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GENDER OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTION LEARNING STRATEGY

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This Publication was prepared by Charla Britt, PhD, for Winrock International under contract.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Gender Opportunities and Action Learning (GOAL) Strategy is to expand on and deepen the ongoing gender mainstreaming work within the Bangladesh Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) project. This Gender Strategy provides practical guidance on improving overall results through a gender-balanced approach that is mutually-supportive and gender-transformative. Transformative approaches promote gender equity by engaging both males and females in changing harmful attitudes and behaviors, and transforming the institutions and practices that create or reinforce inequalities. The reference to “mutual support” is to emphasize the importance of applying a “whole household” gender lens (as and when appropriate), by working together with women and men to encourage support for and uptake of climate-resilient alternative income generation and planning in NRM, and to sensitize male and female beneficiaries in ways that improves communication and shared decision-making, shared divisions of labor, and female empowerment. The objective is to facilitate the equitable engagement of women and men in (1) reducing unsustainable extraction and dependence on natural resources (forests, wetlands, and ecologically critical areas); (2) increasing knowledge and resilience in response to climate change (adaptation and mitigation); and (3) strengthening joint decision-making and female empowerment in households through financial literacy training and increased incomes.

Introduction

The purpose of this Gender Opportunities and Action Learning (GOAL) Strategy is to expand on and deepen the ongoing gender mainstreaming work within the Bangladesh Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) project. It is intended as a “living document” in that it can and should be updated as work plan activities shift focus over the course of the CREL Project. This document provides practical guidance on ways of improving overall results through strategies, activities, and approaches that will help the CREL Team more effectively engage all beneficiaries. The objective is to facilitate the equitable engagement of women and men in (1) reducing unsustainable extraction and dependence on natural resources (forests, wetlands, and ecologically critical areas); (2) increasing knowledge and resilience in response to climate change (adaptation and mitigation); and (3) strengthening joint decision-making and female empowerment in households through financial literacy training and increased incomes from alternative income generation and market linkages.

This Strategy aligns with USAID policies and strategies that prioritize gender equality and women’s empowerment to more effectively reduce gaps between males and females. The importance of gender equality, increased investments in women and girls, measuring progress for high impact development, gender integration, and continuous learning are underpinned, in particular, by new ADS205 gender analysis and reporting requirements (updated in 2012 and 2014), policies on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (USAID 2012a) and Evaluation (USAID 2011), as well as the global strategy on Gender-based Violence (GBV) (USAID 2012b) and program guidance for building resilience (USAID 2012c).

USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GEFE) Policy provides guidance on how to make more effective evidence-based investments and integrate these into core development programming in order to achieve three overarching outcomes: (1) reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefits from resources, wealth, opportunities, and services – economic, political, and social; (2) reduce gender-based violence and mitigation of its harmful effects on individuals and communities; and (3) increase capabilities of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.

In Bangladesh, women’s involvement in agriculture, cottage industries, and natural resource management (NRM) varies by region and economic status, but gender-based constraints remain acute almost everywhere. Women lack autonomy and agency in decision-making and mobility, with limited control over resources, assets, and productive activities. This inhibits choices and potential. Participation in decision-making and access to benefits and resources are sub-optimal largely because of gender issues. These include the subordination of women, the lack of exposure and self-confidence of women in public domains and social forums, and stereotyping of women’s roles and household contributions to domestic domains. Women play major roles in pre- and post-harvest agricultural activities and, increasingly, natural resource management groups and protection committees. However, these contributions tend to be unrecognized or under-valued.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment is not only better for CREL’s beneficiaries *and* overall results and outcomes, it is better for Bangladesh. Gender discrimination not only disadvantages women, it reduces overall productivity and economic growth. Studies from around the world have demonstrated that projects which consult women and succeed in creating enabling environments or “safe spaces” for them to improve their knowledge, voice their opinions, and assume positions of leadership have better outcomes and sustainability results (World Bank 2012). Decreases in gender discrimination and occupational segregation have multiplier effects in efficiency and productivity gains that stimulate economy-wide growth. Positive correlations from closing gender gaps include increases in individual and household-level incomes and inter-generational well-being. Greater equality in education and income-generating activities increases women’s bargaining power and decision-making within the household, resulting in increased spending on children’s needs, higher overall education levels within the family, reductions in mortality rates and sickness, and improved nutrition and social and cognitive development (World Bank 2010).

If women had the same access to resources as men [land, financing and technology, and training, information, and knowledge] they would produce 20 to 30% more food. (FAO At Work 2010-2011: Women – Key to Food Security)

The dual aims of CREL’s Gender Strategy are to: (1) offer guidance for implementing programs and activities in a gender-responsive and equitable manner, and (2) ensure a gender-sensitive work environment for all staff and beneficiaries. Effective implementation of any strategy requires the collective commitment of all staff, especially senior managers. CREL is fully committed to ensuring the institutionalization of gender equality in policies, programs, activities, and approaches among staff and beneficiaries, and to work toward the elimination of all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV).

This updated Gender Strategy offers recommendations for targeted gender actions in relation to CREL Work Plan activities and benchmarks, including equity provisions for greater representation, participation, and knowledge or capacity strengthening, and the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators and objectives for measuring progress. It is divided into three parts. The **first section** briefly explains the approach, objectives, and principles of CREL’s Gender Strategy. It also offers definitions of key concepts. **Section two** provides guidance on gender-sensitive policies and programming, including capacity strengthening (for staff and beneficiaries), workforce diversity and gender equality, and monitoring and evaluation. Gender actions to increase equity outcomes in each of CREL’s components activities are also identified based on Work Plan activities, with some new activities suggested. The **third section** offers recommendations aimed at improving gender equality results and overall outcomes.

Section One: Approach, Objectives, and Principles

1.1 Mutually-supportive and Gender Transformative Approach

CREL works with and through community-based organizations (CBOs)¹ and co-management groups² to conserve protected areas and ecologically critical areas (ECAs), improve governance of natural resources and biodiversity, and increase resilience to climate change through improved planning and livelihoods diversification. These activities bring together resource-dependent households, different communities, civil society, and the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) to collectively conserve, protect, and manage natural resources. These NRM co-management institutions have, in the past, been largely comprised of male members. This is now starting to shift with increased emphasis on a more-inclusive reformation of CBOs and co-management committees and councils, and the large numbers of female beneficiaries targeted (50%) through the Financial Literacy Center (FLC), Lead Farmer Groups, and other livelihood related activities. This presents an excellent opportunity for CREL to increase the capacity and confidence of new female executive committee members as well as general members. However, this must be done with caution and sensitivity in order to avoid feelings of exclusion or anger on the part of male counterparts (current or former group or executive committee members and husbands or brothers).

In order to increase sustainability and improve results CREL should apply a gender-balanced approach that is mutually-supportive and gender-transformative. Transformative approaches promote gender equity by engaging both males and females in changing harmful attitudes and behaviors, and transforming the institutions and practices that create or reinforce inequalities. The reference to “mutual support” is to emphasize the importance of applying a “whole household” lens (as and when appropriate), by working together with women and men to encourage support for and uptake of new technologies and alternative income-generation activities, and to sensitize male and female beneficiaries in ways that improves communication, gender relations, shared divisions of labor, and female empowerment. However, it is absolutely critical that men’s engagement be done in ways that do not reinforce gender stereotypes or undermine opportunities to increase gender equality and women’s empowerment. To safely accomplish this further training of staff may be required.

Gender is a social construct (or identity) that applies to both men and women. These identities can be used as a basis for discrimination – affecting human potential, choices, and opportunities, as well as rights, resources, and responsibilities. Gender or social “norms” are flexible in that they can (and do) change. Often when individuals hear the word gender they think “women.” This is misleading. Gender identities are applied to both men and women. However, addressing issues of gender discrimination often leads to efforts that focus on women, because women

¹ This refers to the different groups or forums that CREL works with to advance conservation and improved management of wetlands, forests, and ecologically critical areas, including VCFs (Village Conservation Forums), PFs (People’s Forums), and RUGs (Resource User Groups).

² This refers to different federated groups that CREL works with to advance conservation and improved management of wetlands, forests, and ecologically critical areas, including CMOs (Co-management Organizations), RMOs (Resource Management Organizations), and CMCs (Co-Management Committees and Co-Management Councils).

almost always occupy a more disadvantaged or subordinate position within their household, community, and society.

Gender integration is not an "add-on" activity, but an essential and integral strategy for improving sustainability and overall results or outcomes. A mutually-beneficial and gender-transformative approach focuses on different ways that men and women (and boys and girls) can work together to transform discriminatory gender norms. This helps to minimize possibilities of backlash (following the key tenet of "do no harm") and to ensure that the project works more effectively with all stakeholders.

1.2 CREL Gender Strategy Objective

- **Secure commitment and follow-through for gender equality and female empowerment at all levels and in the implementation of all activities, including:**
 - Advance the equitable engagement of women and men as change-agents shaping sustainable and transformative impacts or outcomes;
 - Reduce gender-based inequalities in access to and control over assets and resources, and in decision-making and livelihood opportunities;
 - Allocate sufficient budget and human resources to compensate for gender gaps and the legacy of discrimination and achieve gender equality results that have practical, strategic, and transformative outcomes;
 - Establish staff recruitment and retention policies to achieve staff ratios that better reflect Bangladeshi society at all levels of project implementation;
 - Sensitize staff to the "logic" of gender equality and female empowerment (benefits and why this equates to "smart development");
 - Equip staff with gender-aware skills and knowledge to implement gender-sensitive activities and address issues of GBV; and
 - Support the establishment of monitoring, learning, and evaluation systems to better measure gender-differentiated impacts (positive and negative), and processes for replication and/or corrective action.

1.3 CREL Gender Strategy Principles

- **Equity for Equality.** Equity considerations will be used to achieve equality. Women and men have different needs, perspectives, priorities, and resources. Equality (through equity) refers to creating conditions whereby rights and opportunities do not depend on being male or female. Inclusive training programs, targeting, and quotas compensate for past discrimination and barriers to participation. This helps to "level the playing field" and build capacity to better address the gender-based constraints that prevent individuals from operating as equals.
- **Cooperation, cohesion, and collective action.** Social capital builds when groups work together in ways and for projects that benefit everyone. Activities and communication messages should promote solidarity and help individuals (men and women, boys and

girls) identify with each other, work together, and support shared decision-making for NRM, resource allocations, and gender equality.

- **Empower on the basis of rights and responsibilities.** Empowerment is about individuals gaining skills, building self-confidence and self-reliance, and solving problems. Through better knowledge of rights and responsibilities both women and men can begin to overcome inequality in their home, community, workplace, and governance structures. While empowerment cannot be imposed from the outside, CREL will support processes that help individuals increase self-confidence, develop self-reliance, and exercise agency in decision-making.

1.4 Key Gender-related Concepts

Gender refers to identities or roles assigned to *men and women* through early socialization. Interpretations of gender affect relationships, rights, responsibilities, resources, and rewards, cutting across public and private spheres. Gender identities and conceptions of social norms change over time and vary by culture and context.

Gender Equality involves working with men and boys, women and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles, and responsibilities at home, in the workplace, and in the community. Genuine equality means more than parity in numbers – it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for males or females. (USAID 2012b:3)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to violence directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, and arbitrary deprivation to liberty and economic resources. In the context of Bangladesh, the most prevalent types of GBV include: early and forced marriage, trafficking in persons, sexual abuse and coercion, and domestic violence. GBV is a constraint to individual and societal development, and has high human and economic costs. (USAID 2012a)

Gender analysis is a methodology for examining the causes and consequences of inequality. Drawing on gender analysis frameworks, it uses research and disaggregated data to identify and analyze differences in roles, responsibilities, and rights, and access to resources, to better understand gaps and disparities resulting from gender inequalities.

Gender equity recognizes that in order to achieve equality special measures or quotas to compensate for gender gaps and the legacy of discrimination may be necessary. This usually involves a focus on women, because women are almost always in a subordinate or disadvantaged position.

Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, policies, and programs. In this way both women and men are better able to benefit equally through equity approaches (when necessary) so that inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Empowerment is achieved when disempowered and disadvantaged individuals (especially women, girls, and marginalized groups) acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment comes from within an individual, institutions and social norms often create conditions that either facilitate or undermine the feelings or possibilities for empowerment. This is especially true for women.

Section Two: Gender Integration in CREL Programming and Component Activities

As noted in USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, gender integration involves identifying and addressing gender-based inequalities and constraints. From an institutional and sustainability perspective this includes examining and identifying: (1) barriers to participation for resource-dependent households and women in accessing services and opportunities at different sites or levels (e.g., household and community, formal and informal institutions and processes, and project approaches); (2) targeted approaches to address barriers (e.g., in policies, institutional structures, project activities, budget allocations, selection criteria, and decision-making); (3) measurements and reporting systems to monitor and evaluate impacts, based on gender-differentiated and sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators; and (4) adjustments in implementation to flexibility respond to finding and outcomes.³

The following sub-sections discuss practical ways for deepening and expanding the gender integration work started in CREL programming. Drawing on the process for gender integration identified above, the focus is on understanding gender-based opportunities and constraints, and strategies and approaches that will help CREL to identify: (1) the activities and/or services needed to ensure that gender-based constraints are mitigated and/or eliminated; and (2) in what ways activities benefit women and men (i.e., monitoring, measuring, and learning).

2.1 Programming

2.1.1 Capacity Strengthening at Central and Regional Levels

Information sessions or workshops on the meaning and importance of gender equality and female empowerment need to continue. Training sessions for staff have taken place in all regions. These should not be one-time events. Refresher training sessions or workshops need to continue in a format that is interactive, informative, and focused on problem solving.

Capacity strengthening should include participatory guidelines for increasing women’s agency in decision-making and access to benefits. Constraints to participation and NRM include: the lack of self-confidence and representation of women, some indigenous peoples, and the very poor in public domains and forums; conditions of poverty and scarcity that result in extractive short-term

³ Adapted from: ADB, DFID, and World Bank (2011:4-7), Sectoral Perspectives on Gender and Social Inclusion: Agriculture, Sectoral Series.

thinking and environmental degradation; and, stereotyping of women's roles and contributions to domestic domains. These have implications for participatory processes, resource management, women's mobility and access to benefits and services. However, approaches should reflect sociocultural sensitivities in order to minimize backlash from men who may feel threatened or excluded. One way to reduce this possibility is to emphasize the ways that project activities benefit all community members.

- Follow-up workshops needed to better understand the meaning and application of gender issues in project activities and measurement, and to discuss gender-based opportunities and constraints
- Gender Focal Point meetings need to be regularly scheduled
- Reporting requirements include information about gender-based constraints, methods for collecting and analyzing gender-relevant data and information, and strategies for addressing inequalities

2.1.2 Gender Equality and Workforce Diversity

CREL should lead by example in adopting a gender equality and workforce diversity policy that will increase male/female staff ratios to better reflect Bangladeshi society. Advertising for applicants should include broad outreach to attract more candidates. Information about vacancies should be shared widely through as many networks and news sources as feasible. Interview panels should be mixed (a balance of males and females) and interview questions should include those that can help to reveal an applicant's gender knowledge and understanding, as well as commitment to the values of gender equality.

Effective gender integration is more likely to be achieved if there is evidence (policies, practices, and numbers), including:

- Attention to staff ratios and diversity/equality in workforce achieved
- Gender Equality and Workforce Diversity Poster translated and posted in all offices (including Regional and Field/Site offices) in Bangla (as well as English)
- Annual reviews of staff profiles to monitor for changes in ratios and why shifts may be occurring
- Strong support for gender integration by senior management, evident by questions asked, expectations set, and reporting requirements established and regularly monitored (e.g., sex-disaggregated data, gender equality objectives, and gender-sensitive indicators)
- Sufficient resources for capacity-building and training on gender integration in project implementation for main staff, implementing partners, GOB partners, CBOs, and other beneficiary groups
- Accountability frameworks that ensure gender integration (achievements and/or set-backs) is monitored and analyzed to assess performance

(**Annex B** offers more information on ways to increase recruitment and retention for gender equality and workforce diversity. In **Annex C** is the revised language for CREL's recently approved "Gender Equality and Workforce Diversity Poster.")

2.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Disaggregated data, measurement, and analysis help to track the metrics of social change. For every CREL component gender impacts should be integrated into indicators, achievements, and/or results. This data should trigger decision-making and responses (in the case of low and high performance), to better identify gender equality gaps and gains. All reporting formats and surveys (including baseline, mid- and end-performance) should incorporate questions and indicators that help to identify gender-based changes. In other words, ways of analyzing or assessing: (1) How (and if) gender gaps were closed? (2) What new opportunities were created? (3) What negative impacts were addressed or avoided?, and (4) What needs and/or disparities emerged or remain?

Gender-sensitive indicators need to be carefully chosen and verified. Disaggregating by sex is necessary, but not sufficient for understanding changes in gender relations. Tracking the number of men or women involved in a committee, meeting, training or workshop, the number of enterprises or income-generation activities initiated by men or women, and the increase in income for men and/or women does not necessarily reveal changes in gender relations. Although these data are useful for CREL, they need to be supplemented with information about changes in women's status, the division of labor, and the sharing of assets or income to better monitor gender equality impacts.

Gender-sensitive indicators can be quantitative or qualitative, and embody process or proxy units of measurement. They are “appropriate” when they: (1) Demonstrate removal of gender-based constraints; (2) Establish realistic targets; (3) Check assumptions; and (4) Clarify areas where more information is needed.

Ideally, gender-sensitive indicators for CREL activities should measure:

- Vulnerabilities or limitations (that affect men and women, girls and boys differently)
- Confidence-building (improved agency or autonomy)
- Changes in behavior and gender relations (particularly, increases in mutual respect and decreases in GBV)
- Access, use, and control over resources
- Changes in living conditions, incomes, and shared responsibilities in divisions of labor

Examples of gender-sensitive indicators for CREL include:

- Percentage and Number of CMOs/CMCs reaching or surpassing GOB gazette requirement of 33% female representation from communities and civil society
- Percentage and Number of CMOs/CMCs which are regularly tracking sex-disaggregated rates of participation and distributions of benefits
- Percentage and Number of women and men in CMO/PF executive committees and CMCs (committee and council)
- Number of women and men who hold office-bearer positions within committees
- Changes in perceptions (e.g., attitudes, actions, and adaptation strategies) about climate change and NRM problems and solutions, disaggregated by sex
- Average monthly/annual income earned, disaggregated by sex (and/or household)
- Amount or percentage of expenditures on household and family needs, disaggregated by sex
- Number of women engaged in new income-generating activities, disaggregated by sector or products

Indirect measures or proxy indicators can sometimes be more revealing for assessing project impacts and outcomes, providing better insight into changes that may be difficult to measure

through more traditional quantitative indicators. In the context of Bangladesh, proxy indicators for measuring changes in gender relations and female empowerment could include:

- Equal or improved food distribution (quality and quantity)⁴ among HH members, especially girl children and wives
- Changes in women’s and men’s workloads and division of labor (time and task allocation), disaggregated by sex
- Women’s increased control over spending of income
- Increase joint decision-making, with women having the “final say” on at least some decisions

More information is needed to track progress on reducing gender-based constraints. In particular, changes in decision-making and links to markets, ownership of assets and access to resources and services, control over and use of income, leadership and participation in CBOs and other institutions, and time use allocations.

- Identify and include gender-related proxy indicators in monitoring and measurements
- Improve definition and methods for analyzing “participation” of female CBO and CMC members
- Conduct Gender Scorecard initial survey and follow-up
- Monitoring, information (CRELink), and reports need to more consistently collect gender-differentiated and sex-disaggregated data
- Consider conducting a gender-sensitive value-chain analysis, focusing on gender-based constraints⁵
- Link measurements of change to management decision-making, so that data trigger actions to remedy the situation and/or replicate the success in other locations

2.2 Gender Action and Learning in CREL Components and Activities

CREL has a lot of moving parts. The project is working in very different regions, with different types of resources and GOB counterparts (various ministries and departments), and is expanding into new areas. It has four key inter-related components (governance, knowledge and capacity building, planning, and livelihoods diversification) and five main areas of operations (grants, communications, outreach, gender, and performance monitoring).⁶

In the following sub-sections gender integration opportunities and action learning ideas are outlined for each of CREL’s four key components, followed by specific “gender actions” for ongoing Work Plan Activities. This information includes the names of responsible staff members and a “time-line” section.

⁴ Quality measures types of food (meat, fish, and poultry) that are generally reserved for male members of the household; quantity would note whether and by how many more grams per week consumed. This type of measurement was done for CAARP (Cyclone Affected Aquaculture Rehabilitation Project), and demonstrated significant increases in the quantity of fish consumed by women and children following the introduction of project interventions.

⁵ For example: (1) women’s concentration in the producer or cultivator end of the value chain; (2) costs and/or restrictions in capturing or adding value (including lack of negotiation skills); and (3) limited access to extension or skills upgrading and new technologies.

⁶ Based on the information provided from the template for monthly reports (May 2014).

2.2.1 Component 1: Improved Governance

The CMO Sustainability Assessment baseline recorded low participation rates of women in CMOs, in terms of speaking out in meetings and holder committees and office-bearer positions. As part of the Gender Strategy, a target for a 40% quota for women in CBO membership and CMC (committees), with women as treasurers and other office-bearers has been set by CREL. CBOs and CMCs are currently undergoing a process of “reformation” and many (although not all) seem to be trying to achieve the 40% target.

Future assessments on CMO sustainability should seek more meaningful measures of participation. The number of times (or duration) an individual speaks up during a meeting can be misleading and inaccurate. Participation is process by which those with legitimate interests learn from ongoing discussions and find ways to influence the decisions that affect them. A better way of assessing the effective participation in CBOs would be to evaluate based on the following types (or continuum scale) of participation:

- Information-sharing: information is provided and received with limited discussion or input.
- Consultation: women and men are consulted about issues, and may provide feedback.
- Decision-making: women and men are involved in making decisions that direct activities and thinking.
- Initiating actions: women and men organize and take action in response to shared problem or issue.

Furthermore, measures of women’s leadership and/or participation should reflect increases in confidence, respect, and self-esteem. For example:

- Women feel more assertive within their homes and in meetings
- Women feel that they are being listened to and that their knowledge and skills are respected and put to use
- Women feel more involved in decision-making at the household, community, and group (or committee)
- Men feel that they accept and appreciate a more equitable relationship with women, and women feel the same way

Special women-only gatherings or “break-out groups” and/or exchange visits often help to boost confidence levels. This happens through networking, the sharing and comparing of experiences, and learning from women leaders (or other confident and knowledgeable role models). Increased numbers of women (through quotas) will, over time, also help to boost the confidence and contributions of women in meetings and committees.

Component 1: Improved Governance of Natural Resources and Biodiversity			
Current Work Plan Activities	Gender Action	Responsibility	Time-line
1.2 Adjust policy, plans and rules for co-management and NRM	Policy reform to include setting quota for at least 1 female representatives from civil society (out of the total of 3 representatives) in CMC (Council)	Component 1 Manager	PY3
1.3 Provide training to Upazila Parishad staff and Union Parishad members on environment, forestry and fisheries policies, regulations, and law	Training to also include information on gender equality for improved NRM and “smart development,” status and impacts of GBV, and key laws and policies, such as: a) Domestic Violence Act (2010) b) National Women’s Development Policy (2011)	Component 1 Manager	PY 2-3
1.4 Facilitate inclusion of co-management issues and representatives in Union Council’s standing committees for improved NRM	Promote inclusion of women CMO representatives in standing committees on (Forest & environment SC, Social Welfare & Disaster management SC, agriculture & fisheries SC, where SC exist or functioning on domestic violence, women & children welfare SC.)	Component 1 Manager	PY 2-3
1.5 Implement local action plans to support Union Parishads and CMOs use of climate change information in NRM planning and decision-making	Action plans to include information on gender-differentiated vulnerabilities and capacities for responding to climate change (adaptation and mitigation)	Component 1 Manager	PY 2-3
1.7 Strengthen the capacity of co-management institutions	a) Capacity strengthening activities to include 50% female participants b) Provide leadership training for female representatives in co-management institutions	CMO Development Coordinator	LOP
1.8 Form CMOs in new sites	a) <i>Maintain minimum 40% quota for female representative in PFs & VCFs towards 50%, including 40% representation in Executive Committees with at least one office-bearer positions</i> b) <i>Build support for women’s participation through outreach and engagement with men</i>	Component 1 Manager	PY 2
1.11 Provide training to CMOs	a) Training to include 50% female participants b) Integrate information on why gender equality is important for NRM and good governance	CMO Development Coordinator	LOP
1.12 Develop participatory monitoring and reporting systems for threats and other key indicators for forests and wetlands	Participatory monitoring and reporting systems include involvement and inputs from women and youth (boys and girls)	Component 1 Manager	LOP

2.2.2 Component 2: Enhanced knowledge and capacity

The Gender Specialist and two or three Gender Focal Points (as identified by the Gender Specialist) should be involved in reviewing all training program curricula or other content, and offering recommendations for more effectively integrating gender-related messages, data, and information. These inputs should be designed in concrete, informative, and captivating ways; they should communicate information on behavior change benefits and examples of positive

role-models (“positive deviance”) to influence thinking on gender equality and GBV, as well as inspire change.

Different training curricula offer important opportunities for integrating gender actions and learning. However, the logic and importance of gender equality for “smart development” and increased resilience still needs to be more effectively woven into all CREL curricula. Tangible examples should be provided (e.g., successes in increased production and alternative livelihood approaches, and better management of protected areas and ECAs), and grounded by data that demonstrate the benefits of closing gender gaps. Intergenerational and health impacts should also be included in some curricula. For example, how greater equality in education and decision-making results in increases in individual and household-level incomes, better health of children and other family members, improvements in birth spacing and family planning, and higher overall education levels within the family.

The positioning and framing of gender-related information is very important. There is a tendency to add-on a “gender module” at the very end of a training manual, or in a way that disconnects the information from the subject matter being discussed. This means that the discussion on “gender” happens at the very end, when most participants are tired and ready to leave. In this way the “box” for including gender is “checked,” but the content and utility of the information is given short-shrift (less focused attention).

Component 2: Enhanced knowledge and capacity of stakeholders			
Current Work Plan Activities	Gender Action	Responsibility	Time-line
2.1 Develop training curricula, conduct TOT, and train CMO members in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation	a) Training curricula to include gender-related information, particularly the impact of different roles in NRM, vulnerabilities in CC and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and adaptation and mitigation b) TOT trainees 50% female c) Trainers (from TOT) 50% female	CMO Development Coordinator	PY 2-3
2.2 Develop training curricula and conduct training of UP members and Upazila staff on current legal and regulatory framework (e.g., environment-related laws and rules and policies, including Forest Act and Fisheries Act)	Provide information and data related to other relevant laws, rules, and policies, including data on GBV, and provisions of the Domestic Violence Act (2010) and National Women’s Development Policy (2011)	Component 2 Manager	PY 2-3
2.3 Meet with existing curricula review committees within the GOB departments and key universities	Gender Specialist and Gender Focal Point to be involved in meetings with curricula review committees	Component 2 Manager	PY 2 - 3
2.4 Conduct workshops with curricula committees	Workshops to include analysis of gender-related information and data	Component 2 Manager	PY 3
2.5 Conduct training on new modules/curriculum	Training participants minimum 40% female representation	Component 2 Manager	PY 2-3
2.6 Build capacity to plan for climate change	<i>Equal male and female participation for capacity strengthening in planning for climate change</i>	CMO Development Coordinator	LOP
2.7 Review and update modules/manuals, conduct TOT to build capacity of CMOs	a) Gender Specialist and Gender Focal Points review and update revisions for modules/manuals b) TOT trainees 40% female	CMO Development Coordinator	PY 3
2.8 Develop livelihood and	Include gender-related data and information; e.g.,	Component 2	PY 2 -

Component 2: Enhanced knowledge and capacity of stakeholders			
Current Work Plan Activities	Gender Action	Responsibility	Time-line
enterprise training curricula	“positive deviance,” examples of household approaches to production and marketing, and the benefits of sharing HH responsibilities to reduce women’s workloads	Manager	3
2.9 Develop and test co-management stakeholders’ self-assessment methods	Gender specialist and/or Gender Focal Points included in the development, review, and testing of self-assessment methods	CMO Development Coordinator	LOP
2.10 Finalize CMO Action Plans and conduct TOT training on governance	TOT trainees on governance minimum 40% female	CMO Development Coordinator	PY 2-3
2.11 Build capacity of CMOs	Modules/training sessions target women to increase their confidence and influence in decision-making of CMOs	CMO Development Coordinator	PY 3
New Activities			
2.12 CMO Female-only Focus-Group Leadership module/training session	Leadership module to increase confidence and capacity of women, especially for new CMO and VCF members	Gender Specialist, Component 2 Manager, Gender Focal Person	PY 3
2.13 Exchange visits between CBOs with different capabilities and experiences	CBOs from high and low end of performance scales (e.g., leadership and governance, sustainability matrix, examples of “positive deviance” and changes in gender roles and relations), including women-only and mixed groups	CMO Development Coordinator, Component 2 Manager	PY 3 - LOP

2.2.3 Component 3: Climate-resilient NRM and adaptation

Climate change adaptation capacities can and do vary, largely based on gendered differences in roles, resources, and responsibilities, and the resilience and/or vulnerabilities that these inequalities create. Effective climate-resilient NRM and adaptation planning and implementation will need to understand these disparities, and how and why women’s and men’s priorities may conflict or concur. This will require addressing barriers to participation (especially for women and youth), and gathering information on gendered impacts, coping strategies, and adaptation priorities of women and men to help inform climate change responses at the household and community levels.

Component 3: Strengthened planning and implementation of climate-resilient NRM and adaptation			
Current Work Plan Activities	Gender Action	Responsibility	Time-line
3.2 Begin drafting co-management plans for new sites	(a) Engage men and local leaders to build understanding about co-management and the importance of women’s involvement (b) 40% female participation in drafting co-management plans	Component 3 Manager	PY 3
3.3 Develop landscape-level adaptation and mitigation plans	(a) Adaptation plans should examine opportunities and risks through a gender lens, and consider women-friendly approaches and labor-saving appropriate technologies (b) 40% female participation in developing plans	Component 3 Manager	PY 3

New Activity			
3.4 Use PRA tools to identify local solutions in climate-resilient NRM and DRR	Include women-only focus group for identifying changes/local solutions, including discussions on climate-smart agriculture and DRR	Component 3 Manager	PY2-3

2.2.4 Component 4: Improved and diversified livelihoods

There are significant gender-based constraints to livelihood diversification in Bangladesh. Women tend to capture less of the profits and bear more of the costs, because they are concentrated in cultivation and at low-wage production stages of the value chain. Their participation in value chains and market-based activities is frequently limited by workloads, poor nutrition, limited mobility, and childcare and eldercare responsibilities. Lower literacy rates, personal safety issues, and limited access agricultural extension services also restrict women’s ability to absorb information and experiment (e.g., with new seeds, crops, technologies, or value-adding activities).

Ways of reducing gender-based constraints as well as equitable and effective solutions for market access, price negotiation, and value-addition need to be integrated into livelihoods activities. These should aim to increase access, incomes, and benefits for female cultivators and producers, as well as creating consistent and reliable supply-chains for traders and buyers.

Component 4: Improved and diversified livelihoods (environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change)			
Current Work Plan Activities	Gender Action	Responsibility	Time-line
4.1 Finalize beneficiary selection	Maintain targets for 50% female beneficiaries	Component 4 Manager	PY2,3
4.2 Define training needs to strengthen value chains	Identify gender-based constraints in value chains, and ways of strengthening women’s negotiation and marketing skills, as well as agency in controlling income and decision-making	Component 4 Manager	LOP
4.3 Provide income generating training to selected beneficiaries	Training to provide examples of women-friendly labor-saving appropriate technologies, and changes in gender relations (husband and wife) based on shared labor and teamwork in production and marketing	Component 4 Manager	LOP
4.4 Identify and strengthen markets for resource users	Conduct gender-differentiated market assessments to understand gender-based constraints (It can be done from other assessments report)	Component 4 Manager	LOP
4.5 Link targeted beneficiaries to credit programs and other donor-funded projects	Targeted beneficiaries to be 50% female	Component 4 Manager	LOP
4.6 Provide Financial and Literacy Training	Continue to target minimum of 50% female beneficiaries	Component 4 Manager	PY2,3
New Activities			
4.6.1 Target Youth involvement in livelihood activities	Activities should integrate messages on gender equality and “redefining masculinity” messages, and information and concerns about GBV	Component 4 Manager	LOP
4.6.2 Expand number of exchange visits between FLCs and Lead Farmer	Bring together FLCs and Lead Farmer Coalitions from high and low end of performance scales (e.g., in marketing and production, as well as examples of	Component 4 Manager	LOP

Component 4: Improved and diversified livelihoods (environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change)			
Current Work Plan Activities	Gender Action	Responsibility	Time-line
Coalitions/Groups	“positive deviance” in changing gender roles and relations)		
4.4.1 Use Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques to identify livelihood and marketing opportunities.	Concentrate on women-friendly climate-smart agriculture examples and innovations or niche markets for handicraft	Component 4 Manager	LOP

Section Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

Since the start of the project important steps have been taken to mainstream gender in CREL. There is evidence of good management and strong support from leadership. This is evident from including a Gender Specialist on staff from start-up (even as part of the original proposal), the time and commitment provided for giving gender training sessions for staff (at both the regional/field and central levels), attention to quotas for female participation (membership and committee-level office-bearer position in the ongoing reformation of different CBOs and CMOs/RMOs), and the establishment of gender-sensitive and women-friendly policies. The active engagement and advocacy for a gender-balanced approach from CREL’s Gender Specialist, COP, and DCOP have been critical in building support for and institutionalizing these initiatives.

CREL is well-positioned to benefit from the gender-equality synergies that can result from increased incomes and participation or autonomy in decision making, and the positive shifts in gender relations that often occur from these. However, more explicit gender objectives and gender-sensitive indicators, improved consistency in reporting sex-disaggregated data, and greater attention to gender-based constraints are needed.

A key concern for CREL remains the future sustainability of CBOs and CMOs/RMOs following the end of this project. This will require the effective engagement of all beneficiaries to reduce dependence on natural resources and increase resilience in response to climate change. A more rigorous application of a gender lens will be essential to achieving sustainability. This is because gender analysis ensures more effective engagement and benefit-sharing for beneficiaries, improving relations at household and community-levels as well as communication with respective departments and ministries within the GOB.

Continued capacity strengthening and monitoring for results are necessary to ensure that the CREL Team engages women and men in ways that are mutually-supportive and gender transformative. In particular, attention to gender-equitable market facilitation, the introduction of labor-saving technologies for reducing women’s workloads, applying a whole household approach to livelihoods and enterprise development (when appropriate and promising), and ways

of promoting positive deviance (“new men” or positive masculinity) in the benefits of shared responsibilities in the household.

3.2 Key Recommendations

Maximize opportunities for behavior change outreach and constructive engagement among men: Focus on men and youth, especially sharing the experiences and the benefits of gender equality. Use progressive leaders, religious leaders, and other “positive deviant” role models to promote gender equality.

Increase gender analysis skills and competency: At least one team member with gender competency (gender focal points or other team members with gender-related knowledge and skills) should be involved in gender scorecard and other surveys or assessments to collect data on gender relations, roles, and identities in correlation with the needs or problems to be addressed. This information will help to identify gender-based constraints and opportunities.

Increase youth-focused activities, especially at the nexus of gender and inclusion: Youth are the future. Research indicates that young men and women are more flexible in their perceptions of gender roles and identities. It is good to reinforce and encourage shifts in norms and early habituation.

Increase voice, agency, and influence through quotas and coalitions: Increased numbers through quotas and broader coalitions are better-able to hold accountable the institutions that affect them. Within these groups or coalitions it is important to guarantee women’s representation, especially in office-holder positions and/or committees with decision-making authority. This will help to formalize women’s oversight and management roles. However, reserved quota spaces should be secured through a competitive process among women to find the best possible candidates.

Support GOB initiatives to be more gender-responsive and accountable: Work with GOB counterparts, other I/NGOs/NGOs, and partners to apply tools and methods that help to increase awareness, accountability, and responsiveness. Examples include: gender budgets, gender audits, gender scorecards, and gender-sensitive disaggregated data in national surveys, census, and client satisfaction surveys.

Improve Gender-sensitive M&E in programming: More attention needs to be given to the collection and analysis of data to identify changes in gender relations and impacts on the status of women and men. To solidify learning in monitoring and evaluation, the metrics of social change need to be tracked and measured on a regular basis. Gender-sensitive indicators and objectives need to be identified and highlighted, and monitored for changes.

Improve internal M&E: Conduct an internal assessment of gender equality knowledge and application in activities for CREL staff. This could be done through a questionnaire distributed to all staff and returned anonymously. The objective would be to assess levels of understanding and other gender-related issues. The Gender Specialist has drafted a questionnaire, which needs to be revised but could be used as a basis for implementing an internal review and assessment.

Annex A: Sources Consulted

ADB, DFID, and World Bank (2011), *Sectoral Perspectives on Gender and Social Inclusion: Agriculture, Sectoral Series*.

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USAID (2011). "Evaluation Learning from Experience: USAID Evaluation Policy." Washington, D.C.: January 2011.

World Bank (2012). "World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development." Washington, D.C.

World Bank (2010) "Gender Dimensions of Investment Climate Reform: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners." Washington, D.C.

Annex B: Gender Equality and Workforce Diversity: Recruitment and Retention Recommendations

Workforce diversity means having a staff composition which is pluralistic and heterogeneous in terms of people, backgrounds, and human qualities – including gender, caste, ethnicity, age, culture, religion, race, and sexual orientation. Accomplishing diversity usually requires proactive efforts to insure that equal opportunity is available for all (regardless of social identity). This is because there is a tendency to gravitate towards hiring more familiar or like-minded individuals (e.g., the “old boy network”).

CREL should specifically state its support for: “equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.”

Hiring and Recruitment: Hiring and recruitment is largely determined by qualifications and merit (education, experience, language, training, and the level of skills or knowledge necessary to perform the duties of a position). In screening and short-listing candidates there is a tendency to focus mainly on years of work experience and the level of education attained. This does not give sufficient consideration to less quantifiable qualities or measures of merit, such as benefits of a staff profile that better reflects CREL beneficiaries and the different perspectives this might bring to the workforce.

Advertising: Advertising is outreach. It is the link to attracting a broader and more diverse pool of qualified candidates. Information about vacancies should be shared widely through as many networks and news sources as is feasible. Especially important are personal contacts (targeted email lists) who are willing to pass on information in different regions of the country.

- Broaden outreach: Every vacancy announcement should be forwarded by email to NGO networks and to regional universities. Advertise on Community and/or FM radio, at regional universities, and in regional newspaper publications (depending on the position being advertised). Re-advertise if applications are minimal or a strong candidate is not available.
- Timing: Increase the length of time between the announcement and the application deadline, to allow sufficient time for networking, information sharing, and the receipt of applications from more remote areas.

Interview Committee composition: Include a mix of individuals (local and expatriate, as well as the Gender Specialist and/or Gender Focal Point). There should also be a reasonable balance of males and females on the committee.

Scoring and Selection

- Apply a “personal capabilities criteria”, including points for diversity
- Among comparable candidates, selections should opt for individuals from under-represented groups to increase workforce diversity
- If candidate from an under-represented group meets minimum qualifications and is capable of doing the job then they should be hired

Invest in Skills and Capabilities: Offer extra training, mentoring, and skills enhancement possibilities for promising candidates from under-represented groups.

Annex C: Gender Equality and Workforce Diversity Poster

In keeping with its overall outcomes and objectives, CREL aims to facilitate the equitable engagement of women and men within the workplace and among its beneficiaries. CREL is an equal opportunity employer. Its activities and policies endeavor to provide fair and equitable treatment for all people without regard to gender, race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

To maintain a diversified, dignified, and empowering working environment, the following guidelines on gender equality, women's empowerment, and workforce diversity should be put into policy and/or practice by CREL staff and Partners:

- Ensure fair and comparable wages, hours, and benefits for comparable work.
- Undertake recruitment and retention campaigns that target both women and men.
- Ensure that both women and men participate on interview panels and the review of applications.
- Encourage the employment of women and men in occupations or positions that are not normally considered "typical" based on gender stereotypes.
- Ensure diversity, inclusion and/or proportional representation in committees, meetings, training programs, and workshops.
- Set aside sufficient and secure budget allocations for promoting gender equality, women empowerment, and diversity in activities and communication strategies.
- Support different strategies for increasing women's active participation in meetings.
- Provide professional development opportunities (both formal and informal networking) and equal mentoring and leadership opportunities at all levels, especially for women working in non-traditional fields, positions, or occupations.
- Implement concrete, verifiable actions to promote professional-personal balance to support retention of female staff, such as flexible scheduling, dependent care, and policies for time-off for childbirth, parental leave, and family-related responsibilities.
- Avoid arranging meetings/workshops outside of normal office hours or during weekends/holidays if not urgent.
- Prohibit discrimination based on marital, parental, or reproductive status in decisions regarding employment and/or promotions.
- Prohibit and prevent all forms of violence in the workplace, including verbal, physical, and sexual harassment.
- Ensure zero tolerance of sexual harassment, with posted guidelines for reporting such incidents if they occur and provisions for counseling.
- Refrain from patronizing comments or behaviors.
- Provide information on gender-based violence (GBV) resources and legal frameworks (i.e., the Domestic Violence Act 2010) to all staff.
- Implement initiatives to ensure the safety of female staff while in the workplace, as well as during travel to and from field sites and offices.
- Ensure separate toilets for female and male staff.

Annex D: Gender Scorecard Questionnaire⁷ (draft version)

Below is a draft of the Gender Scorecard. This should be conducted with FLC group beneficiaries (before the training and after the training) to measure performance and impact. Large and representative numbers would be required for both approaches, as well as careful training to make certain that those conducting the interviews are clear about methodology and measurement definitions.

The following questions draw on the five domains from the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), concentrating on areas/sectors/arenas that are most relevant for assessing gender equality and female empowerment outcomes for CREL.

Use scores ranging from 0-4 to assess the performance and involvement of men and women, as follows:

0=Never

1=Rarely

2=Sometimes

3=Often

4=Always

CREL GENDER SCORECARD (draft)		Female	Male
1.	Production: Input in Productive Decisions/Autonomy in Production and Market Access		
	Who makes the decisions on the following:		
	What varieties to plant?		
	What crop to grow?		
	Allocation of food crops vs. cash crops?		
	Adoption of new technologies or practices?		
	Distribution of tasks/labor?		
	Where to sell agriculture products?		
	Who to sell agriculture products to?		
	What price to sell agriculture products?		
	Where to sell handicraft products?		
	Who to sell handicraft products?		
	What price to sell handicraft products?		
	<i>Based on the above, give an average score for this domain</i>		
2.	Resources: Ownership of Assets and Access to Services		
	Distribution of Assets, Access, and Decision-making		
	Who owns the land?		
	Who owns the fish pond?		
	Who owns small livestock? (chickens, ducks, goats, sheep)		
	Who owns large livestock? (cattle, oxen, buffalo)		
	Who owns non-mechanized farm equipment?		
	Who owns mechanized farm equipment?		
	Who owns fishing equipment?		
	Who owns the means of transport? (bicycle, rickshaw, motorcycle, car)		
	Who owns/uses mobile phone?		
	Who decides on the sale or transfer of these assets?		
	Who has access to credit?		
	Who has access to extension services?		
	Who has access to demonstration plots?		
	Who has access to training programs?		

⁷ Adapted from Senders, Angelica et al. (2012). “Gender in Value Chains: Practical Toolkit to Integrate a Gender Perspective in Agricultural Value Chain Development.”

CREL GENDER SCORECARD (draft)		Female	Male
<i>Based on the above, give an average score for this domain</i>			
3.	Income: Control over and Use of Income		
Who decides on expenditures and distribution related to the following:			
	Food purchases		
	Quantities of food distributed among family members		
	Education/School fees		
	Home improvements		
	Health Care		
	Clothing		
	Household utensils		
	Energy (fuel, electricity, other?)		
	Water		
<i>Based on the above, give an average score for this domain</i>			
4.	Leadership: Membership and Participation in CBOs		
Who is a member in the following CBOs:			
	CMO		
	CMC (committee)		
	CMC (council)		
	RUG		
	RMO		
	PF		
Who participates in different meetings or event:			
	Who attends the VCF meeting?		
	Who participates in CBO-related exchange programs?		
	Who attends meetings at the sub-district level?		
	Who attends meetings at the district level?		
<i>Based on the above, give an average score for this domain</i>			
5.	Time Allocation: Productive and Domestic Tasks		
Who does the following agricultural tasks?			
	Land clearing?		
	Planting crops?		
	Harvesting?		
	Carrying produce from field to home?		
	Processing?		
	Storing?		
	Tilling/plowing the land?		
	Weeding?		
	Marketing crops?		
Who does the following household tasks?			
	Collecting water?		
	Childcare?		
	Eldercare?		
	Collecting firewood?		
	Cooking?		
	House cleaning?		
	Courtyard sweeping?		
	Washing dishes?		
	Bathing children?		
Who does the following community-related work?			
	Attending community meetings?		
	Preparing for community events or celebrations?		
	Road maintenance?		

	CREL GENDER SCORECARD (draft)	Female	Male
	Levy/embankment maintenance?		
	Tree planting/plantations?		
	What amount of leisure time is available during an average day?		
	1-2 hours?		
	3-4 hours?		
	More than 4 hours?		
	<i>Based on the above, give an average score for this domain</i>		