

## The Business Case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+

*December 2011*



# UN-REDD

## PROGRAMME

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) in developing countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation.

### **UNDP Gender Group:**

UNDP focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment not only for human rights, but also because they are a pathway to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development. UNDP works to ensure that women have a real voice to participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision-making as well as influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and countries.

To achieve these goals, UNDP is coordinating global and national efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development strategies. In addition, UNDP is the lead agency on gender and climate change. As part of these efforts, UNDP works with partners at all levels to help ensure that adaptation and mitigation policies and programmes, including those focused around REDD, are informed by the concerns and contributions of women and men.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	2
Foreword .....	3
List of Acronyms .....	4
Executive Summary .....	5
1. Background and Organizational Context of REDD+ .....	8
2. Gender and REDD+: Definitions, Context and Rationale for Mainstreaming .....	10
2.1 Phases of REDD+ .....	10
2.2 The Rationale for Mainstreaming Gender: Two Basic Elements .....	12
3. Rights Based Approach: The Foundation for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+ .....	13
3.1 The Human Rights Based Approach to Development .....	13
3.2 International Legal and Policy Instruments for Mainstreaming Gender into REDD+ .....	14
3.3 Gender Mainstreaming Trends in Relevant Standards Safeguard Initiatives .....	16
4. Mainstreaming Gender into REDD+: Key Readiness Components .....	19
4.1 Stakeholder Engagement: Effective and Equitable Gendered Participation and Representation in Decision Making .....	19
4.2 Property Rights and Land and Resource Tenure .....	25
4.3 Enhancing the Ecosystems-based Benefits of REDD+ .....	26
4.4 Transparent, Equitable, and Accountable Management of REDD+ Funds .....	27
4.5 Inclusive Growth, Social Benefits and Green Development .....	29
4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation .....	31
5. Conclusions and Recommendations .....	33
5.1 General Recommendations .....	34
5.2 REDD+ Phases Recommendations to National Policy-makers .....	35
References .....	37
Appendix : Safeguards in REDD+ .....	40

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This report will be complemented by a guidance note for mainstreaming gender into UN-REDD Programme support.

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## Foreword

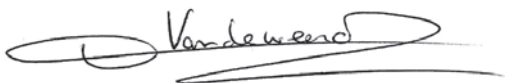
REDD+ offers an innovative approach to addressing the climate change challenge while simultaneously providing significant economic, environmental and social benefits by shifting the opportunity costs of maintaining and conserving forests and land.

Forests provide livelihoods, subsistence and income to more than 1.6 billion of the global poor. While women and men have differentiated knowledge, uses and access to forests, women are the primary users of forests. Their rights to forests and land resources need to be recognized. The roles they play as leaders, participants and beneficiaries in REDD+ must be carefully considered and reflected at every stage of policy and programme development, from design through implementation and evaluation.

Promoting a human rights-based approach to development requires UN-REDD partner institutions to ensure that their support for REDD+ promotes good practices and does not perpetuate or exacerbate existing inequalities between women and men. Toward this end, “the Business case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+” demonstrates why the unique role of women in protecting and managing forests—and ensuring their equal access to resources—is an important component for a more equitable, effective and efficient REDD+. Through this effort we hope to establish a greater base of evidence that will help policy-makers, practitioners and others understand the critical influence that gender-differentiated needs, uses and knowledge have on REDD+ policy and programming on the ground.

This report is an outcome of the on-going collaboration between the UNDP Gender Team and the UN-REDD Programme and aims to integrate gender equality considerations into the readiness support delivered by the UN-REDD Programme. In this way we seek to enhance the capacities of governments to design and implement gender-responsive national REDD+ strategies and programmes.

Inclusive REDD+ systems have the potential to mitigate climate change while strongly advancing the three pillars of sustainable development. We hope this report contributes to this critical endeavour.



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## List of Acronyms

AWG-LCA	Ad hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action
BDS	Benefit Distribution System
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIF	Climate Investment Fund
COP	Conference of the Parties (to the UNFCCC)
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (World Bank-hosted)
FIP	Forest Investment Program
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
NTFP	Non timber forest product
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# Executive Summary

## Does Gender Matter for REDD+?

The loss of natural forests through deforestation and degradation is estimated to contribute approximately 17 percent of total global carbon emissions. Forests not only serve as an essential carbon reserve, **they also provide livelihoods, subsistence and income for more than 1.6 billion of the global poor.**

REDD+ (which stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, with the “+” referring to the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) is a new financial mechanism negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is designed to compensate developing countries for measurable, reportable and verifiable reductions in emissions from specific activities in the forest sector.

**Women and men’s specific roles, rights and responsibilities, as well as their particular use patterns and knowledge of forests, shape their experiences differently.** As such, gender-differentiated needs, uses and knowledge of the forest are critical inputs to policy and programmatic interventions that will enable the long-term success of REDD+ on the ground. To ensure that national REDD+ systems and programmes are inclusive and resilient, specific attention must be paid to the specific roles, requirements and contributions of women and men at every stage of policy and programme development, from design through implementation and evaluation.

This paper aims to demonstrate and illustrate how integrating gender equality principles into REDD+ will result in improved sustainability of climate and development outcomes. **The rationale for including gender considerations in REDD+ policy, planning and implementation is predicated on the human rights-based approach to development.** Gender equality is a human right as set forth in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other international instruments. The business case for mainstreaming gender—in terms of strengthening REDD+ outcomes—is based on examining how mainstreaming gender into REDD+ may :

- increase efficiency (defined here as reducing transaction costs);
- increase efficacy (defined here as reducing greenhouse gas emissions); and
- increase sustainability (defined here as ensuring permanence and thereby reducing the risk of reversals for project investors, be they public or private).

## Mainstreaming Gender in Readiness Components

The business case for mainstreaming gender in REDD+ examines four main readiness components. : stakeholder engagement; property rights, land and resource tenure; ensuring multiple benefits of forests and REDD+; and transparent, equitable and accountable management of REDD+ funds. It also explores how gender can be linked to inclusive growths and green development.

## Stakeholder engagement

A gender-responsive REDD+ stakeholder engagement strategy recognizes the role of women as primary users of forest resources in REDD+ policy and programme design, implementation and evaluation.

Data from the health, nutrition and education sectors show that engaging both women and men **in consultations** advances an understanding of women's practical needs and therefore the relevance of the consultations' outcomes. Moreover, ensuring that women have appropriate and adequate representation **in decision-making** has been shown to better address their strategic needs, resulting in greater uptake of the desired shifts in behaviour.

In practice, shifts in the use of forest resources as a result of REDD+ policies may take significant time. This means that opportunity costs of the use or non-use of different forest resources, as well as community needs and knowledge bases, will shift over time. Therefore, identifying viable alternative land use, livelihoods and forest management will require processes that support innovation and are both inclusive and iterative. Participatory REDD+ interventions that effectively engage both women and men in decision-making could also result in a greater likelihood of sustained change in the way forest resources are used, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the REDD+ mechanism. If women are to be involved in decision-making, their full and effective participation may depend on additional training.

## Property rights and land and resource tenure

If communities are not able to play a role in making rules about management of the land and resources from which they derive their livelihoods, they may be less inclined to defer present direct benefits for longer term economic, financial or social benefits delivered by REDD+. Governments that embrace clear tenure systems are best positioned to make strong business cases for REDD+ by aligning incentives for investors and local communities. Ensuring tenurial security for women and promoting women's property rights could increase the degree of confidence about alignment of those incentives.

## Enhancing ecosystem benefits of REDD+

Local communities' knowledge of trees and non-timber forest products is complex, rooted in tradition and often gendered. With respect to biodiversity, for example, women's subsistence activities and knowledge of the forest can add value to community forestry activities, such as species monitoring, soil management and forest restoration functions, and thereby contribute positively to the sustainable management of forests or enhancement of forest carbon stocks. This is particularly relevant in the context of non-timber forest products and food security.

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