

Report

Gender equality in the forest sector – demonstrating a framework for situational analysis

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Overview of the analytical framework

Gender is an important consideration in the governance and sustainable management of forests. The role of women in forestry has historically remained hidden and underappreciated, especially from governance perspectives, and despite recent efforts at national and international levels, gender equality is still a distant reality. It is therefore of paramount importance to understand where the opportunities and challenges lie, so gender can become the essential cross-cutting issue it should have always been. The European Forest Institute (EFI) has pioneered the development of an analytical framework to carry out a country-level situation analysis of gender equality¹ and gender dimensions on the following forest sector themes from a governance perspective:

1. Forest resource tenure and forest utilisation rights and practices
2. Economic opportunities and employment in forestry production and industries
3. Social welfare, human resources and participation in forestry institutions

The twin purposes of the country-level situation analysis are:

- To analyse the legal setting of gender equality rights and the significant issues and trends in the application and fulfilment of these rights in the forest sector
- To provide an overview of the available quantitative and qualitative information on gender and the forest sector, and to identify any critical gaps in information and understanding.

Annex 1 contains further details and a schematic overview of the situation analysis framework.

To test this framework in practice, EFI applied it in three countries: Ghana, Honduras and Vietnam.² This report reflects on how the framework can enhance the understanding of gender rights and gender dimensions. It illustrates the themes drawing from experience with the three countries. And in so doing, it helps to demonstrate how this framework can be applied in other countries to enhance the understanding of gender issues in the context of forest, land use and governance.

¹ Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between women and men and girls and boys. It is socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes. Gender is context and time specific, and therefore an evolving concept. It entails understanding the social norms, attitudes and practices which underline gender roles and relations. Such an understanding is essential to promote changes in attitudes and in people's behaviours towards gender equity and equality.

² The three full reports, available upon request, are: Asumang-Yeboah, D. *Situation analysis of gender in Ghana's forest sector*. 2021; Rodríguez, G. *Situation analysis of gender in Honduras' forest sector*. 2021; Shanks, E. *Situation analysis of gender in Vietnam's forest sector*. 2021

1. Demonstrating the framework

Application of the analytical framework provides for a review of existing legislation, statistical information and selected literature, and can also include desk-based analysis of data and interviews. The analytical framework caters for differences in the extent and quality of information available to populate the three themes. Below is a short description of these themes and a few reflections and conclusions that have emerged from applying it in practice.

The framework has the potential to yield valuable information. However, it must be noted that limitations, both in the scope of indicators that can draw upon existing statistical data and in the availability of pertinent literature, can impede the ability to assess and monitor gender challenges. Even so, the flexible nature of the framework makes it possible to get valuable insights. It shows ways in which existing data can help provide an indication of the issues and trends related to the three themes analysed (see Annex 2).

Theme 1: Forest resource tenure and forest utilisation rights and practices

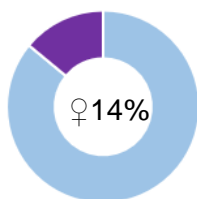
This theme relates to the origins and sources of timber and other forest products. It includes gender dimensions in the ownership of forest land and resources, and their associated utilisation rights and practices. For these areas, it provides for an exploration of the policy and legislative framework, its implementation, and supports the identification of relevant indicators and statistical data.

In recent years, Vietnam, Honduras and Ghana have carried out beneficial civil and land law reforms to regulate equal ownership and inheritance rights for women and men. This has led to some positive developments in forest policies, but there is still a long way to go before these rights are fully realised in practice in the forest sector.

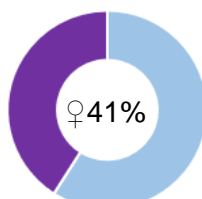
The application of the framework across the three countries indicates that this can arise in a diversity of situations when:

- The law grants women the right to share ownership with their partners, but in practice only the man holds the power to make decisions.
- Women are unaware of their rights – for example, the rights of women to have their names on land titles as well as men, or divisible ownership rights for widows or women who divorce or end a domestic partnership.
- A patriarchal culture, where men are seen as the natural rights holders, constrains exercising rights.
- Different forms of forest land ownership and allocation coexist, such as private versus public lands, or individual versus community-owned lands.
- Land title reform processes do not adequately address rights of women.
- Poverty, combined with patriarchal systems and a macho culture, perpetuate women's dependence on men, both financially and socially. Rural, poor and indigenous women are particularly vulnerable.
- There is little understanding of the challenges women face in relation to forest resource tenure and forest utilisation rights and practices.
- The costs of reissuing existing land titles to include women as title holders, which can be prohibitive, especially for poor households.

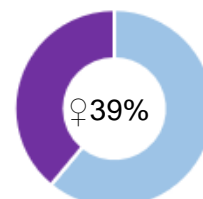
Limitations in gender-disaggregated data on forest tenure and utilisation rights were common across the three countries. However, the available data serves to reinforce that ownership of forest land and resources is often still a fundamental area of gender inequality.³



Ghana - land holdings used for growing forest trees



Honduras - beneficiaries of communal forest land



Vietnam - women named on land-use certificates (sample of provinces)

Box 1. Honduras: reality catches up with the law, and vice versa

Land tenure in Honduras has been historically complex and ridden with conflict. In the 1960s and the 1970s, two unprecedented agrarian reform processes resulted in 400,000 hectares of land being handed over to families of small-scale farmers. Despite women playing a crucial role in rural areas, lands were only allocated to the head of each household, who was typically a man. More recently, with the 1992 Law for the Modernisation and Development of the Agricultural Sector, women were finally granted the right to own lands. Yet, between 2011 and 2020, only 37% of the land titles were given to women (with 63% given to men).

The legal framework continues to evolve in recognition of the need to achieve gender equality, with the current Forest Law explicitly providing women with equal rights to those of men. In practice, however, women often do not claim the rights they are given. This is either because they are unaware that they exist, or because they see it as a pointless theoretical exercise: men are still by and large the decision makers, no matter what the law says. And yet, reality is quickly changing, with women now heading around one third of all Honduras' homes. Things could look very different by the end of this decade. This makes it all the more vital to monitor, record and analyse how reality evolves. It can also help accelerate the transition to a situation where gender equality is the norm – in the law and in real life.

Theme 2: Economic opportunities and employment in forest production and industries

This theme looks at economic and employment rights and the income-earning opportunities for women and men in forest production and related industries. It includes: the employment

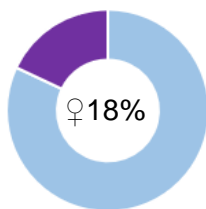
³ Data points illustrated in this paper are typically two to four years old and may not compare the same indicator and same year, however we can assume that these types of data may not change rapidly and thus serve to indicate trends.

characteristics of different segments of the forest industries and in the formal and informal economy; gender roles and occupational characteristics in the workplace; and wage and income equality and differentials. For these areas, it provides for an exploration of the policy and legislative framework, its implementation, and supports the identification of relevant indicators and statistical data.

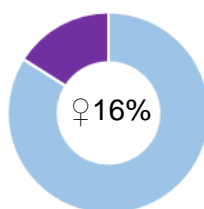
The true economic role and contribution of women in the forest economy are still greatly undervalued and underestimated in many countries. At the same time, there are wide and persistent income and earnings gaps across the board in all segments of the forest sector and forest industries, and associated vulnerabilities faced by women in particular, which can arise when:

- There are established perceptions about the jobs women and men are 'skilled' and/or 'able' to do.
- The multiple purposes and values that women see in forests are relegated as the commercial timber-oriented interests men have taken precedence.
- Women are relegated to administrative roles or 'unskilled' manual tasks, while men are seen as the natural leaders and decision makers.
- Women tend to predominate in the informal economy and household-based production units, while men often predominate in salaried employment with more secure working conditions.
- Employers continue to undervalue women's work and continue to provide lower salaries and insecure working conditions for women – resulting in persistent earnings gaps between women and men.
- Access to capital is more restricted for women, and therefore there is little incentive for them to start their own enterprises, organisations and initiatives.
- The responsibility for the household falls entirely on women's shoulders, so those who work in the forest sector face two working days in one – at the workplace and at home.

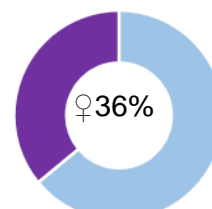
Gender disaggregated data on economic opportunities and employment in the forest sector tended to be available from one-off surveys, although national censuses may have potential to address this. The available data indicates that smaller proportions of women are employed in forestry operations across the three countries, however other data often shows a slightly higher proportion of women employed in processing and trade of wood products.



Ghana - employed in forestry and logging



Honduras - employed in forestry, processing and trade



Vietnam - employed in forestry production

Box 2. Ghana: Recruiting a workforce of women

The forest sector in Ghana is heavily gendered. Official data from 2015 shows that 82% of the workforce were men and 18% were women in that year. Men dominate all the supply chain, with 80% or more engaged in tree planting, lumber trading and wood carving, and with over 65% engaged in tree cropping and primary processing. Only charcoal involves a higher proportion of women, with 58% of the total workforce.

Although the law prohibits gender discrimination, in practice women enjoy fewer employment opportunities. And when they do get a job, they are on lower salaries and generally have little decision-making power. This is partly as a consequence of having fewer possibilities to devote time and resources to education and technical training. Yet, it is women in particular who have an understanding of, and appreciation for, forests as a multifunctional, rather than just as a commercial resource. Providing women with real opportunities to work, lead and contribute their vision to the forest sector has the potential to thoroughly transform it.

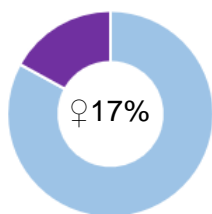
Theme 3: Social welfare, human resources and participation in forest institutions

This is a cross-cutting theme. Social welfare provisions include occupational health and safety, social insurance and other such legal requirements and benefits for workers. Human resources include the professional and technical capacities of the workforce, and the extent to which men and women have access to and participate in education and training. For these areas, it provides for an exploration of the policy and legislative framework, its implementation, and supports the identification of relevant indicators and statistical data.

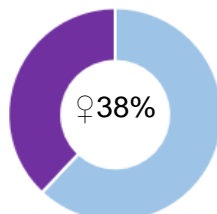
Applying the framework has revealed several challenges and shortcomings when it comes to upholding the rights, access, participation and representation in the forest sector workplace, institutions and processes. These are indicative of a systemic problem and can arise when:

- Women struggle to get dignified work in the forest sector, often missing out on basic requirements such as a fair salary, stable employment conditions or social welfare entitlements.
- Women have lower levels of education, which makes it harder for them to find employment, limits them to less skilled jobs, and offers them fewer opportunities to build a professional career.
- Women are given fewer professional training opportunities and less time to devote to training.
- Few women hold senior management positions in forest institutions, despite them comprising a substantial proportion of the workforce in them.
- NGOs, research institutions, academia and forestry companies hire men for most of their senior positions, sometimes in breach of their own internal regulations.
- Receiving promotions is harder for women, with sexual harassment adding to the challenges they face.

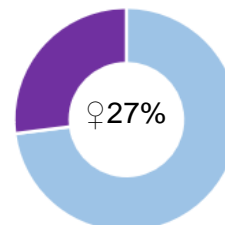
Gender disaggregated data on human resources and participation in the forest sector tended to be available from one-off surveys and reporting of projects and institutions. Data on social welfare tended to be more limited, unless comprehensive labour force surveys are available. The available data indicates that smaller proportions of women were represented in policy dialogue, with a similar trend often seen for female leaders in forest sector institutions.



Ghana - in VPA Multistakeholder Implementation Committee



Honduras - in VPA Technical Committee



Vietnam – in VPA Multistakeholder Core Group

Box 3. Vietnam: addressing social welfare to remain competitive

In Vietnam, an equal number of women and men work in the forest product processing industry. However, men workers predominate in more secure forms of salaried employment, while women predominate in household business units or as self-employed workers with less secure and disadvantaged working conditions. These differences are reflected in a range of indicators, including income disparities, social insurance participation rates and vocational training opportunities.

In 2018, the gender wage gap in the forest product processing industries stood at around 37%, substantially wider than the national gender wage gap of 11.5%. Limited access to social welfare provisions further compounds the situation, as the social insurance participation rate for women in forest industries was limited to 9%, compared to 18.5% for men, and well below the national rate of 23%. Meanwhile, according to Vietnam’s National Strategy on Gender Equality (2011–2020), by 2020, 50% of rural women labourers under 45 years old should have been vocationally trained. However, in the forest industries, by 2018, the actual proportions stood at 7% of women (and 13% of men).

It is also notable that across all these indicators, the forest product processing industry lags behind other economic sectors, such as the textile/garment industry and the electronic good industry. Addressing these critical human resources, social welfare and gender equity issues will go a long way in ensuring the forest industry can continue to grow and remain competitive.

2. Recommendations

Ensure that national legal commitments to gender equity and equality are fulfilled in practice in the forest sector

Many countries have made gender commitments at the international level, including by adhering to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Constitution of a country often explicitly mentions gender equality, providing bases to trickle down to national legislation and policies. However, this can be where commitment starts to become unstuck if, for example, sectoral legislation has an absence of clearly defined gender provisions, which works to the detriment of women. Or if legislation supports gender equality, its implementation on the ground may be lacking in relation to rights of women.

Recommendations regarding follow-through on national commitments:

- Including provisions that guarantee gender equality in relation to land rights, considering the protraction of gender-discriminatory cultures and ensuring that enforcement is effective and aimed at exerting systemic and cultural change.
- Recognising women as the essential workforce they are by ensuring they have equal access to labour and employment rights. Their economic, social and cultural contribution will help reshape the forest sector so it becomes more competitive, sustainable and equitable. This is of particular importance in the context of the climate crisis.
- Upholding, promoting and guaranteeing the rights of workers in the forest sector, especially those of women. It is critical to bridge the employment gap through proactive policies that grant women access to training and a professional path where they can aspire to senior-level jobs in the same way men do.

Challenge entrenched perceptions and practices that work against the fulfilment of women's rights in the forest sector

Historically, women have typically had few rights over forest land and resources in statutory legal systems. That has, however, started to change, with legislation deliberately put in place to ensure women have equal rights to men.

Recommendations regarding gender in the forest sector:

- Challenging the widespread perception of the forest sector as a men-only domain, which leads to the undervaluation of women's work, unequal working conditions for women, and negative attitudes about the type of forestry work women can do. This will require a drastic cultural change that goes beyond the forest sector, but where the forest sector can make substantial contributions.
- Bridging the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that legislation upholding women's rights in the forest sector is effectively enforced.
- Facilitating women's awareness of the laws and regulations that protect them and their rights so they can make effective use of them.
- Ensuring women are represented in the forest sector, including in positions of power and in key decision-making processes.

Strengthen the representation and participation of women in forest sector institutions and reform processes

For policy reform processes to be effective, there is a need to actively engage stakeholders – however if this only considers the groups in general without adequate representation of women, such processes may fail to explicitly include women’s rights, needs, perspectives and priorities.

Recommendations regarding policy and reform processes:

- Improving the understanding, analysis and introduction of participation quotas to ensure that women can be meaningfully engaged in institutions, governance processes and decision making.
- Increasing the proportion of women holding senior management positions in the forest authority so there is a gender balance in decision making and power holding at the highest political and institutional level.
- Addressing the current practices that preclude women from seeing their rights upheld in practice, including existing cultural norms and social structures.
- Ensuring that the realities of women, and how they differ from those of men, are clearly laid out from the outset and underpin any reform process.
- Giving voice to gender issues and leaving behind the dominance men have historically exerted.
- Putting gender front and centre as countries pursue commitments to zero deforestation with implied needs for forest and agriculture reforms.

Take concrete steps to ensure that development cooperation initiatives support the realisation of balanced gender policies

Building gender awareness among development cooperation projects and service providers can go a long way in ensuring the support they provide is gender sensitive. Where there are multiple gender-related initiatives, it should be possible to agree on a systematic approach that is used consistently, so there is a common understanding of how to approach and promote gender equality.

Recommendations regarding development cooperation initiatives and balanced gender policies:

- Ensuring that gender equity is a key indicator in all initiatives, and that its measurement goes beyond headcount and women’s participation at events and better aligns with policy-level quotas where those exist.
- Exploring, proposing, implementing, and sharing lessons on techniques such as gender-sensitive policy and project objectives, gender impact assessments or how to best collect gender disaggregated data.
- Supporting women to build new skills that enhance and expand their professional careers and creating a culture of inclusivity where women are not limited to specific jobs.

Strengthen qualitative and quantitative analytical work and understanding of gender issues in the forest sector

In the absence of a baseline to measure progress and setbacks related to gender equality, the analytical framework can clarify situations and uncover important data – providing a key building block to establish such a baseline.

Access to raw data from government censuses and surveys may provide useful and consistent means for reporting, in particular when sex disaggregated statistical data exists, providing for more detailed findings on gender dimensions of the forest sector.

Recommendations regarding analytical work in the forest sector:

- Using existing national statistics in creative ways to better analyse and understand gender issues, as well as producing more, better disaggregated data.
- Maximising the use of disaggregated data to get a more accurate picture of gender in a country and identify trends that can, in turn, inform priorities for action.
- Ensuring data gathering at the different stages of the supply chain (and indeed the forest sector overall) that enables a nuanced understanding of the sector.

National statistics and census may have ambitions to address gender in a more comprehensive manner but may be constrained by poor enumeration practices or by issues in survey design and sample selection. Best practices in survey research should be employed to ensure that the data captured accurately reflects the population of interest and can be used to better understand the issues at hand.

Conclusion

It is critical to examine and understand how laws, norms, customs and practices shape and influence the use and management of forests by women and men. This is key to enhance sustainable forest management and good governance.

The analytical framework provides a breadth of understanding across the three themes identified. Because it does not require every country to rely on the same indicators, it provides a level of flexibility that facilitates an understanding according to the information that is available. It also helps reveal where the information gaps are. Applying this framework to countries that are starting reform processes could provide them with essential input as they strive to make gender equality an essential characteristic of their forest sector.

Annex 1. Overview of the situation analysis framework

Figure 1 presents a schematic overview of the situation analysis framework. It is generally intended and anticipated that the analysis can be completed based on a desk review of existing secondary information sources and statistics. The framework is also designed to be simple and adaptable, so that it can be flexibly applied to different country and forest sector contexts, while using a common structure and headings so that the information and analysis can be broadly compared.

Figure 1: Overview of the situation analysis framework

Thematic Contents	Analytical Contents			
	Legal framework	Indicators and statistical data	Key findings, issues and trends	Priorities and opportunities
Theme One: Forest resource tenure and forest utilisation rights and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the legal framework of the country say about gender equality and equity with respect to this thematic area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What indicators can be used to analyse gender dimensions in this thematic area? (such indicators may vary from country to country depending on the socioeconomic context and characteristics of the forest sector) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key findings and significant issues and trends in this thematic area? (These may be specific issues pertaining to the forest sector, broader gender issues in society and the economy that are reflected in forestry, or factors influencing the realisation of laws and policies on gender equality) 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities for developing gender sensitive policies in the forest sector
Theme Two: Economic opportunities and employment in forestry production and industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are such gender rights enshrined in law? • What policies, strategies and regulations are in place to realise these intentions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What statistical information is available on these indicators? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What initiatives are underway to address such issues and how effective are they? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to enhance compliance with labour rights and social safeguards
Theme Three: Social welfare, human resources, and participation in forestry institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and to what extent are these legal provisions reflected and mainstreamed in the forest sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the available evidence tell us about the current situation regarding the fulfilment of gender-related rights in the forest sector? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main gaps in information and understanding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical gender issues to address through policy and legislative reform processes • Recommending further research and data collection systems, as well as monitoring and evaluation • Suggestions for the activities of development cooperation projects and partners.

Annex 2: Types of data used for each theme

Theme 1: Forest resource tenure and forest utilisation rights and practices

- Proportion of land titles in rural areas that include the wife's name
- Proportion of land titles allocated to women and men
- Proportion of women and men household heads in forest areas
- Proportion of women and men holding all farms
- Number of women and men beneficiaries of forest lands under forest community management

Theme 2: Economic opportunities and employment in forest production and industries

- Proportion of women and men working in forest industries that have an employment contract
- Proportion of women and men that are engaged in forest tree planting
- Proportion of women and men working at the different stages of the timber value chain
- National gender wage gap in all sectors and in forest industries
- Proportion of women and men in forest industries with technical qualifications or higher
- Time spent by women and men in forestry apprenticeships

Theme 3: Social welfare, human resources and participation in forest institutions

- Proportion of women and men in forest areas that are illiterate/have never been to school/have a secondary level of education
- Proportion of women and men workers with social insurance in forest industries
- Proportion of women who are leaders in the forest sector at ministry level
- Proportion of women and men in the forestry administration as a whole and at different levels and localities
- Proportion of women who are leaders in forest enterprises
- Proportion of women involved in forest sector stakeholder committees
- Proportion of women participating in development cooperation projects in the forest sector

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