs are: an analysis of differences in impacts and adaptive capacities between women and men; and identification of strategies for ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for marginalized, minority, and indigenous people, especially women.

Reference Links:

- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/about-hicap>
- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/women-in-adaptation/>
- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/hicap-component/>

12. Name of the Project: Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalaya – the Himalica Initiative

Region: South Asia

Countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan.

Donor: European Union.

Project Duration: 4 December 2012 - 3 March 2018

Implementing Agency: ICIMOD with its partners

Aim: The Himalica initiative aims to support poor and vulnerable mountain communities in the Hindu Kush Himalaya to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Integration of Gender Equality:

The Himalica Initiative had five main components: (i) **Policy support:** Increasing the collaborative capacities of national and regional stakeholders to positively impact rural mountain livelihoods through the development of adapted policies that consider the impacts of socioeconomic and climate change. (ii) **Knowledge management:** Raising awareness and disseminating knowledge on the effects of climate change and adaptation responses. (iii) **Action research:** Generating evidence-based knowledge on climate change adaptation and mitigation by strengthening collaborative action research. (iv) **Pilot projects:** Implementing collaborative pilot projects to strengthen the resilience of mountain people in vulnerable areas through the delivery of services and products that will improve livelihood opportunities and encourage more sustainable natural resource management practices at the local level. Pilot interventions included the promotion and development of pro-poor value chains of mountain niche products and services; diversification of livelihood opportunities; and the promotion of ecologically sustainable tourism with direct community involvement and benefit. (v) **Capacity building:** Building the capacities of institutions of higher education, skills development, training institutions, and CSOs to scale-up best practices for improved resilience to climate change.

The initiative paid particular attention to addressing the challenges faced by women and strengthening and empowering their roles in adapting to and managing change.

Reference Links:

- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/himalica/>
- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/about-himalica/>

13. Name of the Project: Improving Livelihoods and Enhancing Resilience of the Rural Poor in the Hindu Kush Himalayas to Environmental and Socio-economic Changes (AdaptHimal)

Region: Asia and Pacific

Countries: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Nepal

Donor: IFAD, Government of Norway, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and DFID.

Project Duration: March 2014 to March 2017

Implementing Agency: ICIMOD

Aim: Reduce rural poverty in the Hindu Kush Himalayas and enhance the resilience of the poor, especially women to social, economic and environmental change

Integration of Gender Equality:

Programme beneficiaries included: small and marginal farmers, particularly women; poor and vulnerable communities; emerging rural entrepreneurs in mountain environments; and tribal and ethnic groups. These groups included: Chakma and Marma (Bangladesh); Khasis, Jaintias and Garos in Meghalaya and Karbis in Assam (India); Dalits in Nepal; and the Chin ethnic group (Myanmar). The grant reached out to a total of 2,600 people directly (4,282 indirectly), most of whom were from indigenous people and tribal/ethnic groups, and half were women. Capacity was enhanced for a total of 489 staff of various local implementing partners, plus total 1,296 indirect partners.

Promoted and adopted innovative tools and practices. The programme tested, refined, mainstreamed and scaled up a variety of innovations, including: (i) the **PVA tool**, which some IFAD projects adopted, to improve geographical and social targeting based on location specific drivers of poverty and vulnerability; (ii) **situation analysis and micro planning** for management of effective transformation of shifting cultivation areas in Bangladesh and Myanmar; (iii) Tulsi value-chain interventions for production/cultivation, drying, storage and marketing in India; (iv) a **bottom-up planning approach** to support transformations in shifting cultivation as well as integrated water management and soil conservation techniques in Bangladesh and Myanmar; (v) a methodology for harnessing remittances for rural enterprise development in Nepal, whereby remittance-sending migrants and remittance-receiving households or returnee migrants are integrated in the value chain; and (vi) a framework for using geospatial tools (GIS) to assess watersheds, identify adaptation options and suitable sites for interventions, and develop sub watershed plans.

Enhanced access to profitable income-generating opportunities, value chains, markets and finance. The programme helped identify, assess and promote sustainable value chains and income-generating opportunities, while enhancing market linkages, access to financial services, and rural enterprises. For example, in India, Tulsi farmers reported a gain of income by streamlining production processes and reducing crop damage through the use of better drying and storage technologies. Market linkages were established for fresh pineapples (packed in specially woven bamboo baskets) from Ri Bhoi to Guwahati by road, and to Delhi by Rajdhani express train, with farmers receiving about 20-40 percent more than the market price for pineapples. In Bangladesh, the bee-keeping pilot showed promise, especially for landless people. The programme enhanced communities' access to income generating opportunities, markets, value chains, and finance, with local institutions mainstreaming innovations. The various pilots are now linked to various initiatives in the different countries to take up and mainstream the innovations. Local institutions (e.g. line departments, government institutions, NGOs, community institutions and producers groups) were strengthened to adopt and mainstream innovations and successful approaches.

Reference Links:

- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/adapthimal/>
- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/about-adapthimal/>
- https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39887213/GRS_ICIMOD.pdf/6b0dcd4b-406c-28ed-b5de-4eb1312041ce?t=1549545152000

14. Name of the Project: Resilient Mountain Solutions (RMS)

Region: Asia

Countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan

Donor: Sweden, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Project Duration: 2018–2022 (builds on the past work of HICAP and Himalica initiatives)

Implementing Agency: ICIMOD

Aim: Enhance resilience and adaptive capacities of HKH communities through the research, piloting, and adoption of resilient solution packages, along with knowledge sharing and capacity building

Integration of Gender Equality:

The RMS initiative tests simple and affordable resilience-building tools and approaches that community members in rural parts of the HKH can replicate. It trains and networks with governments, local institutions, and other stakeholders to ensure that these solutions are scaled up and scaled out to reach as many communities as possible. The initiative builds on research and solutions developed and tested by ICIMOD and its partners to identify a range of options that have proven effective and applicable in the diverse mountain context of the HKH. RMS will contribute to three strategic impact areas: Poverty reduction; Reduced physical and social vulnerability; and Improved ecosystem services.

The Project contributes to the SDGs by providing relevant knowledge to ensure their successful implementation in the mountain context. It combines the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development with climate change adaptation, resilience, and preparedness for future risks to form an integrated approach to resilient mountain development. The initiative adopts the working definition of resilience as “the ability of an individual, community, or a socio-ecological system to not only overcome stress, shock, or setback (recover or bounce back) but develop capabilities to move forward to a condition or state that can help transcend to a better state”.

The RMS Framework: The overarching RMS approach combines social, economic, and environmental facets of sustainable development to adapt, build resilience, and prepare for the future risks of climate change impacts. This framework works within three major dimensions of resilience: climate resilience, socio-economic resilience, and future resilience. Gender Inclusion is one of the key areas of work and the project develops and designs gender-inclusive activities, with women leading and meaningfully involved in planning.

Reference Links:

- <https://www.icimod.org/initiative/about-resilient-mountain-solutions>
- https://www.icimod.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Poster_Resilient-Mountain-Solutions.pdf

15. Name of the Project: South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI)

Region: South Asia

Countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Donor: The European Commission; DFID, Government of the United Kingdom; and The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia Administered by World Bank

Project Duration: 2010-2015 (Phase I) and 2015-2019 (Phase II)

Implementing Agency: World Bank

Aim:

Foster cross-cutting actions that will lead to measurable improvements in food and nutrition security. Critical to the success of this work was the commitment of governments and development partners in South Asia.

Integration of gender equality:

SAFANSI sought to address the South Asian Enigma - chronic malnutrition that has remained high despite strong economic growth - by fostering innovative actions that lead to measurable improvements in food and nutrition security. The program was created as a targeted step to advance the food and nutrition security agenda and promote intersectoral action in South Asian countries. The program was a catalyst in driving the food and nutrition security agenda among countries in the region and enhancing sensitivity to nutrition issues in the World Bank's various activities in South Asia. Phase II of SAFANSI built on the success of the first phase and focused on raising awareness and advocacy, building capacity, and sought to stimulate behavior change to improve food and nutrition security through integrated actions.

SAFANSI activities **have targeted the poor and vulnerable, especially women and children, in disadvantaged areas**. The program has informed national nutrition policies in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. Other SAFANSI activities have ranged from testing better ways to deliver nutrition services in villages to creating datasets about the behavior of recipient households. **Beneficiaries of the SAFANSI-financed projects are the poor and vulnerable**, and include pregnant and lactating mothers, children, small farmers, landless, and ethnic minorities in disadvantaged areas. In Sri Lanka, SAFANSI focused on the post-conflict northeast and the estate sector with Bank-financed agriculture and health projects. In Bangladesh and India, **SAFANSI financed studies and pilots in indigenous/tribal or underserved areas**, which influenced the agriculture and health projects in those countries.

On infant and young child feeding, SAFANSI supported the development of a World Breastfeeding Costing Initiative tool, which was adopted by governments in South Asia and beyond. SAFANSI has **paid special attention to gender** in its regional activities. SAFANSI-financed regional activities examined links between gender and malnutrition in a flagship report - "Gender-Inclusive Nutrition Activities in South Asia" - and ways to empower women and their networks to make pathways for FNS gender inclusive programs. The report highlighted that gender was too narrowly addressed in most FNS interventions that focused on mothers' knowledge, skills, and physical health, and overlooked social factors such as household and community support, resource control, and mental health. Additionally, adolescent girls are often ignored by existing programs despite high rates of under nutrition and pregnancy. SAFANSI also worked with a regional network of women's group, the Business, Enterprise and Employment Support (BEES) Network for Women in South Asia, to improve family income through dairy development, fisheries management and other entrepreneurial endeavors. These activities led to innovations in seed/food banks and ready-made meals, followed by another SAFANSI-financed project in the Chittagong Hills.

The grant financed a study, "Women and Civil Works Programs: Empowerment, Gender Equality and Nutrition," and led to the development of new nutrition sensitive guidelines by the government on both targeting and monitoring the execution of civil works. It also supported an impact evaluation of Nepal's Community Challenge Fund. The grant supported the development and incorporation of gender-aware and culturally appropriate behavioral change communications messages to improve the effectiveness of food and nutrition security projects. The program incorporated greater gender sensitivity in developing behavior change messages for nutrition and into the Ministry of Agriculture's policies and programming.

Reference Link

- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/safansi#1>
- <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/764621468300299244/safansi-the-south-asia-food-and-security-initiative>

16. Name of the Project: Food Security and Agriculture Productivity (FSAPP)

Region: South Asia

Countries: Bhutan

Donor: World Bank

Project Duration: July 2017-Dec 2022

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

Aim: Increase agricultural productivity and enhance access to markets for farmers in selected gewogs in southwest Bhutan

Integration of Gender Equality:

FSAPP increases agricultural productivity and enhances market linkages among a target of 52,000 poor people (30 percent women) in select rural districts in southwest Bhutan. The project supports the government's efforts to reduce rural poverty and high levels of malnutrition through climate smart agriculture productivity enhancements for food and nutrition security and to increase farmers' access to local and export markets, particularly for key high-value crops. It addresses the interconnected problems that farmers and rural households face through a set of integrated, consolidated, area-specific interventions that respond to local constraints, potential, and priorities. The project also supports productivity enhancement of food crops such as rice, maize, potato, vegetables, and pulses and possibly of quinoa, citrus, apples, potatoes, and high-value crops (e.g., spices, especially large cardamom and ginger).

Key activities include strengthening producers' groups; developing irrigation, including on-farm sprinkler and drip systems; providing improved agri-inputs and farm equipment; and supporting home-grown school feeding programs. The project has equipped 316 hectares with new irrigation and drainage services, provided 1,207 people with improved nutrition services and products, and supported 89 producer-based organizations. The project has also reached 505 acres with flood irrigation, reached 277 acres with micro-irrigation, providing 608 users with new or improved irrigation services. Further, FSAPP has provided market infrastructure and productive goods to 49 groups. Five major farmer sales outlets are being constructed, one for each district.

Project benefits are expected to be considerable for the **target gewogs, which include vulnerable groups and communities, especially women and the poor**. However, there is a risk that these vulnerable beneficiaries, especially women, will not be adequately informed about the project or engaged in stakeholder consultations - and thus, excluded from project benefits. To address these risks, the ESMF includes measures for consultations, participatory planning, grievance redress, community development, and beneficiary feedback that take into account gender considerations. Specific interventions to support women and other vulnerable groups include: (a) ensuring their participation in stakeholder consultations, planning, and implementation; (b) targeting women and other vulnerable groups during the establishment and mobilization of all types of farmer groups, (c) supporting mechanization at the farm level to reduce the burden of labor on women; (d) raising awareness about dietary diversity and nutrition, carried out through a network of community resource persons, particularly for women of reproductive age who require nutrition awareness for their own health and for their children; and (e) training and capacity building activities on gender for Community Resource Persons and other project personnel at the central, dzongkhag, and gewog levels. Moreover, to ensure that the overall project benefits accrue to women, the project's monitoring and evaluation system will collect, analyze, and report gender disaggregated information for all key indicators as well confirm that approximately 30 percent of the project beneficiaries are women.

Reference Link

- <https://www.gafspfund.org/projects/food-security-and-agriculture-productivity-fsapp>
- <https://www.gafspfund.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Bhutan%20FSAPP%20PAD%20Clean%20Version%20Feb%209%202017%20.pdf>

17. Name of the Project: Building River Dialogue and Governance for civil society organizations in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basins (BRIDGE GBM)

Region: Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basins

Countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal

Donor: The Asia Foundation (July 2016 to October 2017) and Trans boundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA) Programme (October 2017 to September 2021)

Project Duration: 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2021

Implementing Agency: IUCN

Aim: Build the capacity of CSOs to catalyze cooperative water governance, long-term economic growth and livelihood security in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basin shared by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal

Integration of Gender Equality:

The objectives of the project are: (i) Strengthen the capacity and "voice" of CSOs to catalyze regional water cooperation for long-term economic growth and livelihood security in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basin; (ii) Improve government policies and practices at all levels related to water resource management, and to make these policies and practices inclusive of community concerns and meet national and international standards. Gender is a cross-cutting objective. As part of the project, IUCN is promoting women leadership development at regional dialogues and capacity building platforms.

Reference Links

- <https://www.iucn.org/regions/asia/our-work/regional-projects/bridge-ganges-brahmaputra-meghna-river-basins-bridge-gbm>

18. Name of the Project: Ecosystems for Life (E4L)

Countries: Bangladesh and India

Donor: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Project Duration: 2010 – 2014

Implementing Agency: IUCN

Aim: The overall objective is to increase understanding of the values of ecosystems in the Bangladesh–India sub region using various dialogue processes. In doing so, the project will create avenues for informing decision making towards establishing a system of improved, integrated management of these ecosystems.

Integration of Gender Equality

The E4L project, facilitated by IUCN, is a civil society led multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes a better understanding of the management of water resources shared by Bangladesh and India. It seeks to develop a shared vision and understanding of food, livelihood and water security issues through a three-tier collaborative approach involving: collaborative research and developing joint research-based policy options; creating a regional knowledge hub; and enhancing the capacity of civil society stakeholders in both countries to participate in the management of natural resources through dialogue.

Reference Links

- <https://www.iucn.org/regions/asia/our-work/regional-projects/ecosystems-life-e4l>

19. Name of the Project: Fostering Conservation of Biodiversity, Sustainable Livelihoods and an Empowered Civil Society in Lao PDR

Region: Asia

Countries: Lao PDR

Donor: The McConnell Foundation

Project Duration: 2018-2022

Implementing Agency: IUCN

Aim: Empower local civil society organizations to implement activities that conserve biodiversity and sustainably manage natural resources upon which local livelihoods depend.

- <https://www.iucn.org/regions/asia/our-work/regional-projects/fostering-conservation-biodiversity-sustainable-livelihoods-and-empowered-civil-society-lao-pdr>

20. Name of the Project: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region through a Ramsar Regional Initiative (Mekong WET)

Region: Asia

Countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam

Donor: International Climate Fund (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

Project Duration: 1 January, 2017 - 31 December, 2020

Implementing Agency: IUCN

Aim: Build climate resilience by harnessing the benefits of wetlands in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam

Integration of Gender Equality

Mekong WET will help the four countries to address their commitments to the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, and to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Through its focus on wetland ecosystems, the project also supports governments in implementing their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity and pursuing their commitments on climate change adaptation and mitigation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Reference Links

- <https://www.iucn.org/regions/asia/our-work/regional-projects/mekong-wet>

21. Name of the Project: Climate-smart villages in Southeast Asia

Region: Southeast Asia

Countries: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vietnam

Donor: CCAFS

Project Duration: April 1, 2015 - December 31, 2018

Implementing Agency: IWMI, CGIAR

Aim: Elevate the Climate Smart Village (CSV) concept to genuine methodology for bringing Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) technologies to scale. The project activities comprise 3 different dimensions of scaling: 1) Testing approaches and tools for dissemination of CSA and out scaling of CSV; 2) Engaging stakeholders and building capacities for upscaling of CSA/ CSV; and #3) Mainstreaming selected CSA practices and the CSV concept in Mekong Basin countries

Integration of Gender Equality

The project introduces CSA innovations as integral part of local farming systems. The initial phase of the project focus on a set of 'no-regret' technologies (e.g., water saving and harvesting). The scaling process of these CSA technologies is facilitated through participatory approaches with (male and female) farmers in combination with establishing knowledge platforms and multi-stakeholder forums. While the project focuses on a topographic transect along the Mekong river, the new approach for catalyzing CSA rollout covers generic features that are applicable to the conditions found in other target regions.

Reference Links

- <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/what-we-do/projects/show-projects/?C=819>

ADDITIONAL REGIONAL INITIATIVES

IUCN <https://www.iucn.org/regions/asia>

1. Mangroves for the Future (MFF)
2. Mangroves and Markets (MAM)
3. Building River Dialogue & Governance in the Sekong, Sesan & Sre Pok river basins (BRIDGE 3S)
4. Building River Dialogue and Governance for civil society organisations in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basins (BRIDGE GBM)
5. Fostering Conservation of Biodiversity, Sustainable Livelihoods and an Empowered Civil Society in Lao PDR
6. Mekong WET: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region through a Ramsar Regional Initiative
7. Ecosystems for Life (E4L)
8. Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
9. Eco-Longmen, living Dongjiang: Protecting Watersheds for Sustainable Drinking Water
10. Mega-cities and their watersheds: Nature-Based Solutions for Sustainable Drinking Water Sources
11. USAID Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change Project
12. Strengthening community capacity and livelihood resilience through integrated coastal and marine resource management

IWMI: www.iwmi.org

Projects with a gender component - women smallholders collectives, climate change, agriculture:

- <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/2021/03/choosing-the-collective-challenging-conventional-ideas-of-womens-leadership/>
- https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/22700/1/sugden_f_et_al_210305.pdf
- <https://wle.cgiar.org/thrive/2020/10/15/resource-poor-women-farmers-benefit-forming-collectives>
- https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/22700/1/sugden_f_et_al_210305.pdf
- <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/publications/other-publication-types/ca-cabi-series/climate-change-and-agricultural-water-management-in-developing-countries/>
- http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/Publications/wle/towards-sustainable-intensification-briefs/wle_towards_sustainable_intensification-insights_and_solutions-brief_no-5.pdf
- Greater Mekong, Agriculture: <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/2017/02/engaging-marginalized-groups-in-the-greater-mekong-region-through-action-research/>
- Koshi Basin (China, Nepal, and Bihar region) <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/2019/03/you-cant-manage-what-you-dont-measure/>
- Mekong River Commission <https://www.mrcmekong.org/publications/topic/gender>

Annex 3

Interventions Related to Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystem Restoration and Food Security, Cambodia

1. Name of the Project: Strategic Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR) Program

Funding Agency: ADB

Project Objective: To mainstream climate resilience into national and sub-national development policies, plans and projects supported by scaled up financing of adaptation activities in the key development sectors

2. Name of the Project: Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) Program phase 3

Project Location: Four provinces (Kampong Chhnang, Kampot, Stung Treng and Svay Rieng)

Funding Agency: United Nations Development Pro Swedish International Development Cooperation (sida)

Project Duration: July 2019 – June 2024

Implementing Agency: Natl Council Sustainable Dev.

Project Objective: To increase community resilience through mainstreaming gender into school curriculum and school. The specific objective is to contribute to strengthening of the implementation of the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan for 2014-2023

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- Data disaggregated by # of women/girls and men/boys participated in the project activities.
- School curriculum (teaching and learning) in secondary education includes gender impacts of climate and disasters;
- Increased adaptive capacities of women-headed households and girls through testing and promotion of a **gender-sensitive climate-smart school model**, and interventions to support their participation in sub-national planning and decision-making processes.

3. Name of the Project: Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems to Support Climate-Resilient Development in Cambodia Project

Implementing Agency: Action Aid Cambodia and UNDP

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

Under the project, Action Aid Cambodia and UNDP partnered to train 23 'Women Champions' in gender equality, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Receiving training alongside local authorities, the women became disaster-risk reduction focal points for their communities and produced action plans for early warning, including advocacy resulting in construction of a canal to mitigate the impacts of drought, training on gender equality and waste management, and disaster information dissemination. The women were also involved in other activities to reduce their community's vulnerability to disasters, such as a mangrove-planting campaign in Kampot, and solar- water pump research and installation. The **project M&E had a system to track the sex-disaggregated data** for # of men and women to participate in the trainings/workshops/events. One of the main communication series produced under the project was '**Climate Change Champion Profiles**', which depict short stories of Cambodians doing exceptional actions and demonstrating leadership in adaptation to climate change. Of the 27 profiles produced representing 29 individuals, 12 women were exemplified (41 percent). The **project has developed a Women's Resilience Index for Cambodia**.

4. Name of the Project: Reducing the vulnerability of Cambodian rural livelihoods through enhanced sub-national climate change planning and execution of priority actions (SRL)

Project Objective: The objective of the project is to improve sub-national administration systems affecting investments in rural livelihoods through climate sensitive planning, budgeting and execution

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

This project has been designed **to reduce the vulnerability of rural Cambodians**, especially land-poor, landless and/or women-headed households. This will be achieved through investments in small-scale water management infrastructure, technical assistance to resilient agricultural practices, and capacity building support, especially **targeting poor women**, for improved food production in home gardens. Importantly, these services will be delivered by sub-national administrations (communes, districts and provinces) with a view to strengthen their overall capacity to plan, design and deliver public services for resilience building.

5. Name of the Project: EmPower Project: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies project

Project Location: Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam

Project Objective: The project focuses on harnessing renewable energy to build resilient livelihoods for women in rural Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The project also works on transforming policies and institutions, amplifying evidence and voices and fostering regional commitment in this regard.

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- Encourage women and marginalized groups to participate in the decision-making process.
- Improve gender responsiveness in climate and disaster risk reduction policies.
- Enable women to use renewable energy as economic resources for resilient livelihoods.
- Improve regional mechanism, processes and knowledge on climate change and disaster risk reduction to include gender and human rights
- Generate, analyze and use sex, age, and diversity disaggregated data to inform policy.
- Cambodia Women Resilience Index (Tool)
- Costing Options for measuring gender equality in climate action. (regional tool but it can be applied to Cambodia context)

6. Name of the Project: Supporting Forest and Biodiversity project

Project Duration: 2012-2018

Implementing Agency: USAID SFB

Project Objective: The project set a goal of at least 30 percent of participants from under-represented groups in project activities to promote gender equality in all aspects of the USAID SFB project, overcome existing barriers to improving women's participation, and mainstream a gendered perspective into all stages of the project.

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- Although the main focus of USAID SFB's activities is on forests and biodiversity sectors, especially climate change adaptation, gender mainstreaming was integrated into all activities of the project. Opportunities were provided for both men and women to participate in, obtain, and share practical experiences in the activities supported by the project, as well as planning and implementing community forestry development activities, where the project worked closely with local and competent authorities.
- The USAID SFB project promoted gender equality and women's empowerment by ensuring that under-represented groups, specifically indigenous people, women, and youth, were incorporated into all stages of each activity.
- Gender considerations were incorporated into socio- economic baseline surveys, livelihood assessments, value chain analyses and other surveys and studies that are supported under the USAID SFB project. At the project management level, USAID SFB recruited more than 45 percent female staff, of which 40 percent worked in technical positions.
- As the project collected and compiled information, data was disaggregated by gender to ensure that the project team was aware of the importance of establishing and maintaining appropriate gender participation in each of the project's activities.
- For this purpose of gender mainstreaming to the project, a **gender strategy, action plan, checklists, brochure and gender support materials were developed** based on the specific needs of each target audience.
- Women were empowered through capacity-building activities, such as training and awareness raising events, to master skills and enable them to participate in decision making activities related to community forest development. Among the 13,125 people actively engaged in the forest management activities in EPL, PLL and national level, 5,570 or 42.4 percent were women.
- USAID SFB also engaged women and indigenous people in trainings on community climate change adaptation and **using the Watershed Environmental Services Tool (WESTool)** to identify climate change adaptation priorities. Of all participants trained in climate change adaptation, 42.7 percent were women and 25.3 percent were non-Khmer.

7. Name of the Project: The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility REDD+ Readiness Project (FCPF)

Project Location: Phnom Kulen National Park

Project Objective: The main objective of the project is to contribute to reduce forest loss and degradation while promoting environmentally sustainable livelihoods and conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage in Phnom Kulen National Park

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- The project fully considers and promotes the gender equality, women's empowerment when applicable throughout the process of project implementation. As part of the support for implementation of forest restoration activities, to ensure sustainability of such efforts, equitable participation, involvement and support from indigenous and non-indigenous women, men and youth in local communities will be promoted. A stakeholder mapping will be carried out, so as to ensure the affected stakeholders of reforestation and restoration activities are appropriately identified and then are effectively consulted in a socially inclusive and gender-responsive manner
- Gender mainstreaming section has been included in the project narrative and financial progress report.

8. Name of the Project: Strengthening implementation of Partnership Forestry (PF) in Samroang Commune Project

Project Duration: 2019-2020

Project Objective: The overall objective of the project is to contribute to reduce forest loss and degradation through strengthening implementation of sustainable forest management while promoting environmentally sustainable livelihoods and protection of forest resources in Samroang Commune.

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- The project fully considers and promotes the gender equality, women's empowerment when applicable throughout the process of project implementation. As part of the support for implementation of forest restoration activities, to ensure sustainability of such efforts, equitable participation, involvement and support from indigenous and non-indigenous women, men and youth in local communities will be promoted. A stakeholder mapping will be carried out, so as to ensure the affected stakeholders of reforestation and restoration activities are appropriately identified and then are effectively consulted in a socially inclusive and gender-responsive manner.

Establishing Women's Savings Groups:

- The establishment of Charcoal and Forest (CF) saving group is one of the financial sources for CF members to invest on alternative livelihood options, as well as source of income to support implementation of CFMP. It incentivizes CF members to participate in protection and management of their CF, as they can access to credit from their CF saving group to support and expand their livelihood activities. This project will support piloting establishment of a Women CF Saving Group to strengthen CF institution and incentivize PF members to actively participate in the implementation of PFMP.
- Gender mainstreaming section has been included in the project narrative and financial progress report.

9. Name of the Project: Flooded forest rehabilitation and management to sustain landscape management of the Tonle Sap Great Lake

Project Duration: 2019-2020

Project Objective: The Overall Objective of the project is to promote an integrated and sustainable flooded forest rehabilitation and management in the Tonle Sap Great Lake which attains simultaneously related to biodiversity, food security/fisheries/agriculture/livelihoods, and climate change.

10. Name of the Project: Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE)

Project Duration: 2015-2021

Project Objective: The programme aims at testing climate-resilient innovations for Cambodian smallholder farmers, with 3 objectives: (i) Sustainably increase agricultural productivities and incomes; (ii) adapt and build resilience to climate change; and (iii) reduce or remove greenhouse gas emission where possible.

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- One of the target beneficiaries were the smallholders learning group (ID poor and women headed HHs)
- The project report included disaggregated data for # of women participated in the training/workshops and other project activities.
- Completed one 4-day training course on gender mainstreaming in agriculture extension, with 36 participants (21 females) from PDAFF, and GDA/DAE. The participants have understood the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy framework in Agriculture, the Role and Responsibilities to implement the policy and the method for enhancing Women Economic Empowerment.
- Completed 3 4-days TOT training courses on Farmer Field School and Gender Role and Women Economic Empowerment, with 129 participants (24 females) from PDAFF, DAOs and GDA/DAE. The participants are able to develop the topics for 18 weeks FFS with Climate Smart Agriculture.
- Gender Role and Women Economic Empower in Agriculture guidelines has been developed. And it was integrated into the Farmer Field School Guidelines of FAO.

11. Name of the Project: The Feed the Future initiative (FtF) Harvest II

Funding Agency: USAID

Project Duration: 2017-2022

Project Objective: The Feed the Future program supports the Cambodian government's development strategy by increasing the country's agricultural productivity, improving the well-being of the rural poor, and promoting sustainable management of the country's rich natural resources. The overriding objective is to support the achievement of Cambodia's development goals, including halving the proportion of people who suffer from malnutrition and achieving the sustainable use of environmental resources. USAID is developing agricultural solutions to a variety of challenges, including access to finance, private sector engagement, postharvest losses, food safety, lack of market access, poor nutrition and sanitation, and environmental degradation.

Gender integration into project cycle:

- Trained nearly 345,000 (64 percent female) persons or 124,500 households in agriculture and food security, 25 percent of them were poor
- Helped over 193,000 (53 percent Female) farmers or 78,000 households to apply new technologies on 87,600 hectares of land
- Assisted beneficiary farmers to increase their incremental sales by US\$40 million (or each household has additional income of \$110) from selling agriculture products each year.
- Trained over 230,000 (70 percent Female) people in improving nutrition practices.
- Helped 41,000 (50 percent girls) children under 5 years old to receive nutrition program.
- Reduced nearly 30 percent of underweight children within the past 5 years.
- Helped 73 (33 Female) students to pursue Associate, Bachelor, MSc and PhD degrees in agriculture, food security or environment related sectors.
- Report by disaggregated data was available.
- Harvest II works to mainstream women and youth across project activities designed to build capacity for market engagement and participation, including activities implemented through grants to private sector and development partners. Gender equity and youth empowerment are cross-cutting priorities for the project, and Harvest II uses real-time data to track progress towards project targets for women and youth engagement.
- In FY20, 2,489 women and 683 youth were engaged in Harvest II-supported activities to increase access to productive economic resources, comprised of 54.5 percent of female participants and 15 percent youth.
- SME (including farmers) receiving business management training through KiU system
- SME (including farmers) selling or using bio char products from Husk Ventures

12. Name of the Project: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Grant Food for Education programme

Project Duration: FY 2017-2019

Implementing Agency: World Food Programme (WFP) and partners in Cambodia

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

No specific gender analysis was conducted as baseline for this phase of programming, which limits gender analysis of the programme. However, WFP has shown increased commitment to gender equality and empowerment in Cambodia. In recent years the CO has undertaken several pieces of gender-related work in order to better understand the gender context. During this phase, additional gender-related work was done, including a review of gender in Cambodia's food security and nutrition policies, and a study into gender in household decision-making. The findings of these pieces of work should be incorporated into the design of the programme and the section on evaluation findings describes whether gender dimensions have improved as a result. Data disaggregated for # of girls and boys in school enrolment, drop-out and completion rate.

Reference Links

1. Strategic Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR) Program

No Links

2. Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) Program phase 3

- <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/dcc/project/mainstreaming-gender-impacts-climate-change-and-disasters-education-sector>

3. Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems to Support Climate-Resilient Development in Cambodia Project

- https://www.adaptation-undp.org/sites/default/files/resources/booklet_21cm_x_21cm_v10_0.pdf
- https://cambodia.actionaid.org/sites/cambodia/files/publications/Cambodia_WRI_English_Version_0.pdf
- https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cambodia_cIEWS_project_gender_learning_report_final_september_2020.pdf

4. Reducing the vulnerability of Cambodian rural livelihoods through enhanced sub-national climate change planning and execution of priority actions (SRL)

- <https://ncsd.moe.gov.kh/dcc/project/reducing-vulnerability-cambodian-rural-livelihoods-through-enhanced-sub-national>

5. The EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies project

- <https://www.empowerforclimate.org/en/about-us>
- <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/images/unwomen/emp/attachments/2020/09/20%20cambodiawomens%20resilience%20index.pdf?la=en&vs=4420>
- <https://www.empowerforclimate.org/en/resources/c/o/s/costing-options-for-measuring-gender-equality-in-climate-action>

6. Supporting Forest and Biodiversity project

- https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/SFB_Final_Report.pdf
- The WESTool allows users to explore how ecosystem services, land uses and socioeconomic factors interact across Cambodia's landscapes. By combining advanced science with intuitive maps and tools, the WESTool offers valuable information at the local, regional and national scale to support

decision-makers and land managers who wish to understand and balance the value of remaining forests with development goals. <https://winrock.org/westool/>

7. The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility REDD+ Readiness Project (FCPF)

- <http://www.cambodia-redd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LoA-GDANCP-Pilot-Project-Final.pdf>

8. Strengthening implementation of Partnership Forestry (PF) in Samroang Commune Project

- <http://www.cambodia-redd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LoA-FA-Pilot-Project.pdf>

9. Flooded forest rehabilitation and management to sustain landscape management of the Tonle Sap Great Lake

- <http://www.cambodia-redd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LoA-FiA-Pilot-Project.pdf>

10. Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE)

- <http://aspirekh.org/home-4-2-2/>

11. The Feed the Future initiative (FtF) Harvest II

- <https://www.kiuglobal.com/about>
- <https://www.huskventures.com/>

12. The Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)

- <https://ccafs.cgiar.org/news/working-women-farmers-make-cambodian-communities-plantwise>
- <https://ccafs.cgiar.org/news/plant-clinic-established-cambodia-climate-smart-village-address-crop-pests#.WSz3vfl97IU>

13. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Grant Food for Education programme

- https://dss-prod-017575727556.s3.amazonaws.com/0/0/1/FINAL_WFP_Cambodia_McGovern-Dole_Endline_Evaluation_Report_-_Volume_1_-_Main_Report_002.pdf

ANNEX 4

Alignment of SDGs into the 15th Development Plan, Targets and Strategies of Nepal

	Goals and Strategy of 15 th Plan	Key Indicators	Relevant SDGs
1	High and equitable national income (growth rate, poverty and inequality)	Increase economic growth and GNP Reduced poverty Reduce income inequality	SDG 1, 8
2	Development and utilization of human capital (health, quality education, decent employment)	Increase life expectancy Reduce maternal mortality Increase literacy and enrollment ratio Labor force participation	SDGs 2, 3, 5
3	Accessible modern infrastructure and connectivity	Road density Access to safe and modern transport Highway connectivity Access to road, electricity, internet	SDG 9
4	High and sustainable production and productivity	Increased production and productivity Production and consumption of clean energy Improve balance of trade Improve labor productivity	SDG 12
5	Wellbeing and decent life	Improvement in HDI Safe and comfortable housing Access to health and drinking water facilities	SDG 11
6	Safe, civilized, just society	Improved Gender Development Index Reduction of violence against women and girls Improved coverage with basic social security Improved socio-cultural diversity in schools	SDG 5, 10, 16
7	Healthy and balanced environment	Reduced pollution increase renewal energy consumption Increase forest density and wood production Coverage of local level adaptation plans	SDGs 13, 15
8	Good governance (rule of law, public integrity)	Improvement in index related to rule of law, competitions, ease of doing business Reduced corruption index Participation of voters in election Disaster resilience Reduced share of imports (of major food items)	SDG 16
9	Comprehensive democracy		
10	National unity/security and dignity		

Annex 5

Targets and Indicators of the SDGs Related to Food Security, Climate Change and Ecosystem Restoration in Nepal

Indicators	Baseline (2015)	Target (2030)
SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture		
Target 2.1 End hunger, ensure access to safe, nutritious, sufficient food for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence of undernourishment (proportion of population) Per capita food grain production (kg) Global food security index (score) 	36.1 320 44.3	3 530 90
Target 2.2 End malnutrition, address nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence of stunting (% of population) Prevalence of malnutrition (% of population) % of underweight children (under 5 years) Prevalence of Anemia (among women of reproductive age) 	36 11.3 30.1 35	15 4 9 10
Target 2.3 Double the agricultural productivity and income of small food producers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average income of small food producers (by sex/indigenous) Land productivity (AGPA/ha) USD 	NA 3278	NA 7018
Target 2.4 Sustainable food production and resilient agriculture practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture land at present level (000 ha) Round the year irrigated land (% of arable land) Soil organic matter (SOM in crop land %) 	2641 25.2 1.96	2641 80 4
Target 2.5 Maintain genetic resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of plant and animal genetic resources secured Number of local breed classified being at risk Number of community seed bank 	NA NA 115	NA NA NA
Target 2.6 Increase investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture orientation index for government expenditure Government expenditure in % of total budget 	0.14 3.3	0.38 NA
SDG 13: Combat climate change and its impact		
Target 13.1 increase resilience and adaptative capacity to climate change hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of deaths/missing/affected by disaster (per 100000) Proportion of local government adopt and implement DRR 	NA NA	NA NA
Target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into policies and plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local adaptation plan prepared in councils Community level adaptation plans Implementation of adaptation plans Climate smart villages Climate smart farming 	4 31 15 45 133	120 750 60 170 500
Target 13.3 Education, awareness raising and institutional capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of school covered by climate change education Number of trained local persons in climate change adaptation 	80 791	100 3000
SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss		
15.1 Conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forests, wetlands, mountains and dry lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest area as a proportion of total land area % Forest under community-based management Protected areas (incl forests) Conservation of lakes, wetlands and ponds 	44.7 39 23.2 1727	44.7 42 23.3 5000

15.2 Sustainable management of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and increase afforestation and reforestation	44.6	44.6
• Forests handover to leasehold groups for livelihoods (000 ha)	5000	5000
• Afforestation in public and private land (ha per annum)		
15.3 Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil		
• Forest density (number of trees per ha)	430	645
• Conservation of rivulet and river bank (bioengineering in km)	1675	10000
15.4 Conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity		
• Proportion of potentially dangerous lakes	0.37	0
• Mountain ecosystem covered by protected areas	67.8	70
15.5 Reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity, prevent the extinction of threatened species	0.48	0
• Threatened flora, medicinal and aromatic plants (%)	0.81	0
• Threatened fauna (%)		
15.9 Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning		
• Plant species under conservation plan (number)	3	15
• Animal species under conservation plan (number)	5	15

Source: (NPC, 2017)

Annex 6:

Interventions Related to Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystem Restoration and Food Security, Nepal

1. Name of the Project: <i>Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond the Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihood in Agriculture Sector</i>
Project Location: Argakhanchi, Kapilvastu, Siraha, and Udayapur districts
Funding Agency: Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project Duration: 2015-2018
Implementing Agency: Implemented by FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (including Department of Agriculture, Department of Livestock Services, Nepal Agricultural Research Council, and Department of Hydrology and Meteorology)
Project Objective: Strengthen institutional and technical capacities for reducing vulnerability and promoting climate-resilient practices, strategies and plans for effectively responding to the impacts of climate change and variability in agriculture sector
Gender Integration into Project Cycle: This project responds to the needs of women and men in view of the specific climate change issues and adaptation options and addresses SDGs 5, 8 and 13 . The project has not made any specific effort to develop a separate gender mainstreaming strategy . However, social inclusion and gender equality are considered in planning, implementation and monitoring to achieve desired impacts from climate risk management and adaptation interventions. Thus, it follows a gender responsive approach . The measuring of outcomes and impacts of the project activities on women and men's resilience to climate change has been done through gender responsive monitoring and evaluation . Women's involvement and participation is emphasized in the implementation and enhancing adaptive capacity of women is given a high priority. 74 percent of the 3,484 participant farmers in the 120 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are women farmers. A large part of the participant farmers (41.9 percent) is from indigenous communities. In total 1,459 indigenous farmers from four project districts are from the indigenous communities. The project site selection is based on the presence of vulnerable communities in hazard prone and underserved areas mostly with settlements of indigenous communities.
Key Highlight: <i>Farmer Field School as an Approach to Empower Women for promoting Gender Equality: A case story of Patauti Nigali FFS, Argakhanchi District</i> A women farmer from Arghakhanchi district shared her experience of learning and implementing the skills from FFS. She said, Maize is a staple diet for those who don't have land in valley plains for growing rice. Earlier she used to sow maize seeds without knowing their seed rate and spacing. She used to believe that sowing seeds densely is alright since after thinning out it would get desired spacing. She also thought that use of fertilizer is harmful. As result, her maize production was dwindling day by day; the plants remained thin and would then fall due to the wind once the maize started fruiting. But after joining FFS group, she had a FFS on maize plantation where she learnt how to calculate the seeds required, spacing to be maintained and the balanced use of fertilizer. Then she practiced her learning in the field, using the methods she had learnt which was different than her traditional way. Now, she happily shares that her maize production has increased significantly and the inter-cropping in maize has become relatively comfortable with the new knowledge and skills learned.

2. Name of the Project: *Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Program (ASFP)*

Project Locations: Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Dailekh, Darchula, Dolpa, Doti, Humla, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, and Surkhet

Funding Agency: The World Bank
Project Duration: 2013-2018

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Agriculture Development

Project Objective: Enhance food and nutritional security of targeted communities in selected locations of Nepal

Gender Integration into Project Cycle

AFSP has reached the most vulnerable small-scale producers, including women, who are hardest hit by poverty. This is clearly a women-focused project under which a **Social Management Framework (SMF)** was prepared that incorporated social inclusion in the project design and the adverse impacts were identified on time and mitigated accordingly. Thus, this framework gave attention to GESI. This project became very popular among women farmers, since they benefited directly from nutrition and health education, received support and equipment to reduce their workload, and new technologies and technical assistance to grow vegetables and develop livestock (poultry, eggs, goats).

Tools and Technology: The introduction of equipment such as **corn shellers, seed grading machines, processing mills, and improved cooking stoves** have **reduced women's workloads**. Aside from benefiting from the AFSP activities, the implementation of the project has brought about positive economic, social and political change for women within their communities. With the project's help, women were able to open bank accounts in their names. The district-based NGOs/service providers were recruited to assist in the implementation of the project. They facilitated the process of identifying participants from geographically remote, marginalized caste groups, especially Dalits¹, Janajatis (indigenous ethnic groups), single women, and people with disabilities. The project result shows that it has **reached 656,245 poor people (target of 560,000), approximately 91 percent of whom were women**. Overall, the project includes specific measures to address women's workload especially in the context of out-migration of male members of the household, **enhancing skills and capabilities and improving gender sensitization**.

Key Highlights:

Social Management Framework Tool

Under this project A Social Management Framework (SMF) was prepared as a key tool for project implementation that guided on social planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. This framework ensured that the social considerations were incorporated in the project design and the adverse impacts were identified on time and mitigated accordingly. The following twin areas received particular attention: (i) involuntary resettlement; and (ii) gender and social inclusion. It supported to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts, and enhance participation and social accountability in project activities. The SMF consists of social screening guidelines, land acquisition, resettlement and compensation guidelines, a vulnerable community development strategy, gender development strategy, consultation and information disclosure mechanism, monitoring, institutional arrangement for implementing SMF, funding mechanism, and capacity building. **Social screening** at an early stage provides necessary information on the potential social impacts likely to be encountered during implementation. **A Land acquisition, resettlement and compensation guideline** is followed to address any issues related to land. **Gender development strategy** developed for the project seeks to address gender related concerns that were identified such as increased workload, male absence due to migration, low levels of skills and capabilities amongst women, and need for gender sensitization to maximize benefits and minimize adverse effects of project interventions, and to ensure the participation of women in all phases of project cycle. Based on the findings of social screening **Vulnerable community development plan** is developed. Thus, this tool guides the overall project to consider the social issues and address them accordingly and timely at each throughout the project cycle.

¹ Dalits are so called "low caste" groups who have been traditionally, socio-culturally, economically, and politically discriminated and marginalized.

3. Name of the Project: *Home Garden Project (HG)*

Project Locations: 20 districts - Ramechhap, Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Sindhuli, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Siraha, Dang, Rolpa, Salyan, Bardia, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Kalikot, Jumla, Kailali, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Doti and Achham

Funding Agency: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Project Duration: 2002-2018

Implementing Agency: Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

Project Objective: Promote home gardens for wellbeing of resource poor and disadvantaged groups

Gender Integration into Project Cycle

The HG project is simple, effective and within the technical know-how of women and disadvantaged groups. The HGP completely abide by the guiding principles laid out in the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Nepal (2013-2017) document, namely Ownership and Harmonization, Equity and Inclusion, and Governance, Impartiality and Conflict Sensitive. In an effort to engender the participation of women and DAGs for their meaningful and informed participation including their numbers in decision making positions, the project use the **GESI framework**, with the added dimension of poverty. The GESI framework adopted ensure that the processes for addressing the social and economic rights of beneficiaries are established and social justice is achieved. The project adopts a rights-based approach (RBA) to development programming.

This Project constantly made efforts to promote gender equality and social inclusion values through two major strategic interventions: (i) staff recruitment for providing technical and social backstopping services **ensuring 50 percent men and women** workforce; and (ii) formation of HG farmers groups **ensuring maximum number of women participants**, including **representation of women from Dalit and disadvantaged groups** in key positions of farmers groups. The HG project was designed and implemented in four phases: i) Initial formative research (Phase I) that focused on the characterization of indigenous HG system, an assessment of the potential of HG in improving women and disadvantaged household's food and nutrition security; ii) Refinement of HG technologies, practices and implementation modalities (Phase II); Development of pathways for scaling up HG (Phase III); and iv) Mainstreaming HG into national agriculture extension programme (Phase IV).

The HG program proved to be successful in improving household food, nutrition and income security of smallholders, especially women and disadvantaged groups, as evidenced through: the formation of 1,852 HG groups comprising 55,800 households as members, of which, 79 percent were women and 74 percent disadvantaged groups; 3,197 HGs are currently actively serving as demonstration/resource center from other to learn from; 1,432 (77 percent) HG groups actively **participated and benefitted from saving and credit schemes**; HG participants consumed six additional food types (cereals, root and tubers, legumes, vegetables, fruits and animal products) year round compared to the baseline of 3 types; average cash savings/household/year (from not buying vegetables from outside) and an average income/household/year (from selling surplus HG products) amounted to NPR 5,088 and NPR 9,218 respectively; and 79 women HG members are currently occupying positions in local governments. The HG program was **successfully integrated into the national agriculture extension system** and in the course curriculum of government's Center for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT).

Key Highlights:

- i. Good Changes takes time:** HG program shows that dealing with gender equality and women empowerment requires longer term engagement (16 years in case of HG);
- ii. Technically and Economically feasible technologies:** Technologies that are within the reach of smallholders, especially women, and generate tangible benefits are most likely to be adopted, sustained and scaled up; Interventions that help smallholders to diversify their farm production system (as is the case with HG) not only help them to cope with climate stresses, but also help improve family dietary diversity (food and nutrition), income and economic and political empowerment of women.
- iii. HG is an ecofriendly sustainable agriculture practice.**

3. Name of the Project: *Home Garden Project (HG)*

“Home garden as the entry point for reaching poor, women and disadvantaged groups”

The most distinguishing and prized feature of home garden initiative is that this has been successful in reaching and strengthening the capacity of DAGs, especially landless and land-poor households, to improve nutritional security through adoption of home garden technology and diversifying dietary sources in their homesteads, as well as generating supplementary income from the sale of surplus home garden products. Earlier the conventional agriculture-based livelihood and food security programmes focused on households with arable land. So, the households with limited land or no arable land are excluded due to structural limitations of the programme. HG interventions have proven to be best suited to serve the under-served impact group because the interventions occupy just 2-11 percent of family land holding but supply about 60 percent of family requirement for vegetables, fruits and spices, highlighting the tremendous contribution of the home garden system in meeting family nutrition. Since home gardens are practiced in smaller areas around the homestead, this is considered a woman's domain with women's involvement and engagement defining and shaping the management, production and use of the system. It is important to note that women have control over cash income generated from sale of surplus home garden produce contributing to economic empowerment of poor women.

4. Name of the Project: Hariyo Ban Program

Project Locations: Terai Arc Landscape (Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardia, Banke, Dang, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Makawanpur, Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Palpa) and Chitwan Annapurna Landscape (Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahun, Kaski, Syangja, Mustang, Manang, Nuwakot, Dhading, Rasuwa, Gulmi, Parbat, Arghakhachi, Myagdi, Baglung, Makawanpur, Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Palpa)

Funding Agency: USAID

Project Duration: 2011-2016 (Phase I) and 2016-2021 (Phase II)

Implementing Agency: Four consortium partners (WWF, CARE, FECOFUN, and NTNC) under the leadership of WWF

Aim: Reduce adverse impacts of climate change and threats to biodiversity in Nepal

4. Name of the Project: Hariyo Ban Program

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

Hariyo Ban is regarded as a one of the most GESI sensitive program in the forestry sector, bringing lessons and best practices that showcase leadership of women and socially excluded groups in NRM. The project implemented Underlying Causes of Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment (UCPVA) tool for selecting sites. The three community-tested tools developed by CARE- the Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA), Participatory Well-being Ranking (PWBR), and Public Hearing and Public Auditing (PHPA) were used to improve the internal governance of CFUGs, and conservation area management committees. A GESI strategy developed has helped to address GESI issues and implementing direct program interventions for:

- Increasing access of women, Dalits, indigenous people, poor and marginalized groups to participate in decision making processes and take on leadership roles in NRM
- Ensuring access of target communities to equitable benefit sharing

Under this project the application of **Gender Responsive Budgeting and Auditing tool** was very effective as it analyzes the proportion of a development budget and spending that is (a) directly gender responsive, (b) indirectly gender responsive, and (c) gender neutral. Through this program different female friendly, labor saving technologies for non-timber forest product (NTFP) processing and packaging was also introduced in the field such as biogas, improved cook stoves etc. HB program Phase II promoted and scaled-up successful GESI approaches of Phase I. It has prepared a **GESI Analysis and Action Plan** to accelerate GESI mainstreaming, covering work in the landscapes with communities, and policy and institutional level interventions, and has continued to scale up successful approaches pursued during Phase I. It also guides consortium partners and the Hariyo Ban Program team to mainstream GESI in all steps of the project cycle.

HB program has contributed to the implementation of Community Forestry Development Guidelines 2008 to **ensure that 50 percentages of CFUGs members are women** and that there is proportional representation of Dalits and socially excluded groups in the executive committees of the CFUGs. The strategy also strongly supports allocating at least 35 percent of forest revenues for livelihood promotion of poor, women, Dalits and socially excluded groups as identified in **well-being rankings**. The strategy has guided the program and its consortium partners in mainstreaming GESI throughout its activities. Through this project a total of 5,985 people (66 percent women) received training on GESI and governance advocacy, planning, implementation, and mainstreaming into plans and policies at different levels. Overall, 34,830 people benefitted from GESI focused interventions, women (83 percent), Dalits (18 percent), and Janajatis (45 percent). Through HB program GESI mainstreaming was supported in the local development planning process, and in all the national biodiversity, REDD+, PES and climate change adaptation policies, strategies and plans that the Program supported for formulation, revision, and/or implementation.

Key Highlights:

- Application of context-specific GESI tools and building GESI capacity of key stakeholders is key to generate scalable impact in natural resources management sector.
- Conservation of biodiversity, sustainable management of natural resources, and building of resilience to climate change with community stewardship and effective mobilization hinges upon ensuring gender equality and social inclusion.
- The continuation of first phase HB program to second phase along with GESI consideration shows the importance of gender inclusive approach for the project to be effective.
- Participatory and inclusive natural resource management, continuing and scaling up successful approaches is necessary

4. Name of the Project: Hariyo Ban Program

Representation and Leadership of Women and Marginalized Groups in Executive Committees of NRM Groups Increased

The Hariyo Ban Program was successful in increasing the number of women and marginalized people in executive committees of CFUGs, as well as in leadership positions of various community and civil society organizations and institutions. In 2013, a rapid assessment of 913 CFUGs conducted by Hariyo Ban on representation of women and marginalized groups in leadership positions revealed that 47 percent of CFUGs had women as either chairperson or secretary. By 2016 this had increased to 70 percent. Representation of Janajatis and Dalits in at least two decision-making positions in the sampled CFUGs also increased, from 52 percent to 64 percent over the same period. Both results exceeded the Program's targets and show very good progress, but are still short of 100 percent as mandated by the Community Forest Development Guideline (CFDG) 2009. Community Learning and Action Centers (CLACs) have been a major vehicle to empower women, poor and marginalized groups for leadership, and drive this reformation in CFUGs. More broadly they have been a very useful platform for social transformation, bringing people together to discuss and plan actions to address various local issues. The 485 CLACs that the Program supported capacitated 12,436 women and 334 men to undertake social advocacy. This resulted in several positive outcomes, such as helping women and marginalized groups achieve leadership roles not just in NRM groups but also in other community institutions. CLAC members have also been active in pushing for strengthened internal governance of NRM groups and for building community stewardship through effective mobilization for conservation of biodiversity, sustainable management of resources, livelihood improvement with equitable benefit sharing, and reducing climate vulnerabilities by addressing differential impacts and resilience building.

5. Name of the Project: Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP)

Project Locations: Humla, Mugu, Dolpa, Jumla, Kalikot, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Rolpa, Rukum, Dang, Bardiya, Kailali, Bajura, Achham

Funding Agency: EU and DFID (Phase I); DFID (Phase II)

Project Duration: Phase I: 2013-2017 Phase I Transition Extension: 2018-Dec 2019

Implementing Agency: Central: Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE)
District: 26 Local Bodies in 14 Project Districts

Project Objective: Ensure the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Nepal are able to adapt to the effects of climate change

Gender Integration into the Project Cycle

The NCCSP project had **employed a dedicated Gender Specialist in its regional office**, in order to support project districts for **ensuring inclusion and implementation of gender-responsive climate actions**. It has **adopted a strategy** to ensure women's participation in the user committee (UC) in leading roles (47.02 percent women in the UC) with at least one woman in each UC in a decision-making role along with representatives from other ethnic groups. The project has contributed to the SDGs 13, 9, 5 and 1. Almost 50 percent of program beneficiaries were women and a total of 4,946 coordination committee members (43 female) **received training on CCA and using GESI tools and approaches at all levels**, from planning to evaluation of the project. The project had **provisions of equal wages for men and women** who were involved in the implementation of interventions on the ground.

During NCCSP extension phase, the project ensured 50 percent representation of women in the UC and two key positions assumed by women. This project supported **100 gender responsive Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs)** in 87 VDCs and 9 municipalities of 14 districts. The project set a milestone by reforming the composition of the District Energy Environment Climate Change Coordination Committee and Village Energy Environment Climate Change Coordination Committee with 50 percent mandatory representation of women and disadvantage groups in implementation. The project significantly supported in reducing women's workload and improving their health with the elimination of harmful indoor pollution through the installation of 15,829 ICS, 2,377 metal stoves, 448 bio-gas plants, 3,203 micro solar systems, and 90 improved water mills for micro hydropower. Altogether 23,588 participants (36 percent women) from climate vulnerable communities have benefited from these alternative energy sources.

5. Name of the Project: Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP)

Key Highlights

- Bottom-up planning – local adaptation plan of action – LAPA was designed and tested for this purpose, which proved to be hugely successful and as a result LAPA was promoted as a national guideline for planning and implementing climate change adaptation programs at local level.
- Eco friendly and women friendly technologies such as ICS, bio-gas plants, micro solar system, and improved water mill helped in reducing women's workload and improving health condition.
- The project sets an example by reforming the representation of women and DAGs to 50 percent District/Village Energy Environment Climate Change Coordination Committee

NCCSP a significant initiative by the GON in the sector of climate change adaptation

MoPE being a lead agency in close collaboration with MoFALD and AEPC implemented NCCSP to ensure that Nepal's poorest and most vulnerable people are able to adapt well to the negative impacts of climate change. One of the highlighting activities by NCCSP was supporting the implementation of LAPA in order to increase the resilience of climate vulnerable and poor people of Nepal. The programme implemented LAPAs in 87 VDCs and 9 municipalities of 14 districts of far and mid-western region of Nepal covering six thematic areas: 1) Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security 2) Forest Management and Biodiversity 3) Alternative Energy 4) Climate Induced Hazards and Physical Infrastructure 4) Human Resources, Capacity Building and Livelihood, and 6) Human Health.

6. Name of the Project: Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas (ASHA)

Project Locations: Dailekh, Kalikot, Salyan, East Rukum, West Rukum, Jajarkot and Rolpa

Funding Agency: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Project Duration: Feb 2015 - March 2022

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE)

Objective: Strengthen the adaptive capacity of the communities and institutions to better contend with climate change risks in the project districts

Gender Integration into Project Cycle

The ASHA Project's target groups are climate vulnerable households, ensuring GESI dimensions - representation of women, Dalits, ethnic groups and minorities in various committees and implementing specific measures to ensure women's empowerment and social inclusion. So far this project has done a tremendous effort to ensure GESI by developing various guidelines, manuals, strategies, procedures, flyers, posters etc. for integrating gender equality, women's empowerment, social inclusion and social mobilization in project activities. The **GESI Strategy and Operational Guideline** support the mainstreaming of GESI addressing gender needs during planning, implementation and monitoring process of the project. Other guidelines such as the **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming-Process Guide** and Information on sexual exploitation and abuse in workplace (both in Nepali) have been published under this project. The project organized numbers of **CCA with GESI integration capacity building events** at different levels (Federal, Provincial and Local) stakeholders/partners, including beneficiaries and project staff that encourage, sensitize and boost-up the participants on GESI integration skills for effective implementation of CCA sub-projects. ASHA is sensitive to follow the **Gender Responsive Budgeting**. The analysis of project's Annual Work Plan and Budgeting 2019/20 showed that 38 percent budget is 'directly gender responsive', 46 percent is 'indirectly gender responsive' and 16 percent is 'gender neutral'. The project is following the gender responsive expenditure pattern, where, 70 percent of planned Direct GRB, 47 percent of planned Indirect GRB and 65 percent of planned Gender-Neutral budget was spent in FY 2019/20 (MoFE, 2020). ASHA has been **adapting participatory approach** from the very beginning of the project implementation. Since its entry point is the LAPAs, the most marginalized segments of the society have been actively participating at all phases of project cycle. The local smallholders have been participating in **vulnerability assessments**, hazard identification, prioritization and selection of adaptation activities during the LAPA preparation. The Project has facilitated the preparation of 200 ward level LAPAs where 93,695 community members (**45 percent women**) have participated in the LAPA preparation process. The Project has **prepared various forms/formats for GESI disaggregated data** that is captured on the project's MEAL. The project has also developed a **Climate Change Adaptation Tool box** that contains various climate smart measures such as drip irrigation, solar water lifting pump, ICS, etc.

6. Name of the Project: Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas (ASHA)

Key Highlights

- Specific strategy, guideline and process is helps in ensuring GESI mainstreaming throughout the project cycle
- Local Adaptation Plans for Action (LAPA) is a key mechanism to enhance climate resiliency at local level by developing appropriate adaptation measures to enhance the resiliency of the poor and vulnerable
- Climate change Adaptation tool box is the collection of climate smart agriculture technologies that are saves time and reduces women workload.

LAPA: A key tool to enhance climate resiliency at local level

The problem of too little water has created many challenges in the smallholders' lives and livelihoods in rural hilly areas. Many communities are surrounded by water, providing/provisioning water services to the downstream communities, but they are devoid of a facility to access the same. LAPA process facilitated by the ASHA project in that area facing climate change made efforts to improve the climate resilience of vulnerable smallholders through the promotion of climate-resilient community infrastructures. One such measure includes **installing water lifting technology, promoting multiple water uses and conserving water sources** in Sanibheri Rural Municipality-8 of Rukum west in Karnali Province of Nepal. It is climate-friendly intervention that uses solar energy to lift the water and supported vulnerable communities to adapt to the challenges of droughts. It reduced the workload of women and girls improved sanitation, hygiene and increased income generation opportunities. This shows that LAPA is instrumental in assessing vulnerabilities, prioritizing adaptation options like this and enhance the climate resilience of local community.

7. Name of the Project: Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions (BCRWME) Project

Project Locations: Achham, Bajhang, Baitadi, Bajura, Dadeldhura and Doti

Funding Agency: Strategic Climate Fund, Nordic Development Fund Grant, GoN
Project Duration: 2014-2020

Implementing Agency: Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management

Objective: Build climate change resilience of mountain communities of Nepal

Gender Integration into Project Cycle

The BCRWME project adopted practices that lead to increased and equitable access to opportunities and resources, as well as meaningful participation in decision-making, particularly for women. A **Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion (GESI) Plan** was formulated based on community consultation and **Gender and Social Impact Analysis** carried out during the Preparation of the Project. The implementation of the project measures ensured that the benefits of the projects were shared equally and discrimination towards women and DAGs were reduced. The key gender issues in the project area are several. Discrimination of women remains dire, Patriarchal systems, caste discrimination and other types of exclusion are prevalent. The practice of conservative cultural traditions, such as *Chaupadi*² is **one major gender issue** in the project area. Thus these issues were considered and GESI plan included development of awareness and common understanding on gender empowerment and social inclusion issues; promotion of a diversified workforce at the organizational and project level; promotion of, and assurance for, the effective participation and equitable access to project benefits by women, indigenous peoples (IP) and disadvantaged groups (DAG); and promotion of a less discriminatory society and improved sustainability of GESI initiatives through advocacy efforts. These four areas are addressed through a number of components and specific interventions. The project improved water management and storage practices in about 100 communities through building water collection ponds and drinking water tanks to store water during dry months, and orienting communities on water conservation practices. The domestic water collected during the dry season increased on average by 75 percent. As a result, the time women and children spent collecting domestic water during the dry season was reduced on average by 73 percent.

2 The practice of isolating girls and women during their menstruation period in the belief that they are "impure" during this period. Some communities also isolate new mothers after delivery for up to 10 days after delivery due to the same belief.

7. Name of the Project: Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions (BCRWME) Project

Key Highlights

Gender and Social Impact Analysis and formulation of GESI plan accordingly helps to address major gender issues in project area.

Community Ownership Leads to Sustainability

Water scarcity threatens the living conditions, livelihoods, and agricultural productivity of communities living in the Far-western Province of Nepal. Through the BCRWME project over 50,000 households in water-stressed communities of this province now have sufficient and reliable water supply even in the dry season. The project supported 1,250 communities with improved water storage infrastructure and watershed management practices. Spring sources are protected against surface contamination. Reservoir tanks store water overnight for collection the next day and excess water is stored in conservation ponds. The project has demonstrated that a **community-led participatory watershed management planning could lead to local ownership and sustainability**. More than 5,000 locals, almost half of them women, have been trained on water conservation. The **easy water access has saved women's time and reduced their workloads**. Nanda Devi Deuba says, "She no longer has to wake up at 2 a.m. to fetch water. Now, she has water right in front of her door. She uses extra water for growing vegetables. The communities also have enough water for irrigation and many have taken up vegetable farming for extra income. She earns around US\$ 1,000 a year by growing vegetables. She spends this extra money on household necessities. The easy access to water has changed their lives. By growing and selling seasonal vegetables, she managed to save some money and also to send our children to school."

8. Name of the Project: Ecosystem Based Adaptation in Mountain Ecosystems in Nepal

Project Locations: Kaski, Parbat and Syangja (Panchase area)

Funding Agency: BMU Germany (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety)

Project Duration: 2011-2016

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) / Department of Forests (DOF)

Objective: Support for building resilience of vulnerable ecosystems

Gender Integration into Project Cycle

A comprehensive **Vulnerability Impact Assessment (VIA)** study was prepared for the Panchase Mountain Ecological Region (PMER) that outlined the vulnerability of ecosystems and communities. A **gender-sensitive and social inclusion approach** was deployed during implementation of the EbA Mountain project in Nepal. Both women and men benefited from the capacity building initiatives, ecosystem restoration, water harvesting, land rehabilitation and livelihood diversification interventions. The EbA Project emphasized women's participation and social inclusion while identifying participants for decision making, trainings and orientation programs and other EbA implementation initiatives geared towards strengthening the ecosystem resilience. About 42 percent of the participants in EbA capacity development trainings were women. Three women's empowerment trainings were undertaken to engage women in natural resource conservation. Trainings were given to both men and women as micro-entrepreneurs of NTFPs and agro-based products. The project was successful in mobilizing community participation, particularly of women and Dalits. Some of the immediate effects were - the reduction of household drudgery of women such as fetching water required for dominant rural livelihood practices such as subsistence agriculture and livestock rearing, through water source conservation, conservation ponds etc.

Key Highlights

- Participatory, Inclusive, Gender sensitive approach is essential to address vulnerability of ecosystem and communities

8. Name of the Project: Ecosystem Based Adaptation in Mountain Ecosystems in Nepal

Restoring and Improving Traditional Water Sources

Dandapokhari conservation pond lies on the hilltop of Bangefadke VDC, in Syangja district and was originally constructed more than 120 years ago by a Gurung family with the aim that the pond be used every year during Bala Chaturdashi - a Hindu festival to pray for eternal peace of their deceased loved ones - as a rest stop by pilgrims on their holy pilgrimage to Panchase (Siddha Baba) temple and a water hole of wildlife. However, the pond, designed and constructed based on religious beliefs of the Gurung family, also helps sustain the local ecosystem. In 2013, understanding the vulnerability faced by the community due to scarcity of water and the upstream and downstream interlinkages, the local community proposed the renovation of the 'Dandapokhari' increasing its volume and holding capacity with support from the EbA Project. In addition, plantation of multiple-use trees in the 0.5 ha of land surrounding the pond was also undertaken. The construction of conservation ponds is a traditional practice in village areas in Nepal, based on their beliefs of service to humans and wildlife as water holes. In the Panchase area, such man-made ponds are a common sight that not only serves as water source for humans and wildlife but serves to promote water recharge of the many natural springs in the downstream. However, growing human interference and natural disasters are polluting the ponds, causing not only a decline in the water level, but also their subsequent ability to recharge natural springs downstream has lessened. More so, the drudgery of the locals has also increased as they are forced to travel further afield to get access to clean water. Local communities are insistent on the pressing need to conserve and restore these traditional ponds that have both environmental importance, and emotional attachments for the local. With conservation and restoration of water sources, the intervention has further ensured the availability of water throughout the year for local community, pilgrims, and wildlife.

9. Name of the Project: Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded Forests and Rangelands of Nepal (EbA II)

Project Locations: Achham, Salyan and Dolakha

Funding Agency: LDCF/GEF

Project duration: 2019-2022

Implementing agency: MoFE, MoALD

Objective: Enhance the capacity of the Government and local communities to adapt to climate change by implementing EbA in degraded forests and rangelands in Mid-hills and high mountain areas.

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

The project pursued a **gender-sensitive approach** whereby women representation at training workshops, demonstration activities and management committees are strongly promoted. A **Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy** developed by (MoFSC) is also emphasized. Through the project, women as well as underrepresented members from vulnerable groups have improved access to EbA and community-level activities, and proportional decision-making role. EbA II will also deliver diversified livelihoods options (gender-responsive economic investments), reduce women workload (gender-friendly technology), and have ecological co-benefits. In sum, the project can lay pioneering groundwork for marginalized issues: gender mainstreaming tailored for mountainous ecosystems in the EbA format. With effective implementation and monitoring, this project has the potential to become a good practice gender-mainstreaming blueprint for EbA projects – nationally in Nepal, regionally in South Asia, and globally in other LDCs. Gender has been taken into account throughout the project design and document including. Gender disaggregated indicators have also been incorporated. Additionally, the involvement of women in the project is considered in the results-based management framework. Importantly, the project will help reduce the exposure of climate vulnerable groups including women. Gender considerations will be mainstreamed into project activities to ensure that women are included in activities to increase their resilience and capacity to adapt to climate change. The project has been designed to provide training and information to all targeted indigenous and local communities on adaptation to climate change.

Key highlights

- Gender integration is practiced throughout the project cycle
- Building resilience and increasing adaptive capacity of women is prioritized.

10. Name of the Project: Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas

Project Locations: Dolakha, Jumla, Humla, Lamjung

Funding Agency: Global Environment Facility, UNEP

Project Duration: 2014 - 2019

Implementing Agency: UNEP, Bioversity International, NARC, DoA and LI-BIRD

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

This project contributed to SDGs 2, and 15. The project increasingly focused on gender inclusion and participation of women and disadvantaged/indigenous communities in project activities. Community seed banks (CSBs) and farmers Diversity Field Schools (DFS) were key interventions established and operationalized in project sites, where participation of women farmers and local communities is high for conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity and promotion of traditional mountain crop genetic diversity. The data of four project sites for 2018 showed **60 percent women participants** in community seed banks meetings and diversity field schools (DFSs) classes. Out of 6,016 rural smallholder households in 2018, around 45 percent of the project beneficiary households were women. The Project has put specific emphasis on design, introduction and promotion of **women friendly processing technologies** such as **proso millet and finger millet threshers** to reduce women drudgery. In some of the project sites mainly in Dolakha and Lamjung finger millet threshers are run by women groups or women farmers on payment for service basis and reaching large number of women farmers. The Project played a special role to identify, advocate and nominate a woman farmer representative from the project site to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of Nepal. As a result, a woman farmer from Lamjung - Ms. Ratna Kumari Gurung- has been **selected and nominated as the member of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)**. She participated in the PSC meetings and raised the voices of women in conservation and the use of threatened mountain crop genetic resources. The project made good efforts to mainstream gender equality in program implementation at the local and national levels.

Key Highlights

- Community Seed Bank and Diversity Field Schools approaches helps communities in climate change adaptation
- Women are not only beneficiaries they are change makers as well.
- Promotion of ecofriendly, women friendly and economic technologies reduce women drudgery

Diversity Field Schools (DFS) Tool/Approach

Diversity field school (DFS) is similar to farmer field school approach. It is a community-based action designed to create a platform for learning and sharing of crop diversity related knowledge and information. DFS places an emphasis on agency, participation, and empowerment, and seeks to develop both the knowledge base and leadership potential of local farmers.

11. Name of the Project: Nepal Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP)

Project Locations: 43 districts

Funding Agency: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Department for International Development, United Kingdom, Government of Finland

Project Duration: 2012-2016

Implementing Agency: GoN (Lead),

Objective: Maximizing the contribution of Nepal's forestry sector to inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction and tackling climate change.

Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

The MSFP adopted a two-pronged strategy for Gender, Poverty and Social Equity (GPSE) mainstreaming firstly, targeting women, the poor and the disadvantaged through a specific programme and integrating this approach into the other Programme outcomes – policy and governance, the investment of the private sector in job creation, climate change and forest management. Secondly, GPSE as a cross cutting theme was mainstreamed at 3 levels – policy at the center, institutions in the decentralized units of government, and within beneficiary organizations in the field. **Six different approaches and tools for this mainstreaming** were used: **the operationalization of the forestry sector GSI strategy, the GPSE Conceptual and Operational Framework, gender and DAG targeting and budgeting, gender audits and public audits, GESI and leadership training, and operationalizing internship policy within a promotion of work force diversity.** At the beneficiary level following the targeting approach, against a target of 60 percent, 62 percent of all total beneficiaries from direct programme interventions across all activities of MSFP were from disadvantaged groups, including women. In terms of job creation, 33 percent of the 22,478 full time jobs created through forest-based enterprises and sustainable forest management activities were accessed by women. In leadership positions of the Local Forest Groups (LFGs), 42 percent of the key positions of either Chair or Secretary were held by women, 15 percent by Dalit and 45 percent by the disadvantaged. This is a significant increase over the 2013 baseline data, 33 percent for women and 10 percent for Dalit. At the institutional level, MSFP made significant efforts in GPSE mainstreaming by developing its GPSE specific operational framework tools.

Key Highlights

- This project has developed six different approaches and tools for gender mainstreaming in project cycle
- Focused on women participation as well as women representation in all levels

Changing the Rules

As of July 2016, 2,914 LFGs had revised their operational plans and included the GESI perspective in the plan. The GESI provisions included focused on increased representation of women and the disadvantaged in the Executive Committees and in leadership positions, and allocation of at least 35 percent of the LFG's income for supporting women, the poor and the disadvantaged users - as stipulated in the revised Community Forestry Development (CFD) Guidelines of 2014. The GESI provisions were ensured through the facilitation and social mobilization support to the LFGs provided by the NGO implementing partners, with technical and oversight support from the DFOs.

12. Name of the Project: Scaling Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal (CSA)
Project Locations: Nawalparasi, Kaski, Lamjung Funding Agency: Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) Project Duration: 2015 - 2017
Implementing Agency: LI-BIRD in collaboration with CGIAR
Objective: (1) Identify, test and screen CSA practices and technologies suitable for various agro-ecological zones; (2) Develop pathways for scaling up champion CSA options; and (3) Enhance the capacity of stakeholders and generate evidence-based knowledge materials to support the dissemination of climate-sensitive agricultural technology and practices
Gender Integration into the Project Cycle: The project developed portfolios of targeted climate-smart agricultural technologies and practices for benefitting women and marginalized farmers of the three agro-ecological zones (terai, mid-hill, and high hill) of Nepal. The project identified GESI as a cross-cutting issue affecting all the pillars of CSA. Vulnerability differs with GESI specific groups (women, Dalit and Janajati, and poor) owing to their sensitivity, exposure, and capacity at different levels. The project followed the principles of fairness, equity and inclusion to address GESI issues. It ensured meaningful representation and participation of women, poor and disadvantaged people, their access to livelihood resources, ability to exercise voice and influence agency, throughout the project. The project carried out vulnerability assessments for women , the Dalit community and the <i>janajati</i> community. This helped to identify community-specific climatic vulnerabilities and appropriate adaptation interventions. Therefore, economic empowerment of women was prioritized to reflect the meaningful representation and participation of women through access to livelihood resources and their ability to exercise their voices and influence agency throughout the project period - a process ensured through M&E, Fund Flow Analysis and other gender sensitive tools. Women-friendly tools included the hand-held corn sheller, finger millet thresher and jab planter . These tools were found to reduce women farmers' drudgery and allowed them to work more efficiently. In addition to being highly effective in saving women's time (where women would conventionally use a more labor-intensive method), these tools were also physically suited to women's use.
Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed climate smart technologies benefitting women and marginalized group • Technically and economically feasible and women friendly agricultural technologies are introduced
Turning into a Climate-Smart Village Majhthana, an agrarian village situated in the mid-hill above 1,200 masl, about 15 kilometers from the Pokhara valley, was facing drought, changing rainfall patterns, hailstones, insects and diseases, and flooding as the major challenges. With the help of CSA projects, farmers in Majhthana adopted a variety of CSA practices, which was helping farmers to cope with the impacts from climate change, and eventually making them climate-resilient or climate-smart. To combat water crisis problems, farmers made plastic tunnels, alongside rainwater harvest technique for tapping scarce water and drip irrigation technology for efficiently using it (Roof to Root technology). Other 'water-smart' interventions included plastic ponds collecting gray water and community ponds collecting rainwater in order to use it during dry periods mainly for growing vegetables and feeding livestock. This increased hope among some farmers who were graduating to semi-commercial farmers from subsistent farmers. These technologies also saved time for otherwise collecting water from afar, and women and children benefit greatly since fetching water is one of their primary jobs.

Reference to the Project (with links)

1. Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond the Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihood in Agriculture Sector

- <http://www.fao.org/gef/projects/detail/en/c/1056964/>
- <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8492en/CA8492EN.pdf>
- <http://www.fao.org/gef/projects/detail/en/c/1056964/>
- <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1095455/>
- http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/FAO-countries/Nepal/docs/Climate_Factsheet.pdf
- <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA8492EN/>
- <http://www.libird.org/public/HG4-project%20document-Prod.doc.pdf>
- <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/876341468124160450/pdf/E30980v20EA0P10t0Framework0of0NAFSP.pdf>

2. Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Program (ASFP)

- <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/816081540572481772/pdf/icr00004493-09282018-636761018448074944.pdf>
- <https://www.gafspfund.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Endline%20report.pdf>
- <https://www.gafspfund.org/index.php/projects/nepal-agriculture-and-food-security-project-afsp>
- <https://www.gafspfund.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Midline%20report.pdf7>
- <https://www.gafspfund.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Nepal%20NAFSP%20PAD%20-%206%20Feb%202013.pdf8>

3. Home Garden (HG) Phase I to Phase IV

- http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=315
- http://libird.org/app/news/view.aspx?record_id=80
- http://www.libird.org/app/projects/view.aspx?record_id=53

4. Hariyo Ban Program Phase I and II

- https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gesi_mainstreaming_strategy_of_hariyo_ban_program_1.pdf
- <https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hariyo-Ban-Program-Second-Phase-brochure.pdf>
- https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/final_technical_report_of_the_hariyo_ban_program__first_phase.pdf

5. Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP)

- <https://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/projects/nccsp.html>
- <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9743>

6. Adaptation for Small Holders in Hilly Areas (ASHA)

- <http://asha.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/An-overview-of-CSA-in-ASHA.pdf>
- <http://asha.gov.np/gesi-strategy-and-operational-guideline/>
- <http://asha.gov.np/category/thematic/gesi/>

7. Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions (BCRWME) Project

- <https://www.adb.org/projects/44214-024/main>
- <https://www.adb.org/projects/44214-024/main>
- <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/79716/44214-023-tacr-01.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo1GUOL-LUE>

8. Ecosystem Based Adaptation in Mountain Ecosystems in Nepal

- <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/NPL/MTR%20Report%20EbA.pdf>
- <https://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/operations/projects/closed-projects/environment---energy/eba/background.html>

9. Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded Forests and Rangelands of Nepal (EbA II)

- http://www.mofe.gov.np/projectfile/006-EbAII_1575607004.pdf
- <https://www.thegef.org/project/catalysing-ecosystem-restoration-climate-resilient-natural-capital-and-rural-livelihoods>

10. Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas

- <http://himalayancrops.org/>
- https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/GEFDocuments/af2894ef-de7c-e811-8124-3863bb2e1360/Roadmap/ProjectImplementationReportPIR_4464_2019_PIR_UNEP_NEPAL.docx
- <https://himalayancrops.org/project/an-introduction-to-diversity-field-school/>

11. Nepal Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP)

- https://um.fi/documents/384998/0/Multistakeholder_Forestry_VOL_1_Nepal_MTR%2BTOR_2015.pdf/ef84b7f3-4a32-e074-a95a-b429503dbf4a
- https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/nepal/en/The_Livelihood_Improvement_Programme_of_MSFP_Achievements_learnings_and_the_way_forward-EN.pdf
- https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/nepal/en/Gender_Poverty_and_Social_Equity_Mainstreaming_in_MSFP-EN.pdf

12. Scaling Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal (CSA)

- https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Assessment-of-CSA-in-Nepal_CCAFS-LI-BIRD-FINAL.pdf
- <https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Nepal-agriculture-synthesis-final444.pdf>
- http://libird.org/app/news/view.aspx?record_id=47
- http://libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=408#

Annex 7

Interventions Related to Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Ecosystem Restoration and Food Security, Thailand

1. Name of the project: Potential of agricultural Commodity Production Process Development Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: DAE – MoAC

2. Name of the Project: Agricultural Commodity Production Efficiency Improvement Project, 63,916,200 Baht (1,826,177 USD)
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: DAE – MoAC

3. Name of the Project: Prevention and defense against intrusion in forestry Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: RFD – MoNRE
Gender Integration into Project Cycle:

- It was implemented under the Government's Forest Reclamation Policy.
- Re-claiming forest area of 48,501 rai (7,760.16 ha), 2,201 cases, 468 accused.

4. Name of the Project: Community Forest Bill, 2019 Implementation Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: RFD – MoNRE

5. Name of the Project: Regulate Organization to allocate Arable Land for Communities in National Forest Reserves Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: RFD – MoNRE

6. Name of the Project: Regulate Organization to allocate Arable Land for Communities in National Forest Reserves Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: RFD – MoNRE

7. Name of the Project: Biodiversity Administration and Management Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: DNP – MoNRE

8. Name of the Project: Forest Conservation, Recover, and Development Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: DNP – MoNRE

9. Name of the Project: Fire Control Cooperation Networking Project
Project Duration: FY 2020
Implementing Agency: RFD – MoNRE

10. Name of the Project: Pilot Project to Develop Communities within protected Areas in Sustainable Forest Resource Management and Increase Carbon Stored Forest Area with REDD+ Mechanism

Project Duration: FY 2020

Implementing Agency: Office of Forest and Climate Change, Foreign Affairs Division, DNP – MoNRE

11. Name of the Project: Extension Project for Home Economics for Food Security in Household and Community

Funding Agency: Government budget

Project Duration: FY 2019

Implementing Agency: The Housewife Farmers and Home Economics Section, Farmer Development Division under Department of Agriculture Extension of the MoAC.

Project Objectives: The project aimed to promote and develop knowledge, ability and skills of housewife farmer groups, create a quality food source and enhance the body of knowledge and increase the efficiency of the staff. It had been operated by

12. Name of the Project: Voices for Mekong Forests (V4MF) Project

Funding Agency: EU

Implementing Agency: The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), WWF (Germany and Greater Mekong)

Gender Integration into Project Cycle: The project recognizes that many national, regional and global initiatives offer opportunities for NSAs to become actively involved in government-led forest landscape dialogues and decision-making processes. Therefore, the project leverages and contributes to these initiatives, particularly the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade - Voluntary Partnership Agreements (FLEGT-VPA) initiative and REDD+, by helping to ensure they are built on multi-stakeholder processes, and that civil societies have the capacity to effectively engage on issues, present their concerns to policy makers, and organize themselves to share information and strengthen negotiating positions.

13. Name of the Project: Risk-Based National Adaptation Plan Project

Project Location: Five Pilot Areas of Sub-national Level have been studied: Chiang Rai Province on robust tourism strategy for tourism industry, Nakhon Sawan and Mahasarakham Province on CC & Health Impact Assessment, Udonthani city on resilience spatial planning and institutional arrangement to support CCA, Upper Chao Phraya Basin on robust agriculture system for rice-based agriculture system, and Andaman Coastal Area on robust development planning.

Funding Agency: GIZ

Project Duration: 2015-2021

Project Objectives: The project aimed to develop national Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), integrate climate risks and NAP measures into sector policies/strategies and subnational planning process, and align financing instruments and budgeting system with the NAP framework to enhance the implementation of adaptation measures.

14. Name of the Project: Climate Justice (CJ) Program

Funding Agency: Sida, Norad, EU, FJS

Project Objectives: 2019Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) has launched CJ program, focusing on building the capacities of the women's movement and co-creating resources that are based on the gendered effects of climate change as well as women's knowledge on climate resilience and climate justice.

15. Name of the Project: Forestry and Climate Change (FOR-CC) Program

Funding Agency: German 2015-2017Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Project Objectives: Women, as one of the more vulnerable groups within society are particularly at risk. Project aimed to improve the cooperation and joint positioning of ASEAN member states on key climate change issues in the areas of agriculture and forestry.

Implementing Agency: ASEAN

For more information:



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