

# Enhancing effectiveness of forest landscape programs through gender-responsive actions

Patti Kristjanson, Katharina Siegmann, Zeina Afif, Katherine Manchester (WBG), Jeannette Gurung (WOCAN)

## Key messages

- ▶ Gender-responsive actions can significantly improve performance of forest landscape projects and programs.
- ▶ Enhancing women's active participation, strengthening their land and tree tenure rights, and applying equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, are key.
- ▶ Developers of forest landscape programs and projects can take the following practical, gender-responsive actions to achieve more effective and equitable impacts:
  - Earmark training and technical assistance for women and youth.
  - Include budget line items for gender-targeted activities.
  - Include gender-specific actions and indicators.
  - Employ new mechanisms to channel funds directly to women and to measure the impacts of gender-responsive forest landscape efforts.

## Background

Many forest landscape projects around the world do not address *gender gaps* sufficiently. As a result, interventions may lead to outcomes that are not only inequitable, but also unsustainable. For example, forest landscape restoration efforts in some countries rely heavily on a few species, such as teak or eucalyptus, that provide limited livelihood benefits for women and are often harvested in an unsustainable manner. In response, the World Bank Group (WBG), Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) and others, in partnership with civil society organizations, local and national governments, are increasingly supporting interventions that explicitly target gender-related inequalities.

**Gender-responsive actions** include project or program activities designed around individuals, groups and communities; entrepreneurs, small and

medium-sized enterprises, and larger companies; local, sub-national and national governments; regional organizations; and international entities. These activities identify and address the different constraints faced by various vulnerable groups, targeting their specific needs and interests. Moreover, they ensure that women, men, girls and boys benefit equally from forest landscape interventions and that outcomes of these interventions will be sustainable.

This brief highlights successful examples of gender-responsive forest landscape restoration projects and programs. The authors also identify critical gender constraints/issues/gaps that can influence desired project outcomes, and recommend actions/strategies to address them. These include actions that

- develop women's leadership skills and enable their role in governance;
- enhance women's active participation in forest landscape projects and programs;

- strengthen land and tree tenure rights;
- design equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms;
- support inclusive, local, forest and agricultural institutions, governance structures, networks and platforms;
- strengthen women’s access to finance for forest, agroforestry and energy access through technologies, activities and enterprises;
- build women’s knowledge and technical skills;
- measure results/impacts of all of the above.

## Evidence and experience: Community forest management in Mexico

Addressing gender issues in practice involves targeted analyses to understand critical gaps that can be addressed in specific contexts. Community forest management in Mexico, for example, is widely recognized for its scale and level of sophistication in tackling gender issues. Since the 1990s, the Government of Mexico has run a series of community-focused programs that provide incentives and advice to improve forest management. PROCYMAF, financed by the World Bank, is one such innovative program. Mexico’s ongoing efforts in community forest management have helped strengthen social cohesion and social capital at the local level. Based on a system of collective land ownership and sound community governance structures, the country’s forest sector policies and programs like PROCYMAF recognize *ejidos* and communities as key to rural development.

Despite its achievements, Mexico’s forestry sector still can improve its gender responsiveness.

The country’s community forest management strategy includes targeted incentive programs (e.g. subsidies) related to infrastructure, access to finance, technical assistance and forest management-related capacity strengthening. However, roughly 80% of forest landowners are male, and subsidies have traditionally gone to those with land titles. Therefore, women’s opportunities to benefit from public programs have been limited. Community governance structures and decision-making bodies have also been predominantly male, further limiting women’s participation in forest management.

A recent gender analysis, led by the WBG’s Environment and Natural Resources group, analyzed perceived and actual barriers women face in accessing natural resource management programs in Mexico. The study team identified multiple barriers to women’s participation. These include complex sign-up procedures, lack of aspirations, low self-efficacy and confidence, and lack of commitment to follow-through with intentions.

The team leverages insights from behavioral science to design solutions that simplify procedures, increase women’s aspirations through role models and provide commitment devices such as SMS reminders and hotlines to support women through the application process. These innovations, which are being field-tested, will be replicated at landscape level. This ‘action research’ will contribute to the much-needed evidence of the benefits, costs and impacts of gender-responsive approaches in forest landscape investments. It will also test and demonstrate innovative and relatively low-cost solutions and actions that similar programs in other countries could adopt.



Women agroforesters, Mexico (Photo by World Bank)

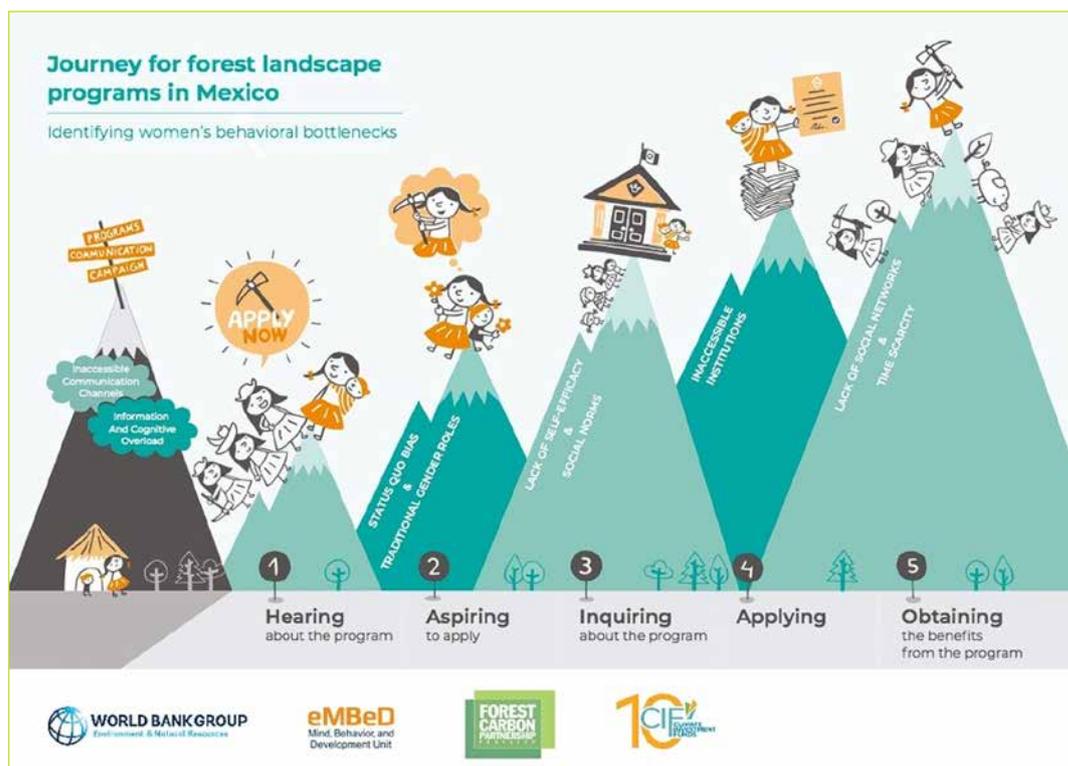


Figure 1. Women's behavioral bottlenecks in Mexico's forest landscape programs (Source: World Bank 2018)

Figure 1 illustrates the five greatest challenges limiting women's participation in forest landscape programs. These are related to hearing about these programs, aspiring to apply, inquiring about them, applying for them and actually receiving benefits. Gender-targeted strategies and actions are needed to overcome each of these hurdles and achieve desired outcomes (shown as the highest mountain peak).

## The W+ Standard for women's empowerment in Nepal and Indonesia

The WBG-supported REDD+<sup>1</sup> programs have also been very supportive of, and are testing, targeted gender actions in many countries. For example, through its Emissions Reduction Program Document of its REDD+ program, Nepal is testing an innovative benefit-sharing mechanism that provides resources to women's groups. It is known as the **W+ Standard for women's empowerment**. WOCAN created the W+ Standard to measure the impact of women's empowerment and to accelerate investments in women's access to resources and capital. Its metrics focus on six areas: time, income, health, leadership, education

<sup>1</sup> 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+).

and food security. Governments, companies and individuals can use the W+ results-based framework to make projects in the forest sector more transparent and effective.

The W+ Standard provides certification for economic development or environment projects that generate increased social and economic benefits for women. These benefits can take the form of time and labor-saving mechanisms, improved renewable energy technologies, and/or participation in forest and agriculture activities. On the one hand, women stand to benefit from the certified project activities (determined through consultation with the women beneficiaries during project design). On the other, they also benefit from direct payments to women's groups that are generated through sales of the W+ units and provided by the project developers.

The application of the W+ Standard demonstrates that many 'forest smart' interventions involve saving time and efficient use of water and fuelwood, which are particularly beneficial to women. For example, the W+ certification has been used in biogas digester projects with women's groups in Nepal and Indonesia. This has resulted in measured and verified energy and time savings for women, along with improvements in income, assets and leadership capacity. The W+ Standard is also being applied in agroforestry-, water- and food-related projects across Africa and Asia.

## Lessons learned and recommendations

Developers of forest landscape projects globally can take a wide range of practical, gender-responsive actions to achieve more effective and equitable impacts. Key actions to consider in design and implementation of such projects and programs include the following:

- earmarking training and technical assistance for women and youth (e.g. on leadership, forest management, forest restoration or agroforestry practices, with a focus on appropriate tree species for men and women)
- supporting development of participatory community forest management plans that include women in leadership positions in all committees
- establishing performance-based contracts with joint signatures for planting and protecting trees on farms, as well as near and inside forests
- including budget line items for gender-targeted activities
- including actions and indicators to address specific gender gaps identified in project conceptualization
- providing targeted communication channels and feedback mechanisms (e.g. text messages) to potential female applicants of forest landscape projects
- facilitating registration for forest-related programs in easily accessible spaces where women already go (e.g. schools, health care centers), and training and hiring female technical advisors
- employing new mechanisms such as the W+ Standard to channel funds directly to women and to measure the impacts of gender-responsive forest landscape efforts.

For more information, see:

- <https://www.profor.info/knowledge/catalyzing-gender-forests-actions>
- <http://www.wplus.org/>
- <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/243311534947810543/Mexico-Forestry-Report-V14-DIGITAL.pdf>

### About this brief series: Lessons for gender-responsive landscape restoration

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) aims to achieve ecological integrity and enhance human well-being in deforested or degraded landscapes. Evidence shows that addressing gender equality and women's rights is critical for addressing this dual objective. Against this backdrop, CIFOR and a number of partners hosted a Global Landscapes Forum workshop on FLR and gender equality in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2017. The objective of the workshop was to identify and discuss experiences, opportunities and challenges to advancing gender-responsive FLR in East African countries, as well as to join together various stakeholders working at the interface of gender and FLR as a community of practice. This brief set is a tangible outcome of this collaboration, featuring a number of useful lessons and recommendations rooted in the experience and expertise of partners in civil society, multilateral organizations, research community and private sector – all working in different ways to enhance the gender-responsiveness of restoration efforts.

**The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF)** is the world's largest knowledge-led multi-sectoral platform for integrated land use, bringing together world leaders, scientists, private sector representatives, farmers and community leaders and civil society to accelerate action towards the creation of more resilient, equitable, profitable, and climate-friendly landscapes.



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The CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) is the world's largest research for development program to enhance the role of forests, trees and agroforestry in sustainable development and food security and to address climate change. CIFOR leads FTA in partnership with Bioversity International, CATIE, CIRAD, ICRAF, INBAR and TBI. FTA is supported by the CGIAR Fund Donors: [on.cgiar.org/CGIARFundDonors](http://on.cgiar.org/CGIARFundDonors)

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CIFOR advances human well-being, equity and environmental integrity by conducting innovative research, developing partners' capacity, and actively engaging in dialogue with all stakeholders to inform policies and practices that affect forests and people. CIFOR is a CGIAR Research Center, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA). Our headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia, with offices in Nairobi, Kenya; Yaounde, Cameroon and Lima, Peru.

