

Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Programming

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What is a Gender-Sensitive Programming Process?

Gender is a critical factor that determines an individual's role and status. Because women and men have different roles and utilise the resources of their environment differently, development and environmental programmes affect women and men differently. The common assumption is that the whole household or community will benefit equally from such programmes, but this is rarely the case. Different people have different roles and status in a household and in a community, which can favour or hinder their capacity to access information, obtain new opportunities, and make decisions. Hence, the needs and interests of women and men are different, but both are important to consider in a programme in order to address mountain development and contribute to the improvement of mountain people's wellbeing. Thus, it is important to develop gender sensitive programmes and monitor their impacts with methodologies and gender sensitive indicators.

A gender sensitive programme recognises that women's role is as important as men's in addressing environmental and development issues. It acknowledges that, because they have different roles, women and men may have different needs, which must be addressed in order to achieve sustainable mountain development. The gender perspective is not only relevant to projects where women are the principal target group, it must be mainstreamed in all environmental and development programmes.

A programming process is gender sensitive when the gender dimension is systematically integrated into every step of the process, from defining the problem, to identifying potential solutions, in the

methodology and approach to implementing the project, in stakeholders analysis and the choice of partners, in defining the objective, outcomes, outputs, and activities, in the composition of the implementation and management team, in budgeting, in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process, and in policy dialogue.

Why Integrate Gender in the Programming Process

In the Himalayan region, women are playing a key role in mountain livelihoods. Not only are they directly involved in agriculture and livestock activities, they are also managing

the maintenance of their household and the provision of care services to its members. In many cases, they are taking over men's work while the men are away grazing the herds, trading, or for seasonal labour. Hence, if a programme aims to address development or environmental issues, it cannot ignore women's role and their needs. Moreover, with the growing trend of out-migration of men, and for longer periods, some regions are witnessing the feminisation of mountain livelihoods.

Therefore, mainstreaming gender in development and environmental programmes makes sense and is becoming a pre-requisite for their efficiency and in order to achieve programme goals. Gender equality is not just one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is itself considered a condition for achieving the other MDGs. Likewise, Agenda 21, Chapter 24, states that "women should be fully involved in decision-making and the implementation of sustainable development activities" in order to "avert the ongoing rapid environmental and economic degradation in developing countries" (Agenda 21, Chapter 24, 24.6 and 24.7).

Equity involves access to equal opportunities and the development of basic capacities. It does not imply that everyone must receive the same 'amount': in some cases, equity could necessitate the implementation of special measures (affirmative action) to compensate for the disadvantages women face. It may also require different interventions to address different needs. And it may involve different modalities to take into account different capacities.

However, the usual approach to tackling development and environmental issues is often 'technical' and pays little attention to the 'human perspective'. When the human dimension is taken into account, it is in terms of 'mountain communities' as a homogenous group, often ignoring social disparities. Baseline surveys usually use the household as the basic unit. In such cases, the gender perspective, the differential roles of women and men, the power relations and inequities – which are often at the

root of development and environmental issues – are usually overlooked.

Integrating a gender perspective into the programming process will improve our capacity to achieve the goal of improving the living conditions and wellbeing of mountain people by ensuring equitable benefits for both women and men. This is becoming even more important in the context of the feminisation of mountain villages as a result of the increasing number of men who are migrating for longer periods. The feminisation of mountain villages means that the division of labour in mountain livelihoods is changing, women’s workloads are increasing considerably, and women are becoming the main producers of food. It also means that men have different needs related to their mobility and the need to find work outside.

Thus, when designing a programme, it is important to take this dimension into account. It may require some awareness-raising activities for the programme partners and the building of their capacities to address gender issues and, moreover, to work with women, taking into account their capacities and constraints, which are often related to the socio-cultural context.

When gender is mainstreamed into a programme, the roles of women and men in relation to a sector and their capacity to address the issues are better acknowledged, which should lead the programme to work with and/or target people who are more likely to make a difference in addressing the issues’. It also compels programmes to adopt an approach and strategy that looks at the human element; consequently, the solutions are more likely to be adopted by mountain people and are more likely to be effective and sustainable

“We do not make any distinction between women and men.”

The so-called ‘neutral’ approach usually fails to address the specific needs of women and the constraints they face. In fact, women’s invisibility leads to their exclusion.

A programme is never ‘neutral’: it reflects the implementation agency’s values, perspectives, and priorities.

Planning Step-by-Step with a Gender Perspective

The starting point: A gender analysis

The integration of a gender perspective in the programming process requires a gender analysis related to the sector of intervention (e.g., a gender perspective in rangeland resources management; gender roles in biodiversity conservation). The gender analysis should also be part of the situational analysis.

A gender analysis based on information provided by mountain women and men directly affected by the intervention is a big asset. However, it is not always possible, especially when programmes are implemented through partner organisations. In this case, planners have to think about the roles of women and men and how their respective activities affect the issue they want to address. The analysis must also be extended to the gendered pattern of utilisation, and to access and control over resources, including natural resources. Mobility, access to information, the constraints and the socio-cultural context may also be important to assess. This information must be taken into account during the whole planning process.

A conducive factor: The participation of women in the planning process

It is important to avoid generalising men’s perspective to the whole community; mountain women are important stakeholders and we need to promote their crucial contribution to mountain livelihoods. As women and men have different roles in society in general, they may have different knowledge, different points of view, different interests, different skills, and different needs related to an issue that is the subject of a development intervention. If it is not possible to involve mountain women directly in the planning process, it is useful to obtain the expertise of a women’s organisation working in the sector, or at least the support of a gender specialist.

Defining the problem to be solved

We need to understand how development interventions (e.g., biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, disaster risk management) affect women and men and how their actions and capacities are affecting the problems that these interventions are designed to solve.

Identifying potential solutions

When identifying potential solutions to a problem (e.g., the co-management of a natural reserve, implementation of an early warning system, diversification of mountain livelihoods), we need to anticipate how different solutions will affect women and men. This can be done by taking into account their respective roles in the livelihood system and in the household and community, their respective knowledge and capacities, and the constraints they are facing. Interventions should be chosen that equitably address women's and men's needs; they must, at least, not add to the already traditional burden of women, avoid increasing gender inequalities, and prevent the dispossession of women's customary rights over natural resources. We should be aware that new practices promoted by a programme may contribute to addressing some livelihood or conservation issues, but may also considerably increase women's workload.

Selecting the implementation methodology and approach

The growing trend of out-migration of men, and for longer periods, has resulted in the feminisation of mountain livelihoods. This reality must be reflected in the selection of the methodology and approach to implementing a programme. This presents certain challenges for organisations that are accustomed to working with and through men. It implies that interventions must be adapted to overcome some cultural constraints that may restrict women's participation in decision making or in the implementation of a programme. Mountain women's mobility is also relatively limited, so the programme must plan activities to reach out to women. What is important to acknowledge here is that mountain women's competencies are crucial to mountain livelihoods and in natural resources management, so it is important to work with them.

Choosing programme partners

It is much easier to choose programme partners that are already gender sensitive and committed to promoting gender equity. When it is not possible to find such an organisation in the sector of intervention, think about developing a partnership with a women's organisation. Women's organisations can contribute to building the capacity of other partners to address gender issues in the particular sector. They can also be very helpful in mobilising mountain women and in increasing their involvement in the implementation of the programme.

Defining the objective and outcomes

Programmes implemented by ICIMOD aim to improve mountain people's living conditions and wellbeing through sustainable development. This cannot be done without equitable access to meaningful resources, the reduction of women's drudgery, and the empowerment of women. Even when gender is not mentioned in the objective and outcomes, the objectives and outcomes should, somehow, contribute to reducing gender inequalities and addressing gender issues.

Defining outputs and activities

Again, the outputs and activities of a programme must benefit both women and men by addressing their different needs and capacities.

Composing the implementation and management team

The implementation and management team should be gender balanced in order to reflect the organisation's commitment. This can be a key element in reaching out to mountain women, as it can greatly improve the capacity of the programme to interact with them, understand their issues, and involve them to ensure that they benefit from the programme's interventions. However, mainstreaming gender is not the sole responsibility of female staff and gender specialists; all team members should be aware of gender issues related to their sector, be committed to addressing such issues, and develop the expertise to conduct gender analysis and to mainstream gender in their activities.

Budgeting

In the context of the feminisation of mountain communities and increased out-migration of men, women's needs should be considered as priorities and not secondary or optional. Sufficient funds must be allocated to address their needs and to put in place specific measures to increase their participation.

Establishing the baseline

Baseline data provides a basis for the monitoring and evaluation of projects. The requirements of the baseline vary according to the nature of the project, but it must integrate the gender perspective.

There is a strong tendency to involve women only in ‘women’s topics’, such as health and sanitation. Women are rarely involved in discussions related to farm production and the overall management of natural resources. The typical baseline survey comprises interviews with the ‘head of household’ and generalises ‘his’ condition across all members of the household. As a result, the situation of women prior to the programme is rarely properly documented, which makes it difficult to measure to what extent they are benefiting from the programme.

In order to make the baseline gender sensitive, the information collected must be disaggregated by gender and a gender analysis must be performed.

Monitoring and evaluation process

From the perspective of gender mainstreaming, a gender sensitive M&E system should be used in any development and environmental programme, not just in programmes that principally target women.

Monitoring is a continuous process of data collection on the specified targets and parameters to show whether the project is going in the right direction or not. Through a gender sensitive monitoring approach, the programme’s team observes to what extent a programme’s outputs benefit women and men, how they address their respective issues related to the sector taking into account the different capacities and constraints women and men may face, and proposes corrective paths to address inequalities.

Evaluation is a periodic assessment of project performance based on specified indicators. A gender sensitive evaluation process uses methods to assess the roles of women and men in addressing the issues the programme aims to address and the achievement of the outcomes. It also measures how the programme’s outputs have affected women and men – what are the direct benefits from the interventions; how they improve women’s and men’s wellbeing; how they empower women and men; to what extent the programme challenged traditional power relations, introduced practices that promote equity, and reduced gender inequalities; to what extent women’s and men’s needs have been addressed; how addressing gender issues has contributed to dealing with the development or environmental issues at stake.

Defining indicators to measure progress is part of the planning process. As much as possible, the indicators must be gender disaggregated. The indicators should not just measure the number of women participating in different activities. Indicators should be defined to measure the concrete impacts of the programme on women and men, how the outputs have affected their workload, how they have affected their capacity to equitably access critical resources, how they have contributed to addressing their respective needs, and how they have transformed power relations and empowered people¹.

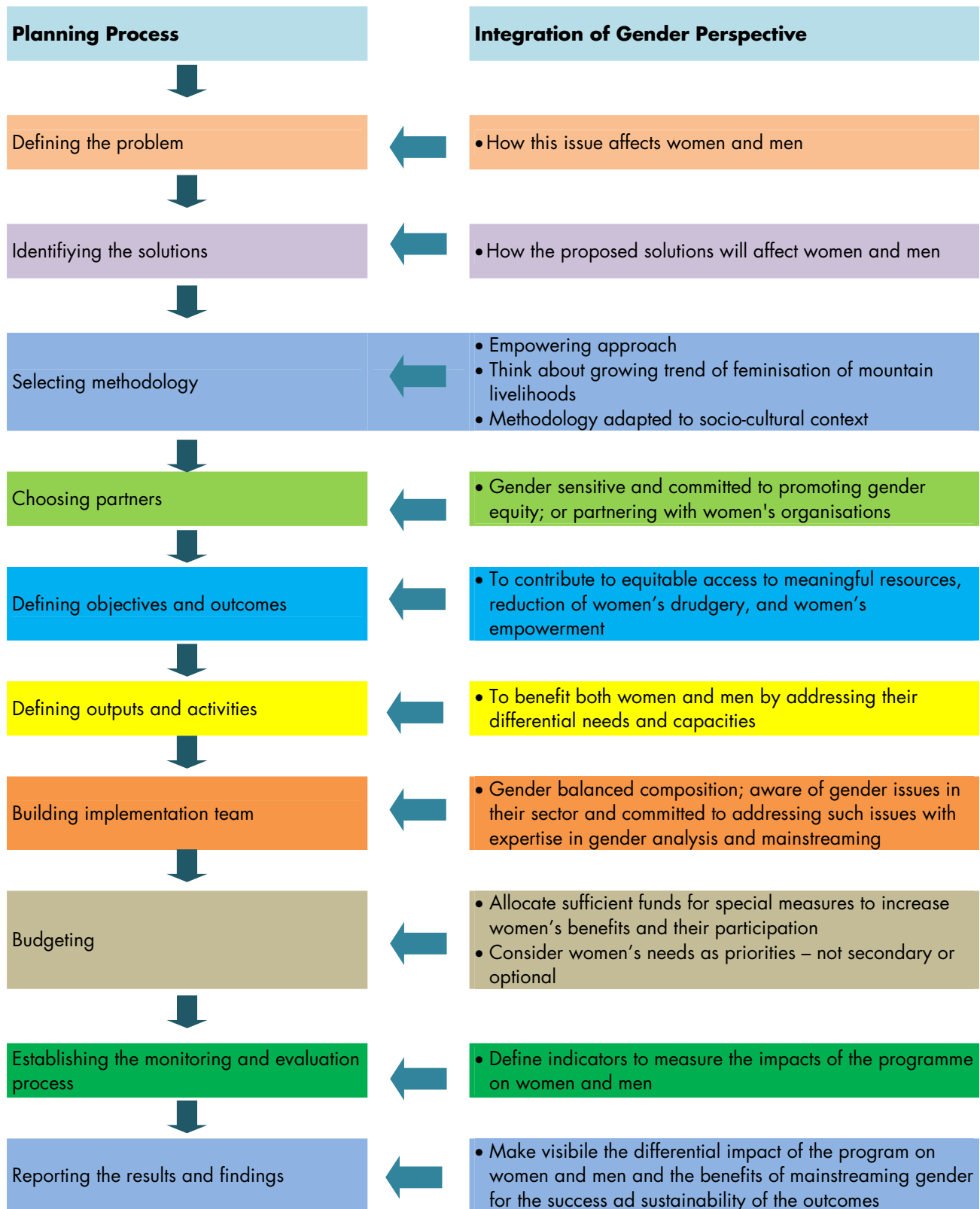
Disseminating findings and policy dialogue

In order to influence policy makers to mainstream gender, the dissemination of programme results and findings should highlight the differential impact of the programme on women and men and the benefits of mainstreaming gender for the success and sustainability of the outcomes of the programme.

¹ See Annex 2 for more information on gender indicators.

The Planning Process

The gender perspective must be integrated throughout the whole planning process.



Gender Sensitive Logical Framework

The gender perspective should be reflected in the logical framework. The outcomes and outputs statements do not always need to 'talk' about gender, but the gender

dimension should be reflected in the performance indicators and means of verifications. It can also be part of the assumptions and risks. The activities chosen and the type of resources required should give indications about the programme's strategy to mainstream gender.

'Engendering' the Logical Framework²

Result Statements	ICIMOD Context	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions and Risks
<p>Goal/Impact</p> <p>Do gender relations influence in any way the goal at the policy/national level?</p>	Highest level impact covering more than 5 years	What measures can verify achievement of the gender-sensitive goal?	Are there disaggregated data to verify and analyse the goal, objectives, outputs, and activities in terms of gender?	<p>What important external factors are necessary to sustain the gender-sensitive goal?</p> <p>What important external factors are necessary for project benefits (especially for women)?</p> <p>What may hinder women's capacity to access project resources, to participate in project activities, and to benefit from the project's outputs?</p>
<p>Purpose/Outcomes</p> <p>Does the project have gender-responsive objectives?</p>	Action Area and Division outcomes for MTAP II (2008–2012)	What measures can verify achievement of the gender-responsive objectives?	<p>What gender analysis tools will be appropriate?</p> <p>What means of verification will show the benefits for women and for men?</p>	
<p>Outputs</p> <p>Does the distribution of benefits take into account gender roles and relations while defining outputs?</p>	Yearly defined results for each Action Area bringing together different project outputs	What measures can verify that project benefits increased to women as well as men?		
<p>Activities</p> <p>Will activities contribute to addressing women's needs and capacities as well as men's needs and capacities?</p>	Activities are defined for each year specified for each output defined at the Action Area and Division level	<p>Inputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are women's as well as men's contributions accounted for? • Are there external resources that account for women's access and control over resources? 		

² Adapted from Hambly-Odame, H (2000) "Engendering the Logframe." ISNAR

Checklist for Gender Sensitive Programming

- 1) Conduct a gender analysis related to the sector and the issues you intend to address.
- 2) Define objective, outcomes, outputs, and activities that will contribute to addressing both women's and men's needs.
- 3) Adopt a methodology that encourages the participation of women in all components of the programme, including the programming and M&E process, taking into account the socio-cultural context in which the project is implemented.
- 4) Develop mechanisms to ensure equitable benefits for women and men.
- 5) Allocate sufficient budget to fund particular measures to address women's needs.
- 6) Recruit or develop collaborative work with professionals/scientists women.
- 7) Select gender sensitive partners.
- 8) Build the capacity of the programme's team and partners to conduct gender analysis and mainstream gender.
- 9) Adopt an M&E process and methodology to capture the gender dimension of the programme.
- 10) Define quantitative and qualitative gender sensitive indicators to measure how the outputs of the programmes have affected women and men, and how women and men have contributed to addressing the issues and achieving the expected outcomes, and to what extent the programme has equitably addressed both women's and men's needs.
- 11) Highlight mountain women's capacities in policy dialogue.
- 12) Advocate for gender mainstreaming as a critical tool for achieving development and environmental goals in the Himalayas.

Additional Reading³

Aguilar, L. (no date) *Gender Indicators. Gender Makes the Difference*. San Jose: The World Union Conservation

CIDA (1997a) *The Why and How of Gender Sensitive Indicators. A Project Level Handbook*. Gatineau: Canadian International Development Agency

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SDC (2006) *Gender and Qualitative Interpretation of Data*. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

UNDP (2001) *UNDP Learning & Information Pack. Gender Mainstreaming Programme and Project. Entry Points*. New York: United Nations Development Programme



Photo: Robert Zomert

³ All the documents are available on the Internet and in the ICIMOD gender virtual library.