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Gender Mainstreaming Strategy & Checklist

Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF)

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Gender Mainstreaming Strategy & Checklist

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Prepared by:

Kalpana Giri

Gender and REDD+ Expert

Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF)

Liberty Square, Suite 2002

287 Silom Road, Bang Rak

Bangkok, 10500 THAILAND

Office: +66 (0) 2 631 1259

Mobile: +66 (0) 84 907 7572

Email: Kalpana22us@yahoo.com



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Abbreviations & Acronyms

LEAF	Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests
LMI	Lower Mekong Initiative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forests
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TOR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN-REDD	The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD).

Purpose

Climate change mitigation is considered to be a highly technical and rapidly evolving subject, filled with significant promise to produce multiple mitigation and sustainable development benefits to both women and men. Yet, the delivery of this anticipated promise depends greatly upon how climate change mitigation projects are implemented in practice and to what extent they offer solutions to legitimate stakeholders.

Women and men, owing to their gendered responsibilities, possess unique knowledge-sets about forest resources. This knowledge can be applied to achieving successful sustainable forest management. Accrediting this unique knowledge provides both legitimate recognition of their engagement in decision-making processes and equitable share of benefits. This holds enormous significance in climate change mitigation programs (such as REDD+- Reducing Emission from Deforestation, Forest Degradation) since these programs provides benefits to stakeholders based on their recognition of regulated performance to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Existing evidence indicates that gender issues have not been specifically identified as having any relevance to the climate change mitigation sector. There have been sparse attempts to address gender issues mainly through awareness programs. Yet, the paucity of relevant tools that facilitate translating gender principles into practice is evident. Development practitioners implementing climate change mitigation projects require better understanding about the tools that facilitate achieving development benefits to both women and men, while also reducing emissions.

Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forest (LEAF) is a USAID-funded program that strengthens capacities of developing countries in Asia to produce meaningful and sustainable reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the forest-land use sector, thus allowing these countries to benefit from the emerging international REDD+ framework. Gender integration within the LEAF program is essential to ensuring that LEAF reduces existing gender gaps, do not promote new gaps and also benefits both women and men.

This document presents LEAF's gender integration strategy along with a checklist to implement and monitor gender issues in LEAF programming. This document is meant to primarily serve as a guide for LEAF regional and country teams to better mainstream gender into LEAF's interventions. This strategy and checklist will be shared with LEAF's regional, national and sub-national teams and partner organizations to provide a basis for dialogue with stakeholders, including both women and men. This will be revised to reflect shifting priorities as the program evolves.

The strategy and checklist may also be used by other development practitioners implementing climate change mitigation projects, after adapting it to their specific objectives and work plans.

1 Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Gender mainstreaming is a transformational process that calls for a systematic examination of the similarities and differences in the conditions and positions of women/girls and men/boys in order to determine appropriate interventions. It stipulates approaches, responsibilities and expectations regarding LEAF's contributions to gender-inclusive climate change mitigation. At the same time, it provides a framework on how LEAF's commitment should be implemented and it helps to identify the required inputs.

1.1 Climate change mitigation has a gender dimension

Climate change mitigation broadly refers to activities that involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions, either by reducing their sources or by increasing their sinks. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is a key approach for addressing the threat of global climate change. REDD+ aims to reduce greenhouse gases by conserving carbon pools through financial incentives and other benefits, with a focus on sustainable management of forests, conservation, and enhancement of carbon stocks.

Deforestation, degradation and sequestration each contain considerable socio-political and gender dimensions. In the LEAF countries, as elsewhere, women and men are responsible (owned due to their cultural roles) for collecting and managing different forest resources in distinct and different ways. In general, rural women are primary users of forest resources for food, fodder, fuelwood, medicine, and other non-timber forest products to meet their family's daily needs. Women play an important role in minor extraction for energy use, household consumption and supplemental income. Because of their gendered responsibilities, they possess unique knowledge sets about forest resources. This knowledge can be applied to achieving successful sustainable forest management. Accrediting this unique knowledge provides both legitimate recognition of women's engagement in decision-making processes and equitable share of benefits. This holds particularly significance in case of REDD+ since REDD+ incentivizes stakeholders based on their performance to achieving sustainable forest management that contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Compared to men, however, women have less involvement in, and influence over, decision-making processes that influence their access to forest rights, resources and benefits. Existing evidence in the region also indicates that women have not been systematically identified as stakeholders in REDD+, PES, land use planning and sustainable forest management initiatives and, consequently, have not been involved in related policy discussions and pilot demonstration activities. Additionally, gender issues have not been specifically identified by key actors as having any relevance to the climate change mitigation sector.

1.2 Gender equality is a pre-condition for climate change mitigation effectiveness

Gender equality means that women and men have the same opportunities and rights to all aspects of human development. It means that women and men enjoy the same level of respect, have the same opportunities to make choices and equal power to shape the content of these choices, thereby contributing to social development.

Because of the important roles women play in forest management, efforts to mitigate climate change will not be sustainable without their effective collaboration and meaningful involvement. The importance of gender equality as a condition for successful approaches to climate change in developing countries has been well documented^{1,2}. Recognizing the importance of women in forest resource management via empowerment is a key strategy for achieving sustainable climate mitigation outcomes.

Oftentimes, stakeholder processes in forestry management do not recognize men and women as having specific cultural responsibilities which dictate different needs, responsibilities and distinct knowledge and roles in forest management. REDD+ financing is based on results from regulated performance.

This regulated performance cannot be achieved until viable solutions which truly accredit women's contribution for the achieved performance and benefits them, are put into practice.

1.3 Gender equality is a fundamental human right

Gender equality is a fundamental condition for the full enjoyment of human rights by women and men. It is also a prerequisite for sustained carbon change mitigations and sustainable development. Discrimination on the grounds of sex and unequal circumstances between the sexes reinforces (and can also create) gender gaps. Therefore, *equality between women and men needs to be treated as both an objective in of itself and also as a method to achieving sustainable climate change mitigation.*

All of the LEAF countries have policies for gender equality and have assigned specific departments to work for gender equality. For example, Lao PDR and Vietnam both have National Commissions for the Advancement for Women. These organizations work together with Women's Unions to actively promote gender equality and women's rights.

¹ USAID 2011. Getting REDD+ Right for Women. An analysis of the barriers and opportunities for women's participation in the REDD+ sector in Asia. USAID GenDev. September 2011.

² UNREDD 2011. The Business Case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+. December 2011.

In order for women to have time to participate in climate change mitigation programs, and to take on new roles as stakeholders and managers, mitigation programs need to be designed in a gender-sensitive manner that reduces the burden on women and girls in meeting their family's daily needs for food, fuelwood, fodder, and income generation. Equally important is to garner men's support through specific gender-awareness and sensitization programs. Likewise, there is a need to effectively engage women and strengthen their leadership skills. This includes stakeholder engagement and strategic development in policy processes and pilot demonstrations, as well as institutional strengthening and capacity building. Otherwise, climate mitigation efforts like REDD+ could inadvertently result in greater inequalities for women.

2 LEAF's approach to gender mainstreaming

The LEAF program is a five year regional effort which began in January 2011, and is being implemented by a consortium comprised of Winrock International, SNV – the Netherlands Development Organization, Climate Focus and The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). LEAF's overall goal is to strengthen capacities of focus countries³ to produce meaningful and sustainable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the forestry-land use sector and to allow these countries to benefit from the emerging international REDD+ framework. Gender equality is instrumental to LEAF's ability to achieve sustained climate mitigation. Therefore, it is not a negotiable issue.

LEAF uses **gender mainstreaming** as a key approach to integrate gender into its project cycle while also providing specific technical support to selected key institutions in the region to enhance their capacity to better mainstream change at the organizational level. LEAF and its partner organizations shall discuss and agree on the importance of genuine female participation, equitable distribution of resources, benefits and opportunities between women and men in the organization, and the importance of increased awareness of women's rights in climate change mitigation activities. LEAF expects all partner organizations to work towards gender equality through concrete measures. Organizations which are not willing to work for increased gender equality will not be considered for partnership with the LEAF program.

LEAF activities focus on four thematic areas:

- strengthening regional platforms, encouraging the exchange of information allowing for replication and scaling up of successful models;
- Providing technical expertise in the areas of policy and market-based financing related to REDD+;
- promoting human and institutional capacity through targeted trainings and integrating REDD+ topics into university curriculum; and
- undertaking sub-national interventions which demonstrate innovative approaches to forest management or payment for ecosystem services (PES). LEAF plans to integrate gender aspects into all the thematic areas and ensure that our development work benefits both women and men.

LEAF's gender integration policy closely aligns with U.S. Government policies and priorities, including USAID's Climate Change and Development Strategy and USAID's Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment. The Climate Change and Development Strategy emphasizes "utilizing gender-sensitive approaches across climate programming" and "strengthening development outcomes by integrating climate change

³ LEAF's target countries include Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Papua New Guinea, as well as the potential for regional sharing and replication with other countries in the Asia region.

in Agency programming, learning, policy dialogues and operations⁴.” The program also directly supports USAID’s Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, which aims to “reduce gender disparities in access to, control over and benefit from resources” and to “increase capability of women and girls to realize their rights...and influence decision making⁵.” Additionally, the LEAF Program is part of the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) Environment pillar that aims to incorporate and strengthen women’s voices in natural resource decision-making, biodiversity conservation and sustainable forestry^{6, 7}.

2.1 LEAF’s strategic steps 2011-2016

LEAF will use a number of action points to better mainstream gender in its interventions.

2.1.1 Action points for LEAF’s project management

- Facilitate the understanding of the importance of gender integration to LEAF regional/country staff. Convey the message that gender integration is an integral, and not additional, part of LEAF technical interventions. All LEAF interventions will be designed to reduce the existing gaps between men and women in climate change mitigation. Thus, the entire LEAF team will ensure that gender is on the agenda as a cross-cutting topic and is communicated accordingly/properly to all LEAF country staff and partners.
- Ensure the integration of explicit gender-specific activities in LEAF’s interventions by incorporating timely inputs and/or review of all central documents (e.g. quarterly & annual work plans, performance management plans) and events (including design and delivery of workshops, sub-national interventions, research/assessment, and trainings). This helps reinforce the gender perspective, and leads to gender-specific activities and outcomes.
- Enhance the capacity of LEAF staff (regional, national, sub-national level), to ensure gender mainstreaming in REDD+ through various activities (including gender sensitization discussions, presentations, trainings, workshops and seminars). This helps build sensitivity, awareness and capacity of LEAF staff to strengthen the ability and commitment for gender mainstreaming at all levels.
- Assign at least one staff member from each LEAF country teams to undertake/promote/explore/inform gender-specific activities in country-specific LEAF interventions. The identified LEAF staff members will receive basic training on gender and have a willingness to learn more about gender inclusion. Each country manager

⁴ http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/policy_planning_and_learning/documents/GCCS.pdf

⁵ http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/policy_planning_and_learning/documents/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf

⁶ <http://lowermekong.org/>

⁷ <http://transition.usaid.gov/rdma/documents/RDMA%20LMI%20Fact%20Sheet%20--%20LEAF%20-%20Oct%202011%20FINAL.pdf>

will be responsible for supervising the identified staff members and will report to the Gender Advisor on gender-specific mainstreaming plans, events and lessons.

- Prepare and disseminate information and tools (e.g. assessment report, brochures, LEAF's gender mainstreaming strategy and checklist) required to systematically integrate gender into all LEAF activities. Such information and tools will be communicated through strategic interactions using various means such as, presentation during strategic workshop, trainings to country staffs, etc.
- Integrate gender indicators with LEAF's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan and assign objective-specific gender activities and outcomes. LEAF's gender advisor will work together with the M&E specialist to ensure the gender indicators have specific monitoring and evaluation plan to report progress.
- Integrate and disseminate LEAF's experience and learning of gender integration through LEAF's Communication Strategy.
- Develop specific gender equality plans with at least eight selected organizations to enhance their capacity for increased gender inclusion in REDD+ interventions. Some organizations have been already identified through a pre-assessment study⁸. Country staff members, with guidance from LEAF's Gender Advisor, will further discuss about the needs and opportunities with these organizations to identify each organization's specific gender gaps and priorities as well as possible support to be provided by the LEAF program.
- Ensure that LEAF's interventions target to include likely 50% or at least 40% of women as participants and beneficiaries in all activities and interventions.

2.1.2 Action points for LEAF's objective and activity levels

2.1.2.1 Activities related to Objective 1: Platforms

- Identify and engage with platforms to create, maintain, strengthen and disseminate gender and REDD+ related information.
- Identify required gender gaps in existing platforms and build capacity strengthening plans with LEAF's support.
- Use the LEAF website and social media channels to disseminate LEAF's gender-specific information (events, publications, and other materials).

2.1.2.2 Activities related to Objective 2: Policy

- Explore opportunities to review key REDD+ and PES plans, policies, /documents and regulations/strategies through gender lens.

⁸ Key organizations to receive LEAF's technical support in gender mainstreaming: A pre-assessment report. LEAF, July 2012.

- Network with forestry and women's ministries to determine LEAF country's needs and priorities for required policy support from gender perspective.
- Identify key policies, regulations, strategies, plans wherein LEAF can provide gender-specific policy support.
- Ensure that gender-sensitive approaches are used for stakeholder consultations and engagement employed during policy revision process.
- Develop policy-specific recommendations and actions for selected policies, plans etc. from gender-perspective.

2.1.2.3 *Activities related to Objective 3: Capacity Development (Training and Curriculum Development)*

- **Track 1: Trainings:**
 - o Use gender sensitive approaches to select participants for LEAF capacity building events.
 - o Aim for 50% women's participation in the event. If not, ensure at least 40%.
 - o Document individual stories of both women and men on how their knowledge gained from trainings are enhanced their capacities and applied. Such stories shall serve to establish the best practices, resulting out of LEAF's interventions. LEAF's Communication Strategy will provide required inputs for documentation and reporting.
- **Track 2: University curriculum workshops:**
 - o Identify and address gender gaps in existing curriculum within LEAF countries.
 - o Incorporate gender-specific activities to address gaps. These may include:
 - + Integrating gender-specific aspects into the design, delivery and outputs of curriculum development workshops (workshop design, concept notes, objectives, use gender experts in the team for assessment, workshops and recommendations);
 - + Inviting an equal number of women and men from universities to these events;
 - + Identifying gender-specific needs and support through which gender can be integrated into university curriculum (brainstorming and priorities setting);
 - + Training an equal number of female and male faculty members in gender and REDD+ topics, as part of LEAF's capacity building plan;
 - + Ensuring that LEAF's input to universities includes gender-specific recommendations;
 - o Document LEAF's experience and learning on integrating gender into university curriculum.

2.1.2.4 *Activities related to Objective 4: Sub-national interventions*

- Gather gender-disaggregated data by integrating gender-specific questions, focus group discussion into LEAF's baseline survey in pilot sites.
- Target for a likely 50% (with a mandatory (40%) of women as participants & beneficiaries in sub-national interventions.
- Use the opportunity to engage with women-bodies in LEAF sub-national interventions. Provide required capacity building to facilitate their decision-making.
- Provide gender-sensitization trainings at the LEAF pilot sites to garner men's support for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Ensure that LEAF supported sub-national interventions (e.g. pilot plans/assessment report) include gender-specific recommendations.

2.1.3 **Action points for enhancing gender equality at partner organization level**

- Identify organizations that support better gender mainstreaming;
 - + Identify gender-related organizational needs. For LEAF's interventions, this can be done at two levels. First, organizations may require gender-specific support directly contributing to LEAF's objectives (e.g. sub-national forestry offices receiving training on gender analysis and undertaking gender analysis at some of LEAF pilot sites) . Second, organizations may require gender-specific support that indirectly supports LEAF interventions (e.g. support to build up organizational action plans on gender mainstreaming, training for staff on specific topics, etc.).
- Prepare gender integration plan with selected organizations listing required support, types of LEAF's contributions, and M&E criteria to measure and report on progress.

3 Gender Mainstreaming Checklist

Purpose of the checklist: To act as a quick guide for LEAF and its partner organizations to identify, analyze and address gender equality mainstreaming gaps through targeted gender-sensitive processes and activities.

How to use the checklist: The checklist provides a set of questions that guide LEAF staff members to better integrate gender into LEAF interventions. LEAF's interventions offer a wide array of technical support (including workshops, trainings, tools, and assessments), fulfill distinct objectives (platforms, policies, pilots, capacity building) and operate at different levels (regional, national, sub-national). It is likely that many of LEAF interventions may include various activities such as, assessments/design, stakeholder consultations, events, workshops, training, seminars, exposure/study tours, publications etc. Yet, all LEAF interventions may include following three components where gender needs to be integrated:

- 1) **Design of interventions:** This is a key entry point to identify specific gender-gaps and responsive measures to incorporate gender-responsive objectives on platforms, policy, capacity building and pilot demonstrations.
- 2) **Stakeholder engagement:** This is a continuing tool to ensure both women and men have opportunities for meaningful participation throughout the consultative processes for LEAF interventions. This needs to be used consistently for effective engagement with both women and men in all LEAF's interventions.
- 3) **Benefit sharing:** This component strengthens the crucial linkage between gender equality and development by implementing LEAF interventions to rectify existing gender gaps for poverty reduction. It ensures both men and women equitably participate in, and get benefits from, development programs like LEAF.

Table 1: LEAF’s Gender Mainstreaming Checklist

LEAF Interventions	Key Checklist Questions	Key Indicators	Data Sources
LEAF intervention design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have gender gaps been identified in relation to LEAF interventions? Are any relevant research papers, studies (or excerpts) or references, consultations included as annexes (particularly those that provide sound justification of attention to gender)? -Does the goal of the proposed intervention seek to correct gender gaps through addressing practical needs of men and women or through transforming institutions (social and other) that perpetuate gender inequality? -Have LEAF proposed interventions been discussed with LEAF’s Gender Advisor? -Have the suggestions of LEAF’s Gender Advisor on proposed interventions incorporated into the design documents? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Incidence of consultation with LEAF’s Gender Advisor on the design of LEAF interventions. - Number of LEAF interventions that integrate gender aspects in their design as well as assign resources and responsibility to address the issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Joint consultation meeting minutes (emails/calendar/notes/photographs, or other forms of communication)-Concept note/agenda, program schedule, quarterly plans, country work plans, TOR for research assessments, pre-assessment report on gender integration, MOU/Gender integration plans.
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are both men and women from concerned institutions consulted while undertaking LEAF interventions (policy assessments, priority settings, identifying benefit sharing schemes, training needs etc.)? - Is women’s representation secured in stakeholder consultations (e.g. policy dialogue, workshops etc.)? -Are any adjustments made to accommodate special needs for consultation/LEAF meetings (e.g. prior information and capacity building, time and mobility issues, special spaces to capture women’s consultation, adapting LEAF meetings to suit women’s time, education and capacity levels, garnering men’s support to counter-off violence to women’s consultative processes and leadership)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LEAF interventions that involve consultation as a process to identify and/or address the gender-gap engage with gender champions/networks/institutions that provide gender-specific information relevant to the interventions. - At least 40% of women are invited to LEAF-organized events. - Gender-specific concerns are tabulated by at least a representative on LEAF’s organized events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trip report (contact list), assessment reports. - Event registration records disaggregated by gender. -Events minute/reports reflection from LEAF staffs-email. -Report on need assessment & capacity building support.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of accommodating provisions to ensure women's representation & decision-making in stakeholder engagement. 	
<p>Benefit-sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is there gender balance within the target beneficiary group? -Do planned activities target/involve provision of benefits to both men and women? -Has potential negative risks (both intended & unintended) to attain project benefits (e.g. increased work-burden to women due to participation in project activities) been considered?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At least 40% of women benefit (access/control to resources including program/project resources, direct and practical benefits e.g. jobs, training etc., strategic benefits e.g. increased decision-making at household, community, national, regional level) from LEAF interventions. - Number of inclusive models/plans of benefit sharing equitably benefit men and women are demonstrated through sub-national intervention models. - Number of measures in place to counter-off potential negative risks to gender equality and women's empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports/surveys, case studies, PRA with village women. -Sub-national intervention plans, innovative models. - Training/workshop reports on gender needs and gender analysis.

4 Contact

For more information about LEAF's gender strategy and checklist, please contact Dr. Kalpana Giri, LEAF's Gender and REDD+ Advisor (kalpana@leafasia.com) or Mr. Brian Bean, LEAF's Deputy Chief of Party, (BBean@winrock.org). Also please visit LEAF's website: www.LEAFAsia.org