



## 4.3 Gender and REDD+ road maps in Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda

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### Introduction

A gender-sensitive process to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) will allow countries to address gender inequalities from the onset of the process. In an effort to address gender considerations in REDD+, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) launched an initiative to develop gender and REDD+ road maps in Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda. Implementation of the road maps will ensure that both women and men are recognized as important forest stakeholders and are given equal opportunities to learn about REDD+; build their capacity; participate in and contribute to decision-making processes; have access to technology; own land and benefit from REDD+.

### Forest governance and gender

Decision-making over the governance and use of forestland and resources should begin by acknowledging the gender-differentiated knowledge, needs, dependence, use and access and control of forests (Aguilar, Araujo and Quesada-Aguilar 2007; Quesada-Aguilar, Aguilar and Shaw 2011). Women's role as major forest stakeholders and contributors to forest conservation and management has traditionally been ignored, creating a disconnect between the fields of gender equality and forest governance.

In a time when new forest initiatives are being implemented, there is an urgent need for action that recognizes that forest governance has two different dimensions: that of women and that of men. There are important differences between men's and women's perspectives on and approaches to use of forest resources. Unfortunately, due to traditional gender inequalities, women's perspectives and circumstances are rarely taken into account in forest governance.



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Despite many efforts, gender equality<sup>1</sup> is not yet a reality. There are significant differences between the rights of women and men: in many countries women have fewer land tenure rights, fewer opportunities to participate fully and effectively in consultation or decision-making processes; less access and/or control of information, technology and tools; and less access/or control over income-generating forest activities. They therefore receive fewer benefits (Table 1).

**Table 1. Gender related forest governance issues in Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda**

Issue	Cameroon	Ghana	Uganda
Access to forest resources	Women have access for daily activities	Women have user rights	Women have limited access
Control over cash generated by activities in the forests	Women control cash only from activities they carried out	Women control cash from their activities	Women control very little cash (used for household needs)
Opportunity to own land or forests	By law, women can own land; in practice, it is very difficult for them to do so	Women have access to land; however, in the northern part women cannot inherit land	Unfavourable land/property rights and policies are in place
Access to and control over tools, equipment, cash/credit, inputs, new technologies	Women can buy some tools and have access to traditional inputs; other tools are too expensive and women cannot get loans due to their limited revenue	Women do not have access due to gender roles and cultural beliefs; most women are not educated enough to use new technology or bank credits	Women do not have access to cash because they do not have collateral assets; women have access to simple tools, but have to ask permission to use them
Opportunity to participate in forest related activities	Women do not participate because these are activities specific to males	Some activities are reserved for men	Women participate depending on their level of empowerment
Request to participate in forest projects	Women are not usually invited, and when they are they cannot participate because of work overload	Women are not involved in decision making or implementation	Women are invited to participate but to a limited extent
Opportunity and time to participate in forest projects	Women prefer to do agricultural and household activities	Women participate when they are invited and have time	Most women have a household work overload; empowered women do participate but usually only in implementation

Issues identified during gender and REDD+ training for representatives from women's organizations and gender experts. September and October 2011

Ignoring the gender dimension of forest conservation and management is not an option when the goal is effective forest governance. Mainstreaming gender in forestry is fundamental to effectiveness: an awareness of the power relations between men and women in terms of forest resources will help ensure that these resources are used sustainably and equitably. If gender is ignored, efforts to strengthen forests' contribution to poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development will fail.

REDD+ has the potential to achieve multiple social and environmental benefits, but it could also cause social and environmental harm if programmes are not properly designed (Moss and Nussbaum 2011). REDD+ efforts will be successful only if they support developing countries in addressing the fundamental governance challenges (Brito et al. 2009) and gender inequalities that can seriously impede improvements in forest governance. They can also affect the success of national strategy, increase risks for women and decrease the opportunities available to women. Addressing gender considerations is a central component that can affect the eventual success of any forest initiative, including REDD+.

As countries start implementing international REDD+ policies and develop national strategies, there is a need to incorporate specific gender provisions in REDD+ mechanisms and projects from the outset (Box 1). To do so, countries will require a plan of action that addresses gender considerations. It will also help address the gender differentiated risks and opportunities that REDD+ presents to women and men, and generate the data necessary to highlight best practice and set guidelines.



#### **Box 1. Decision UNFCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 72**

The Conference of the Parties requests developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of appendix I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities.

In September 2011 IUCN and WEDO launched an initiative to develop Gender and REDD+ road maps in Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda.<sup>2</sup> This is the first global initiative to address country-specific gender considerations in REDD+ processes.

#### **Methodology to develop the road maps**

The Gender and REDD+ road maps are the product of multi-stakeholder processes. These brought together representatives of women's organizations, gender experts and national-level policy-makers to discuss country-specific gender issues and propose actions that

would lead to gender-sensitive REDD+ national processes. The road maps are plans of action that identify objectives within the three phases of REDD+ (readiness, implementation and consolidation) and the steps to achieve these objectives within a particular national context.

In each of the countries the process started with three days of training for representatives from women's organizations and gender experts. This was followed immediately by a two-day workshop for national policy makers, in which several representatives from the first training also participated.



The training focused on building the capacity of participants, as many of them had never been invited to discussions or consultations on REDD+. By enhancing the knowledge of REDD+ on the part of women and women's organizations, the training prepared them to better engage in REDD+ processes and make informed decisions and proposals when dealing with decision-makers working on REDD+. The training allowed participants to discuss the role of women in the forest sector, identify gender

considerations in REDD+ (relevant to each country) and identify women's involvement and risks and opportunities in relation to REDD+. These discussions were the basis of an information baseline on the gender-differentiated uses and governance of the forest.

Participants in the two-day workshop built on the knowledge generated during training, identified possible ways that gender considerations could be mainstreamed in REDD+ processes, and proposed concrete actions to address or highlight gender-specific risks and opportunities. The end result of the workshop discussions was a country-specific "road map" for mainstreaming gender in REDD+ processes in each of the countries.

### Results of the road maps

One of the main results of the training was a list of concerns identified by women regarding forest governance issues (Table 1). It was necessary to understand these concerns in order to determine which gender considerations to address in the road maps. Land tenure was identified as the most relevant forest governance issue in the three countries. The lack of opportunity to participate in forest-related activities was also highlighted. In Cameroon and Uganda participants were concerned that women had little or no control over cash generated by forest activities. In Ghana the control over tools, equipment, cash/credit, inputs and new technologies needs special attention.

In addition to governance issues, the road maps outline the specific risks (Table 2) associated with REDD+ processes that do not incorporate gender considerations appropriately, based on the potential structure of REDD+ in each country (these are defined in the initial planning documents: Readiness Plan Idea Notes, or R-Pins and Readiness Preparation Proposals, or R-PPs).

**Table 2. Potential risks for women if gender-blind REDD+ programmes are implemented in Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda**

<b>Land tenure</b>	Persistence of customs and practices discriminatory to women's land and forest tenure; since women have little access to land, their participation in forest management programmes would be minimal
	Limited financial means often prevent women from being able to take their case to court
<b>Participation</b>	Lack of involvement of women and civil society in decision-making bodies related to REDD+
	High illiteracy rates among women prevent them from participating in capacity-building programmes
	No deliberate effort to involve women in consultations and participation in REDD+
<b>Distribution of benefits</b>	Social exclusion and capture of profits by men
	Multiple roles of women; women may have less time to be involved in forest management programmes than men, so are not likely to benefit
	Unequal rules of inheritance of resources for men and women
	Cultural practices and patriarchal values lead to inequitable distribution and distribution of benefits, more often than not to the advantage of men and at the expense of women
<b>Knowledge</b>	Information dissemination on REDD+ may not reach the women
	Women's organizations may not get information during all phases of REDD+.
	Limited understanding of the technical aspects of REDD+ could hinder women's meaningful participation

Source: Gender and REDD+ training for representatives from women's organizations and gender experts, September and October 2011

The road maps further identify entry points for mainstreaming gender considerations in the REDD+ national strategy and propose country-specific actions for each of the three phases of REDD+ (Table 3 lists objectives for readiness).

In all the country road maps, the primary objective is the establishment of a gender and forest task force. This will help ensure that the REDD+ national strategy and its implementation address gender considerations. The task force is a platform that will bring together representatives from women's NGOs and networks, organizations working on specialized topics (e.g., land tenure rights), national women's organizations and institutions, female parliamentarians, and gender focal points of development partners, among others. The objectives of the task force are to provide technical support to government REDD+ officials; conduct research on specific forest governance issues that affect women; propose concrete gender responsive actions; and identify and advocate for women's inclusion in decision-making bodies and processes.

**Table 3. Examples of objectives proposed in the road maps for the readiness phase**

Country	Objectives
Cameroon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the establishment of a gender and forest task force</li> <li>2. Build and strengthen women's and gender-focused organizations capacity on REDD+ issues</li> <li>3. Ensure that readiness policies are gender sensitive</li> <li>4. Support the mainstreaming of gender considerations in existing policy reforms and documents</li> <li>5. Guarantee women's participation in REDD+ demonstration activities</li> <li>6. Build and strengthen institutional capacities on gender and REDD+ issues for government and professional training institutions who work in REDD+</li> </ol>
Ghana	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the establishment of a women and forest task force</li> <li>2. Support the mainstreaming of gender considerations in current revisions of environmental and natural resource policies, with special attention to land policies</li> <li>3. Build and strengthen the capacity of women and women's organizations on REDD+</li> <li>4. Guarantee women's participation in REDD+ pilot projects</li> <li>5. Build and strengthen institutional capacities on gender and REDD+ issues of implementing partner organizations in REDD</li> <li>6. Enhance participation through formal and informal education about the forestry sector for women and girls</li> <li>7. Avoid negative impacts of the REDD+ initiative on women rights (as part of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment)</li> <li>8. Develop gender-sensitive benefit-sharing schemes</li> <li>9. Enhance the capacity of women to engage in monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) through appropriate methods</li> </ol>
Uganda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the establishment of a gender and forest task force</li> <li>2. Ensure the effective consultation and participation of women in the design of national strategy</li> <li>3. Increase knowledge about gender issues and climate change</li> <li>4. Create a gender-sensitive awareness and communication strategy</li> <li>5. Avoid the negative impacts of REDD+ initiatives on women's rights</li> <li>6. Conduct gender-sensitive baseline studies and MRV</li> <li>7. Build the capacity of women and women's organizations/NGOs, particularly those in forest management in REDD+</li> <li>8. Support the mainstreaming of gender considerations in environmental and natural resource policies, with special attention to benefit-sharing schemes</li> <li>9. Guarantee women's participation in REDD+ sustainable forest management, conservation, reducing deforestation and forest degradation</li> <li>10. Promote equal and equitable relations between women and men during the preparation and implementation of gender sensitive REDD+ processes</li> <li>11. Guarantee women's rights to land ownership</li> </ol>

The road maps include specific actions, indicators and a timeline. It identifies implementing organizations and potential sources of funding for each of the proposed objectives. Table 4 lists some examples of specific actions to address some of the forest governance issues mentioned in Table 1 and 2.

**Table 4. Actions proposed in Gender and REDD+ road maps to improve forest governance**

Objective	Actions
Ghana	
Avoid the negative impacts of REDD+ initiatives on women	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the potential risks of REDD+ implementation on women's livelihoods</li> <li>2. Modify and/or create safeguards to prevent the violation of women's rights</li> <li>3. Inform local women of their rights and safeguards and build their capacity to use grievance systems</li> <li>4. Engage with the judicial system and traditional authorities (including female leaders) to advance women's rights pertinent to the forest sector</li> </ol>
Uganda	
Guarantee women's rights to land ownership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess gaps, challenges and opportunities for women in land tenure systems</li> <li>2. Foster a dialogue with traditional authorities and local government institutions</li> <li>3. Support traditional authorities and local government institutions to develop specific mechanisms that facilitate women's land acquisition</li> <li>4. Train local women on land acquisition procedures</li> <li>5. Work in collaboration with female parliamentarians to promote land legislation reforms and the review of the <i>Succession Act</i></li> </ol>
Cameroon	
Guarantee women's participation in REDD+ demonstration activities (pilot projects)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify good practices and actions in other forest management/conservation initiatives that have fully and effectively integrated women</li> <li>2. Promote the use of such good practices in pilot projects</li> <li>3. Encourage the participation and involvement of women in the projects by providing the resources to do so</li> <li>4. Build the capacity of local women to participate in and/or coordinate the activities of pilot project</li> <li>5. Provide equal access and control to women and men over the tools, equipment, technology and resources needed to engage in pilot activities</li> </ol>

Note: Actions have been modified from original road maps

Source: Gender and REDD+ training for representatives from women's organizations and gender experts, September and October 2011

## Conclusions and next steps

This initiative enabled the development of the first road maps on Gender and REDD+. It is important to acknowledge that the road maps are just the first step in the development of a REDD+ process that is gender-responsive.



IUCN country offices have continued to support the implementation of these road maps. In Ghana, the road map was presented to the Forestry Commission, key stakeholders at the Pro-Poor REDD Project Review meeting, and the Climate Change Unit of the Forestry Commission. The Climate Change Unit staff have indicated their interest in considering the issues in the road map. In Cameroon, IUCN staff are planning to discuss and share the road map with the government to ensure that it becomes part of the R-PP

process. In addition, IUCN will promote the road map and support civil society efforts to create project-funding proposals based on it. In Uganda, the road map is currently undergoing consultation and the representatives of the National Forestry Authority (NFA) have shown interest in its implementation. There is a need, however, to look for additional funding.

Much work remains to be done to ensure that gender equality and women's rights are at the heart of REDD+ policy design and implementation. If they are well designed and implemented, REDD+ mechanisms could contribute to major shift in approach, where conservation initiatives contribute to a true advancement of women's rights. It could also potentially put an end to discrimination against women in forest-related areas. It is hoped that the road maps will lead to gender-responsive REDD+ that will build the capacity of women in forest-related practices, ensure the full and effective participation of all members of the community, create a new legacy for girls and ensure that gender equality is achieved.

## For further information

For more information, please contact IUCN-Gender and Environment ([www.genderandenvironment.org](http://www.genderandenvironment.org)) or Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) at [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org).

## Endnotes

1. Gender equality is defined as equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, resources, rewards and voice for women and men.
2. This initiative was organized under IUCN's pro-poor REDD+ project, funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

## References

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