

Report

Situation Analysis of Gender in Ghana's forest sector – Summary Report

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1. Introduction to the situation analysis framework

In 2020 the EU FLEGT Facility developed an analytical framework to provide for a situation analysis of gender rights and gender dimensions in relation to three forest sector themes from a governance perspective, also described below:

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 analytical framework has been applied in three countries with active Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) processes in order to better understand gender rights and gender dimensions of the forest sector and the VPA. Its application also served to identify priorities and opportunities for the forest sector and the VPA.

Theme One: 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 associated utilisation rights and practices. Depending on the country context, this may be in relation to the rights of indigenous forest peoples, forest dependent communities, farm households or other forest user groups, and in relation to plantation forestry, forest concessions, farm forestry or collaborative forest management etc.

Theme Two: 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. Topics under this theme may include the employment characteristics of different segments of the forest industries and in the formal and informal economy; gender roles and occupational characteristics in the workplace; wage and income equality and differentials; the creation of business opportunities; and the fulfilment of employment rights and obligations by employers.

Theme Three: Social welfare, human resources, and participation in forestry 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 includes 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. This theme also covers gender in relation to the rights of association and representation in the workplace and in forest sector institutions; leadership in the business community and in the state forest sector; as well as gender participation in forest sector processes and mechanisms.

Further details of the situation analysis framework are given in the Annex. The full report of the situation analysis is available on request.¹

2. Overview of the situational analysis

The report makes use of a number of gender assessments and studies on forest governance, as well as sex disaggregated statistical data available through several nationwide surveys conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service – in particular the 2015 Labour Force Survey and 2017 Living Standards Survey of Ghana. The questionnaires for these two surveys have potential to yield more detailed findings on gender dimensions of the forest and wood processing sectors, however, for these surveys, the raw data has not allowed for such deeper analysis.

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 underlie gender roles and relations. Such an understanding is essential to promote changes in attitudes and in people's behaviour towards gender equity and equality.

An analysis of gender roles is a prerequisite for understanding gender differences, opportunities and patterns of decision-making, as well as access to resources and services within the forest sector. 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, it is also imperative given the importance of the forest sector to the Ghanaian economy and its role in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Country context

The total population of Ghana is 30.8 million, with women comprising 50.7 per cent and the remaining 49.3 per cent made up of men.

In 2010, 9.2 million hectares or 38.4 per cent of Ghana's land was designated as forest land, of which 762 thousand hectares were identified as Timber Production Areas in 2015.

The contribution of the forest sector to Ghana's GDP has been declining. This is partly attributed to deforestation and forest degradation. Employment in the sector has also reduced, however forests continue to provide livelihoods for 3.6 million people. The Ghanaian traditional society is reported to have had little gender inequality prior to colonisation. The leadership role of women in the country, and elsewhere across Africa, has

¹ Full report "Asumang-Yeboah, D. Situation analysis of gender in the context of VPA-FLEGT in Ghana. 2021". This report includes references to source information relevant to this summary report.

however been negatively influenced by Western civilisation, which has favoured male domination in decision-making structures.

Two distinct models of kinship and lineage dominate traditional systems in Ghana: the matrilineal system, which prevails in southern Ghana, and a range of patrilineal systems, which prevail in northern Ghana. These systems are deeply influential in the country's political, economic and social context, and are therefore critical in defining gender and development perspectives, including in the forest sector.

Policy and legislative context

Ghana is making efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in accordance with its 1992 Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. Some concrete developments include the Affirmative Action Policy of 1998, which requires a 40 percent quota of women's representation on all public positions of power and decision-making, and the creation of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in 2013. In 2015 Ghana passed its first National Gender policy, emphasising the government's objective to support gender equality. The policy commits to focus on women's empowerment and livelihood, women's rights and access to justice, women's leadership and accountable governance, economic opportunities for women, and gender roles and relations.

Internationally, Ghana has signed and ratified a number of treaties that aim to protect the rights of women by creating obligations on the state, for example, to eliminate all forms of discrimination in economic, educational, social, and cultural aspects.

The statutory framework on forest-related laws does not explicitly address gender equality and equity in forest resource tenure and utilisation rights and practices. For example, the 2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy is silent on gender equality and equity. However, it does make specific provisions for women's rights in the context of public education to intensify the links between natural resources, over-exploitation, environmental degradation and community poverty; and to enhance the participation of youth and women in sustainable resource management.

More recently, the Lands Act of 2020 has incorporated the rights of women through inclusion of the names of both spouses when registering an interest in land, and through restriction on the transfer of land by a spouse.

Different grievance remedial channels exist for the rights mentioned above. These include enforcement through the High Court or the Supreme Court. However, this presents a challenge for forest communities due to the location of the former in urban areas and the latter only in Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

Another channel for enforcing rights is through the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), which is mandated to investigate alleged breaches by public officers in their official duties. However, awareness of and access to this channel is typically limited amongst forest communities as the CHRAJ is located in the regional capitals.

Gender in the VPA

The forest sector in Ghana has over the years been saddled with some challenges and key amongst them have been illegal logging, abuse of the rights of forest fringe communities and inequality in the sharing of benefits accruing from the forest. For some tropical timber producer countries, one approach to address such challenges has been through a VPA with the European Union.

The Ghana - EU VPA, which entered into force in December 2009, is at an advanced stage of implementation since Ghana has developed a system to assure timber legality and is addressing a few remaining governance issues. NGOs have described the VPA as gender neutral due to the absence of clearly defined gender provisions in the agreement – for example, the legality definition, reflective of the legal framework, does not include specific gender considerations.

Broad stakeholder participation is key to forest governance and is upheld in the VPA text. However, as is the case in other sectors, men’s dominancy of the forest sector renders women absent from or at best under-represented in decision-making processes. For instance, the Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee (MSIC) of the VPA in Ghana is dominated by men – although participation of women has increased from only one member in 2019 to three in 2021.

Overall, the VPA process has helped to raise issues related to access to resources, women’s representation in decision making, and inclusion in the sharing of benefit from the forest resources. This has been helped to some extent through civil society involvement in the VPA process by addressing these issues through various capacity development programmes targeting both men and women across the sector (timber industry, civil society and government).

3. Main findings

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

Theme One – selected statistical indicators			
Total population and proportion of women and men	2021	30.8 million ♀ 51% ♂ 49%	[a]
Total agriculture population and proportion of women and men	2017/18	11.3 million ♀ 50% ♂ 50%	[b]
Proportion of women and men household heads in rural forest areas	2016/17	♀ 33% ♂ 67%	[c]

Proportion of women and men holding all farms (first figure) and medium and large-sized farms (of 5 acres or more) (second figure)	2018	♀ 24%, 11% ♂ 76%, 89%	[d]
Total number of land parcels for agriculture used for growing forest trees ² and proportion held by women and men	2017/18	27,139 ♀ 14% ♂ 86%	[b]
Total number of land parcels for agriculture used for growing tree crops ³ and proportion held by women and men	2017/18	1.3 million ♀ 24% ♂ 76%	[b]
<p>[a] Ghana Statistical Service, 2021. Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census</p> <p>[b] Ghana Statistical Service, 2018. Ghana Census of Agriculture – National Report for 2017/18</p> <p>[c] Ghana Statistical Service, 2019. Ghana Living Standards Survey 7 for 2016/17</p> <p>[d] FAO and ECOWAS Commission, 2018. National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods – Ghana.</p>			

- The rights of women to own and inherit land are protected by the Constitution of Ghana, however, customary practices and lack of knowledge on women’s rights to land make it difficult for women to enjoy these rights.
- Land tenure in Ghana is complex due to the plurality of the legal system and regulation of the sector, which combines customary law, common law and statutory interests, and because the control, management and user rights of land may not be vested in the same entity. As a result, women’s rights to access and manage land and forests are not clearly established.
- Lands that form part of Ghana’s forests are held either by community chiefs (stools and skins) or by the government. Currently, about 80 per cent of the land in Ghana is classified as customary land – this means that naturally occurring trees found on such lands are under the control of traditional leaders, who are usually men.
- Although there is no legal instrument that expressly prohibits women from acquiring land, the matrilineal and patrilineal systems mean that it is usually the boys who hold inherited property and tend to pass it on to their sons. As such, women are generally not seen as capable of holding land, and consequently laws are implemented in a way that usually excludes them – so, in practice women are denied rights such as those that owners have.
- The Land Act of 2020 offers protection by restricting the transfer of land by a spouse. Yet, in practice, the existing forest ownership and control structures preclude the involvement of women in fundamental decision-making processes around lands and forests.

² Forest tree: growing trees for the purpose of afforestation or production of wood.

³ Tree crop: crops that are cultivated for two or more years for fruits, without the need for replanting each year (e.g., mangoes, pears, etc.)

- Women also have rights to spousal properties following the death of a partner or a divorce. Some women are unaware of this and thus denied their rightful share of spousal properties. In addition, some women face difficulty to access land, labour and information about collaborative forest management opportunities.
- Women are free to hold timber rights for their involvement in timber logging operations, however most women lack the empowerment to access natural and financial capital for such activities – for example, the Kumasi Wood Cluster Association currently identifies just six women as having timber rights/concessions as logging is still perceived as a man’s job.
- Women’s rights to land have been further aggravated by rapid population growth and commercial agriculture. The conversion of forest lands into agriculture crops and cocoa plantations has increased the prices of land and decreased availability in some parts of Ghana. This has led men to assert their primary rights over land.

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

Theme Two – selected statistical indicators			
Total number and proportion of women and men that are employed in forestry and logging in Ghana	2015	5,016 ♀ 18% ♂ 82%	[a]
Total number and proportion of women and men (15 years and older) that are engaged in tree cropping	2017/18	1.2 million ♀ 33% ♂ 67%	[b]
Total number and proportion of women and men (15 years and older) that are engaged in forest tree planting	2017/18	16,360 ♀ 20% ♂ 80%	[b]
Proportion of women and men involved in primary processing along Ghana’s timber value chain	2020	♀ 32% ♂ 68%	[c]
Proportion of women and men involved in charcoal production/trading along Ghana’s timber value chain	2020	♀ 58% ♂ 42%	[c]
Proportion of women and men involved in wood carving along Ghana’s timber value chain	2020	♀ 18% ♂ 82%	[c]
Proportion of women and men involved in lumber trading along Ghana’s timber value chain	2020	♀ 18% ♂ 82%	[c]
Time spent by women and men (15 years and older) in apprenticeships of all types in Ghana	2016/17	♀ 26.6 months	[d]

		♂ 29.5 months	
Time spent by women and men (15 years and older) in apprenticeships for fishing / hunting / forestry in rural areas of Ghana	2016/17	♀ 16.8 months ♂ 23.5 months	[d]
<p>[a] Ghana Statistical Service, 2015. Integrated Business Establishment Survey – National Employment Report for 2015</p> <p>[b] Ghana Statistical Service, 2018. Ghana Census of Agriculture – National Report for 2017/18</p> <p>[c] Koramah, B, 2020. Gender Roles and Livelihoods along Ghana’s Timber Value Chain. MSc Thesis. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.</p> <p>[d] Ghana Statistical Service, 2019. Ghana Living Standards Survey 7 for 2016/17</p>			

- The Constitution of Ghana recognises the right to fair remuneration and equal pay for work of equal value and that no person can be discriminated on any ground. It also provides for equal choice of profession so that women can work in the same industries as men.
- The laws of Ghana do not directly address gender equality and economic opportunities in forest production, rather they provide a broad framework that is applicable to all sectors and industries.
- Gender rights in relation to the economic opportunities and employment are predominantly found in the Labour Act of 2003, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender and promotes equal pay for equal work.
- The National Gender Policy of 2015 includes objectives to improve women’s economic opportunities by engendering macro-economic and trade policies, and by accelerating efforts and commitments to empower women to have safe and secure livelihood, access to economic opportunities, and decent work.
- The timber industry plays a key role in socioeconomic development and poverty eradication in forest-fringe communities where forest operations take place. Nevertheless, as the table above indicates, the proportions of women engaged in forest tree planting and employed in forestry and logging is a fifth that of men.
- Jobs in the forest and timber sector in Ghana are gendered, with more men than women reported to be working in all parts of the value chain, except for charcoal trading which, like firewood collection, engages more women.
- These low levels of employment of women are linked to women having lower levels of literacy and schooling (see Theme 3), and less time in training than men. They also reflect the fact that men often concentrate on the commercial potential of forest products, while women view the forest as multifunctional, providing both household needs and economic benefits.
- Perceptions of the women’s abilities hamper opportunities in the more physical or skilled areas of work. In general, in Ghana there are fewer women in top management positions. There are also reports of economic discrimination in the forest sector – women are paid less for the same job and receive fewer opportunities for promotions.

- Other sector jobs, including those in academia, research institutions, companies and NGOs, are also gendered, with few women in positions of power.
- Women forestry workers suffer gender specific discrimination when it comes to receiving promotions and work opportunities. They are sometimes subject to sexual harassment too.

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

Theme Three – selected statistical indicators			
Proportion of women and men in rural forest areas that are not literate	2016/17	♀ 64% ♂ 44%	[a]
Proportion of women and men (15 years and older) forest tree holders who have never been to school	2017/18	♀ 52% ♂ 25%	[b]
Proportion of women and men (15 years and older) forest tree holders who have a basic level of education	2017/18	♀ 43% ♂ 57%	[b]
Proportion of women and men (15 years and older) forest tree holders who have a secondary level of education	2017/18	♀ 3% ♂ 11%	[b]
Proportion of women in the Forestry Commission of Ghana	2018	♀ 16%	[c]
Proportion of women in management positions in the Forestry Commission of Ghana	2015	♀ 12%	[c]
Proportion of women on the VPA- Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee	2019	♀ 17%	[d]
Proportion of women participating in FLEGT project events funded by the FAO EU FLEGT Programme (23 events over 8 projects)	2016-2021	♀ 17%	[d]
Proportion of top managers in all sectors that are women and men	2013	♀ 10% ♂ 90%	[e]
<p>[a] Ghana Statistical Service, 2019. Ghana Living Standards Survey 7 for 2016/17</p> <p>[b] Ghana Statistical Service, 2018. Ghana Census of Agriculture – National Report for 2017/18</p> <p>[c] Asumang-Yeboah et al., 2020. Community forest monitoring and the social reproduction of inequalities in Ghana. Under review.</p> <p>[d] FAO EU FLEGT Programme data provided in 2021 for projects over the period 2016-2021</p> <p>[e] World Bank Enterprise Surveys for 2013</p>			

- The National Gender Policy of 2015 includes objectives to enhance the participation of women in leadership, governance, and decision making at all levels, and to transform inequitable gender relations in order to improve women's status relative to that of men.
- The Labour Act of 2003 takes into consideration the different working capacities of women and young persons and caters for the conditions under which they should work – including issues related to pregnancy and maternity, and sick leave for women. Many other aspects are considered for workers, but with no specific gender considerations.
- The Labour Act established equal pay for equal work without discrimination of any kind. Both men and women have the right to get a contribution to their pension amounting to 13 per cent of their salary.
- The Forestry Commission Act of 1999 makes explicit provisions for women's participation in the Commission. It states that the governing body of the Commission is a Board with at least one woman member nominated by the minister.
- Lower levels of literacy and less time in education amongst women in rural forest areas and those involved in afforestation or production of wood limits opportunities to fully participate in and benefit from the forest sector.
- The Forestry Commission of Ghana, which is the main institution responsible for forest management, has over the years strived to improve the enrolment of women. Women staff strength has increased in recent years from 12 per cent in 2014 to 16 per cent in 2018; and the proportion of women in management positions increased from seven per cent in 2015 to 12 per cent in 2018 – an improvement by comparison to the 10 per cent of women top managers in all sectors in 2013. In most cases, the staff at management level in the Forestry Commission rise through the ranks.
- The Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee for the VPA has 19 members of which there are now three women – an increase from 2019 when there was only one. While this appears low it is also indicative of the proportion of women involved across the sector and how it is gradually increasing.
- In recent years, there have been efforts to encourage women's participation in the forest sector, both in the formal and informal sub-sectors. Training institutions in many instances have allocated a quota for women.
- The Forestry Commission of Ghana, which is the largest employer of trained foresters, gives equal opportunity to men and women in their recruitment processes. In the formal and informal sectors, many organisations have implemented capacity enhancement interventions for women along the timber value chain with the aim of empowering them to function effectively.

4. Priorities and opportunities

Priorities and opportunities for the forest sector

Increase gender representation in forest resource governance: There is a lack of opportunities for women in forest resource governance in Ghana: they are mostly absent from statutory bodies and committees that are responsible for the management of these resources; and social and cultural norms hinder women from actively partaking in decision making regarding their forest-dependent communities. Therefore, it is necessary to reassess the governance structure in the management of forest resources, so it integrates a gender perspective, for example by:

- Reviewing the constitution of statutory committees that are responsible for the management of forest resources with a view to introducing a minimum quota of women on those bodies.
- Building the capacity of women to encourage their participation along the supply chain of forest resources.

Equip women with technical skills: There is a gap between men and women in terms of economic opportunities in the forest sector due to women often lacking the needed technical skills, and engrained perceptions about men's jobs and roles. Ensuring that women have access and are encouraged to actively engage in training could begin to amend this situation.

Raise awareness on gender rights and protections: There is a lack of knowledge on the gender rights and protections that exist in international law and local laws. This is true both for those who are meant to enjoy the rights included in the laws and those meant to enforce or observe those rights. Awareness raising is needed to engage forest sector stakeholders to better understand gender rights and protections.

Create a culture of inclusivity: There remains a general belief that women do not have a role to play in the forest industry. It is necessary to develop and cultivate a culture of inclusivity in order to effect positive change in the sector, for example at the top by achieving gender quotas for boards of directors, and at the entry level by ensuring skills gaps are also viewed through a diversity lens – increasing women's enrolment, development and retention to, over time, strengthen representation at the management level.

Advance research and knowledge: Gender issues receive little attention in the forest sector. A more in-depth understanding is necessary to ensure gender inequalities are properly addressed, for example by:

- Conducting qualitative and quantitative gender analyses along forest sector value chains.
- Conducting surveys on women in the forest sector, covering the formal and informal sector, as well as academic and research institutions – including by strengthening the capture of forest related gender data during national census and surveys.
- Evaluating outcomes of gender policies and interventions for the forest sector.

All future research should adopt a gender intersectionality lens, so women are not seen as one homogenous group but, instead, are acknowledged in their diversity.

Priorities and opportunities for the VPA process

Give voice to gender in reform processes: Gender provisions in forestry laws are lacking. Therefore, policy processes that build in stakeholder dialogue, as with VPA processes, present opportunities to give voice to gender considerations during forest sector reform processes.

Integrate gender considerations into relevant aspects of VPA implementation and monitoring: The VPA process presents the following opportunities for gender development in Ghana:

- **Impact monitoring:** The VPA requirement to develop a better understanding of the livelihoods of potentially affected indigenous and local communities as well as the timber industry, provides an opportunity to integrate gender considerations as a basis to mitigate any adverse effects on women.
- **Public disclosure of information:** The VPA requires making publicly available information about harvest rights and harvesting and information on social responsibility agreements, which provides an opportunity to integrate and better understand gender aspects in these areas.
- **VPA annual reporting:** The VPA requires that an annual report be published by the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism (JMRR) which oversees implementation of the agreement. Here again, relevant gender-related data and information could be included.
- **Gender-focused activities:** The VPA process also allows for projects to support gender equality and gender-focused activities. Examples include this and other gender-related studies, and gender requirements in support projects. In addition, the JMRR as well as national VPA related stakeholder fora could provide opportunities for stakeholder engagement and dialogue on FLEGT and gender-related areas of interest and concerns.

Raise awareness and build capacity on gender: The VPA process has shown how FLEGT-related projects that build the capacity of forest sector stakeholders provide opportunity to raise awareness on gender issues. This could be strengthened through resources, such as studies like this one, that keenly illustrate the gender context of the VPA process.

Annex. Overview of the Situation Analysis Framework

The Situation Analysis Framework provides for making a situation analysis of gender rights and gender dimensions in relation to three forest sector themes (see first column of Figure 1. The purpose of the situation analysis is fourfold:

- To provide an overview of the available information on gender in the context of three forest sector themes, including the legal setting of gender rights, the available sources of statistical data and other research and secondary information sources.
- To make an analysis of significant issues and trends concerning gender in the forest sector and to highlight any critical gaps in information and understanding.
- To broadly assess gender issues in society and the economy in relation to forestry production and industries.
- To identify future priorities and opportunities for the forest sector.

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 at the same time using a common structure and headings so that the information and analysis can be broadly compared. A schematic overview of the situation analysis framework is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Elements 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 	<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 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Priorities for developing gender sensitive policies in the forest sector.</i> • <i>Critical gender issues to address through policy and</i>

<p>Theme Two: Economic opportunities and employment in forestry production and industries</p>	<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? 	<p>vary from country to country depending on the socio-economic context and characteristics of the forest sector.</p>	<p>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>	<p><i>legislative reform processes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Actions to enhance compliance with labour rights and social safeguards.</i>
<p>Theme Three: Social welfare, human resources, and participation in forestry institutions</p>	<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 statistical information is available on these indicators? ● 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 initiatives are underway to address such issues and how effective are they? ● What are the main gaps in information and understanding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Recommendations for further research and data collection systems as well as for monitoring and evaluation.</i> ● <i>Suggestions for the activities of development cooperation projects and partners.</i>

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