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|  | Revised Second Deliverable |
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| Gender responsive governance structures, land tenure, and safeguards forREDD+ in Bangladesh |
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**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AIGA Alternative Income Generation Activities

AIG Alternative Income Generation

BRAC Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

CBD Convention on Biodiversity

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CFIs Community Forestry Institutions

CHT Chittagong Hill Tracts

CM Co-Management

CMC Co-Management Committee

CPG Community Patrol Groups

CPF Collaborative Partnership on Forests

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FD Forest Department

FPIC Free, Prior and Informed Consent

FUGs Forest User Groups

GO Governmental Organization

GoB Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

LNP Lawachara National Park

NGO Non Governmental Organization

NSP Nishorgo Support Project

NTFPs Non-Timber Forest Products

PAMs REDD+ Policies and Measures

PF People's Forum

PLRs Policies, Laws and Regulations

REDD+ Reduced Emission from Deforestation and Degradation Plus

RDRS Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SDC Swedish Development Corporation

SFL State Forest Lands

SFYP Sixth Five Year Plan

SIS Safeguard Information Systems

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNEP United Nations Environment Programme

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNCCD Convention to Combat Desertification

UN-REDD United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

USAID United States Agency for International Development

VCF Village Common Forest

VFFP Village and Farm Forestry Project

**Executive summary**

In Bangladesh, climate change has adverse effects, threatened to intensify poverty and affecting livelihoods, and the worst sufferers are women and the poorest. Women are the most vulnerable to climate change, as their access and control over resources and decision making is lower than those of men. Moreover, recent studies revealed that over the last few decades deforestation rate exceeded 1 per cent each year. In 2010, Bangladesh was included in UN-REDD programme as it is one of the developing countries with a low forest cover that has suffered a massive forest loss and has only about 10 percent of the remaining forest. It is pertinent to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are addressed in issues relating to climate change, forest management and sharing of REDD+ benefits.

Capturing the gender dimensions in REDD+ programme is a process, and it is key to a gender transformation and their active participation in the forest sector. UN-REDD Programme Strategic Framework 2016-20 clearly stated that *"*Gender equality and women's empowerment are catalysts for reaching sustainable development." Women’s subsistence activities and knowledge of the forest can positively contribute to sustainable forest management or enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Moreover, determining the different roles played by men and women can enable in analyzing the driving forces of deforestation - what, where and how as well as find potential solutions and to undertake interventions relevant at national and local levels.

 In Bangladesh, there are forest dependent women including indigenous women who are often displaced due to deforestation and forest degradation. Socio-economic inequalities still persist which limit women, the poor and indigenous groups to have equitable access to resources, participation and to benefit from REDD+. Given these underlying dynamics, the UN-REDD Programme aims to contribute to gender equality and the full participation and empowerment of women in its approach, viewing women and men as key agents of change and recognizing their unique knowledge, skills and experiences as vital to successful REDD+ action.

This study is mainly based on desk review of REDD+ project documents, publications and articles on gender equality, empowerment and forest related issues, government policies, laws and regulations to identify and analyze gender responsiveness and how gender dynamics can be integrated into REDD+ processes. It also focused on gender gaps with regard to lack of equal rights among women and men, customary land tenure, forest access, forest management and participation etc.

The Human Development Report (2011) notes that in a number of countries, greater involvement of women in decision-making has resulted in improved forest protec­tion and better management of environmental resources. Enhancing women’s engagement as decision-makers can lead to improved outcomes relevant to REDD+, such as increased regeneration and forest growth, increased carbon stock. Bina Agrawal’s study from Nepal and India shows that having a high proportion of women in community forestry user group executive committees and other key decision-making bodies significantly improves forest condition. Moreover, review of 17 studies in natural resources management demonstrates that increased participation by women leads to improvements in local natural resource governance and forest conservation efforts. Enhancing women’s engagement as decision-makers can lead to improved outcomes relevant to REDD+, such as increased regeneration and forest growth, increased carbon stock.

With regard to the various legal provisions governing forests and forest related produces in Bangladesh, the recent policy and rules namely National Forest Policy of 2016 and Forest Protected Areas Management Rules of 2017 have clearly stated the involvement of the community and emphasized on the participation of women in forest related activities. Increasing women’s participation in forest decision-making bodies improves forest sustainability and could give women more opportunities to raise their voices and participate in the policy-making processes. Women’s active and effective participation in forest decision-making bodies provides an opportunity to present their concerns, points of views and needs, and incorporate their knowledge in the discussion.

The Forest Department of Bangladesh had given priority to women when selecting the beneficiary of their programmes. The Department noted that 50% women were participants of social forestry programmes. Women were nearly 30% of the total 133,080 people who received benefits from social forestry programme. Moreover, 100% beneficiaries were women in social forestry programmes at Comilla, Jamalpur, Jessore and Patuakhali districts. Furthermore, 20% of the positions on the co-management councils in 16 Protected Areas and 50% (or 733) positions with the People's Forum (PF) for the Protected Areas have been reserved for women members. In addition, 33% of the positions with the Village Conservation Forum (VCF) are reserved for women from the villages adjoining the Protected Areas. A total of 16,240 women are involved in providing motivation for the conservation of forests in the Protected Areas.

The government had initiated co-management through the Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) in 2004 where participation of grassroots women has been encouraged in the livelihood programmes like forest patrolling, forest user groups, microcredit operation, nursery development, handicrafts making, etc. Women of Mochoni near Teknaf and Baligaon village to the east of Lawachara have been different in their approach from the men patrol groups. The women spend relatively less time walking through the forest and more time going house-to-house in the periphery, at times trying to educate residents about the forest and searching for people who have stolen logs or fuel wood from the Protected Areas.

Women were part of the social forestry programmes of BRAC, Nijera Kori, Proshika and RDRS. While addressing to special needs of ethnic women, in Modhupur and other areas tribal women are being involved in social forestry. In the Northern region women from Santal community have been trained on modern vegetable cultivation techniques.

Women are the key participants in homestead agro-forestry where they performed many activities such as collection and storing of seeds, raising seedlings, planting, watering, fencing, fertilizing, harvesting and processing. Homestead forests of Bangladesh constitute multi-storied vegetation of shrubs, bamboos, palms and trees that produce materials for a multitude of purposes, including fuel, shelter, structural materials, fruits, fodder, and medicines. However, women had limited access in market, cash income from homestead produces and eventually no decision making power and control of their incomes. Income derived from homestead agro-forestry was used by women for repayment of micro-credit instalment, children's education and to meet deficits during household crisis.

Men remain the principal landowners in case of inadequate legal reforms and the pervasiveness of customary law which limit women’s land and tree ownership. It makes women dependent on men’s priorities and decisions making regarding land use and put restrictions on their livelihoods options and income opportunities. Women are often not allowed to plant trees or if they do, men determine the place where they will plant trees.

 Although the Constitution endorses gender equality, women in Bangladesh do not have equal property rights and rarely holds title to land. In 1996, only 3.5% of agricultural land was titled in the name of women. Fewer than 10% of women have their name included on any documentation of property rights. In rural areas, women access land almost exclusively through relationships with male family members such as husband, father or brother. Women hardly are owners of land property as there is discrimination regarding property rights of women which is unequal to that of men. Moreover, rights of indigenous women are undermined, their customary laws and practices are not fully recognized. Overall, Bangladeshi women are unlikely to claim their share of family property unless it is offered to them. Women lack resources and knowledge of the legal rights. Legal processes are complicated, corrupted and hampered by social and cultural norms preventing women from effectively using the law to protect their land rights.

 It is necessary to establish safeguards for REDD+ activities in countries wishing to participate in REDD+ such as Bangladesh as safeguards are a key component of UNFCCC agreements which aim to ensure social and environmental risks are minimized and benefits enhanced. One of the social risks is corruption been identified within the forest management in Bangladesh. Women bear the burden of corruption as they have less access to public services including access to forest resources. Implementing a safeguards approach at the national level can formulate and change existing policies, laws and regulations. For Bangladesh, such changes could present challenges, especially where inheritance laws are gender biased due to built-in constraints of religious and customary practices which in turn has impact on women's property rights and decision-making processes.

It can be concluded that knowledge of local communities about forests is deep rooted in tradition and also gendered. Informed and meaningful involvement and participation of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, women and other forest-dependent communities are essential for forest management and governance. Effective engagement of stakeholders will provide them the feeling of ownership in forest governance for longer economic, financial and social benefits.

The study recommends for recognizing women as a separate stakeholder's group as they have different roles, experiences, needs and knowledge of forests. Moreover, there should be adequate representation and equitable involvement of women in decision-making processes such as consultations, committees, platforms and other decision-making bodies. Structural inequalities should be addressed that deny women and marginalized groups including indigenous women property and land tenure rights. Accountability and transparency should be ensured for women's access to forest resources and services. Issues of employment and alternative livelihood opportunities for forest dependent women should also be prioritized. Steps should be taken to introduce effective and low cost fuel as an alternative so that women do not rely on the widespread use of fuel wood.

**1. Introduction**

Forest and trees play multiple roles in the context of climate change, provide key eco-system services and contribute to climate change mitigation, such as carbon sinks, by regulating water, sustaining agriculture and providing livelihoods for women and men(Marin and Kuriakose, 2017).Globally, forests provide subsistence and income for more than 1.6 billion people, including approximately 60 million indigenous people. Moreover, those who rely on forests for their livelihoods are among the poorest people and they are disproportionately women. It is estimated that the loss of natural forests through deforestation and forest degradation contribute approximately 17 percent of total global carbon emissions (Rutherford, 2011).

In 2008, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) in developing countries (UN-REDD Programme) was set up and builds on the technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Under the UN-REDD Programme, these agencies are jointly providing support to developing countries in their efforts to mitigate climate change through the implementation of REDD+ activities agreed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (UN-REDD Programme, 2015). The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, poor women and other forest-dependent communities. REDD+ goes beyond simply deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. To accomplish these objectives, Bangladesh has established four cross-cutting themes, namely governance, land tenure, gender equality and stakeholder engagement, which need to also be considered in its national programme on REDD+ (Thompson et al., 2017).

In 2010, Bangladesh was included in UN-REDD programme as it is one of the developing countries with a low forest cover that has suffered a massive forest loss and only about 10 percent of its forest is remaining. Recent studies revealed that over the last few decades deforestation rate exceeded 1 per cent each year. The remaining forests consist of four broad types in distinct and disconnected areas: Sunderbans mangroves in southwest, *sal* forests in north of Dhaka, hill forests in the southeast, and coastal forests along the Bay of Bengal (Thompson et al., 2017).Studies on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Bangladesh distinguished between indirect and direct drivers, as well as between the drivers of degradation and those for deforestation. The indirect drivers are nearly the same for deforestation and degradation which includes poverty, over-population, and a group of drivers related to ineffective governance including lack of land-use planning, corruption, insufficient capacity to manage and enforce, and unclear land tenure. Direct drivers of deforestation common to all forests include over-harvesting (excessive and illegal), agriculture (shifting cultivation) and encroachment (industrial, military, and settlement). On the other hand, common direct drivers of forest degradation are fuel wood harvesting, excessive and illegal logging (Thompson et al., 2017).

Capturing the gender dimensions in Bangladesh’s REDD+ programme is a process, and key to its success is ensuring that a gender perspective is fully integrated within it and women’s active participation is promoted.

The rationale for doing so is highlighted in UN-REDD Programme Strategic Framework 2016-20:

*Gender equality and women's empowerment are catalysts for reaching sustainable development. However, various social, economic, cultural and political inequalities are still present in many societies which limit certain groups, such as women, the poor, youth, the handicapped, and the elderly, from being able to equitably access resources and fully participate in, contribute to and benefit from REDD+. Given these dynamics, the UN-REDD Programme aims to contribute to gender equality and the full participation and empowerment of women in its approach, seeing women and men as key agents of change, whose unique but often differentiated knowledge, skills and experiences are vital to successful REDD+ action (UN-REDD Programme, 2015).*

Women and men are key agents of change and their unique but often differentiated knowledge, skills, and experience are central to environmental sustainable development. Therefore, women’s key skills and knowledge in forest use and knowledge in forest conservation and management can add value to and enhance the efficiency and efficacy of REDD+ action. However, in countries where land and forest rights are not equitably guaranteed between women and men, women in poor forest dependent communities often do not fully benefit from forest conservation activities or efforts to support REDD+ action. Therefore, attempts have been made in promoting social inclusion within REDD+ initiatives by integrating gender equality and women’s empowerment principles into national REDD+ strategies (Habtezion, 2016).

Women and men may experience the effects of climate change and REDD+ policies differently given their different roles, responsibilities and priorities in the communities. In Bangladesh, climate change has adverse effects, threatens to intensify poverty, affecting livelihoods and the worst sufferers are those more marginalized in society, such as women and the poor. Women are the most vulnerable to climate change, as their access and control over resources and decision making is lower than those of men (Begum, 2014). Therefore, it is pertinent to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are addressed in issues relating to climate change, forest management and sharing of REDD+ benefits. Women’s subsistence activities and knowledge of the forest can positively contribute to sustainable forest management or enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Moreover, determining the different roles played by men and women can help to identify the driving forces of forest degradation and deforestation - what, where and how as well as find corresponding potential solutions to undertake at national and local levels.

**2. Objectives of the study**

This report is part of a larger analysis, which has the following overall objectives:

1. Identify and document the differentiated gender roles among women, men and youth in forest resource use and management in Bangladesh
2. Identify and recommend how REDD+ PAMs, governance structures, land tenure arrangements and safeguards can be designed and implemented in the country so as to ensure 1) the equitable and meaningful involvement of women, men, male and female youth and disadvantaged communities in the tackling of drivers of deforestation and forest; and 2) that women’s, men’s, male and female youth and disadvantaged communities’ perspectives are taken into account in this process
3. Provide recommendations on how REDD+ PAMs, land tenure arrangements and safeguards can be designed and implemented to ensure women, men, youth and disadvantaged communities equitably benefit from REDD+, wherein their livelihoods are supported and rights to forest use protected.

This report is the second of three reports to address the following three objective noted above. The first report is a checklist for REDD+ PAMs, governance structures, land tenure arrangements and safeguards. This report discusses gender dimensions in forest use and management, gender aspects and gaps of governance structures, land tenure arrangements and safeguards for REDD+ as well as provides recommendations for improving their gender responsiveness. Lastly, the third report discusses gender aspects and gaps of PAMs for REDD+ in Bangladesh as well as provides recommendations for improving their gender responsiveness

**3. Methodology**

The study was mainly based on desk review of REDD+ project documents, publications and articles on gender equality, and forest related issues as well as government policies, laws and regulations in order to identify and analyze gender responsiveness and how gender dynamics can be integrated into national REDD+ processes. The review also focused on analysing gender gaps to identify any inequalities between women and men, including in customary land tenure, forest access, forest management and participation etc. In addition, international instruments and commitments related to gender equality and forest conservation were also reviewed. At the initial stage, a list of relevant documents was prepared, web search was undertaken and publications of the UN REDD Programme were collected from project office.

Moreover, several meetings were held with the project team members to discuss key issues to be addressed. In addition, 3 Local Consultation Workshops on REDD+ Policies and Measures (PAMs) were attended along with Team Members at Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Tangail to meet, forest officials, as well as both men and women of the community based forest patrol team in particular, who are involved in the project to get their feedbacks about forest related issues, especially on how the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation can be addressed at the grassroots level.

**4. Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+**

The terms “gender” and “gender equality” imply concern for both men and women and the relationships between them. Nevertheless, specific attention to women’s needs and contributions is typically required in order to address the gender gaps, discriminatory policies and practices that have placed women in a disadvantaged position.

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| **Box 1 Gender related terms****Gender** denotes the socially constructed roles and responsibilities ascribed to men and women and the relationship between them. Common attributes of gender-differentiated roles, rights and responsibilities include an asymmetrical distribution of and access to power between men and women.**Gender equality** exists when men and women are attributed equal social value, equal rights and equal responsibilities and have equal access to the means (resources, opportunities) to exercise them.A **Gender-sensitive** approach understands and considers socio-cultural factors underlying gender-based discrimination to attempt to redress existing gender inequalities. In application, gender sensitive has come to mean ‘do no harm’.A **Gender-responsive** approach proactively identifies, understands, and implements interventions to address gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions. A gender-responsive policy, programme, plan or project aims to ‘do better’.**Women’s empowerment** refers to tools, strategies and approaches that seek to correct asymmetries of power, access and privilege that result from gender inequalities. Promoting gender equality may require efforts to ensure women’s empowerment.It means that every woman has the ability and to shape her own destiny, exercise her rights and make her own choices.**Gender analysis** is the process of analyzing information in order to ensure development benefits and resources are effectively and equitably targeted to both women and men, and to successfully anticipate and avoid any negative impacts development may have on women or on gender relations*.***Gender mainstreaming** was defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1997 as “a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.” *Source: Rutherfold, 2011 & UN-REDD November, 2013* |

Mainstreaming gender and integrating women’s valuable expertise in REDD+ processes can also both help to address and respect REDD+ safeguards as well as enhance environmental and social benefits from REDD+. It can also contribute to gender equality beyond the scope of the specific REDD+ process. Gender-responsive REDD+ processes, if implemented effectively, can create broad ownership of REDD+ and ensure more ef­ficient REDD+ outcomes, as well as contribute to the empowerment of women; promote the achievement of international commitments on women and gender equality; ensure a human rights based approach to development; establish frameworks for effective partici­pation, particularly of rural women; and increase the recognition of women as important managers, key stakeholders and decision-makers in forests and forest management (UN-REDD Programme, 2013).

However, in Bangladesh, there is widespread lack of understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming at the operational level, particularly around REDD+ and the forest sector. For example, the forest department often provides support aimed at providing women financial benefits without addressing gender inequality.

Lack of human resources with technical knowledge, particularly on sectoral gender issues, is a great limitation often hampering implementation of the strategies and plans. Gender mainstreaming at the beneficiary level is accepted faster than bringing in changes at the institution levels or in laws and reforms. Access to forestry resources through women co-management groups should continue and expand for sustainable development (Begum, 2014).

**5. Gender and forest use, management and governance**

Integrating a gender perspective within the forest sector involves assessing how women and men’s specific roles, rights and responsibilities, particular use and knowledge of forests, shape their experiences differently. They often use the forests differently, respond differently to incentive measures, policy interventions, and have different relationships with institutions. Gendered practices of forest use and management are much more pronounced where men generally tend to focus on timber and profitable non-timber forest products, while women are likely to focus on firewood and fodder (Habtezion, 2016). In addition, women tend to rely more on natural resources for their livelihoods (FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNISDR, UNRISD, UNU, UN Women, WB, WFP and WHO, 2011) and are often the primary users of forests, whose practices can include traditional agro-forestry systems, gathering wild plants for food and medicinal purposes, collecting non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and forest patrolling and monitoring such as in Indonesia and Viet Nam (Habtezion, 2016).

In many societies, women and often other marginalized groups, such as indigenous people, the poor, youth, and handicapped continue to experience ongoing exclusion due to various social, economic and cultural inequalities and legal impediments, particularly within the forest sector which in turn limit their ability to fully participate, contribute to and benefit from REDD+ action. Agrawal (2001) revealed that while women in forest-dependent communities contribute considerably to the management of forests, they do not often benefit from forest related investments or are excluded in relevant decision making. They also often face large inequalities with regard to forest and land tenure as well as possess fewer assets to overcome such hurdles (FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNISDR, UNRISD, UNU, UN Women, WB, WFP and WHO, 2011). Gender gaps can directly and indirectly contribute to gendered experiences in forest use and management, including land ownership, access to socio-economic and political decision-making powers (Habtezion, 2016).

Globally, both women and men are forest managers and primary users of forest products. Their unique knowledge, skill, experience and leadership are now well recognized to contribute to the management and conservation of forest ecosystems.

Habtezion contended that:

*As primary users and managers of forest products in many communities, women play a crucial role in the sustainable management of forests as well as in other productive and reproductive activities at the household and community levels. This puts them in a position to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental conditions. Such knowledge and capabilities can and should be deployed to benefit climate change mitigation (Habtezion, 2016).*

Studies reveal that in both agriculture and forestry, women’s work and hours of work are more than men's and frequently tied to subsistence and family care. Women have much less free time to attend and participate in meetings and consultations which can lead to lack of sufficient information on which to design forest policies and programmes. Even when women are present in public meetings, their ability for free expression can be constrained by social structures; hence the often cited “gender-blind” approaches that assume communities are homogenous (Rutherford, 2011).

As UN-REDD Programme also notes:

*Natural resource management is shaped by social and political forces. Men and women have different relationships with institutions - international organizations, national and local governments and traditional authorities and differential access to resources. To understand the local social dynamics of inclusion and representation, it is essential to be aware of the position of men and women vis-à-vis formal and informal institutions at the local, national, and international levels(Rutherford, 2011).*

There is evidence to support the fact that having both men and women ef­fectively participate in decision-making processes improves the long-term and sustainable management of forests (UN-REDD Programme, 2013). The Human Development Report (UNDP,2011) notes that in a number of countries, greater involvement of women in decision-making has resulted in improved forest protec­tion and better management of environmental resources. In India and Nepal, conservation outcomes were improved in forest projects by providing women with more powers in decision-making (World Bank, 2012).

The above findings bear evidence that increasing women’s participation in forest decision-making bodies improves forest sustainability and could give women more opportunities to raise their voices and participate in the policy-making processes. Moreover, women’s active and effective participation in forest decision-making bodies provides an opportunity to present their concerns, points of views and needs, and incorporate their knowledge in the discussion. Agarwal (2009) found that more women participating in the executive committees of the community forestry institutions (CFIs) was positively correlated with forests with lower percentages of degraded areas. Furthermore, in the villages with higher women participation in the executive committees, women also tend to participate much more in patrolling and were more likely to comply with the rules when they were part of the committees (Agarwal, 2009).

A key entry point for gender responsive national REDD+ processes and programme is within forest governance arrangements and in policies, laws and regulations that are in place. The governance structures for REDD+ should further be accountable and encourage transparency and access to information for all stakeholders (UN-REDD Programme 2013).

It is globally well recognized that both men and women are forest managers and primary users of forest products. Their unique knowledge, skills, experience, participation and leadership substantially contribute to the management and conservation of forest ecosystems. Given below is an example of inclusive process of governance involving various stakeholders using gender sensitive indicators.

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| **Box 2: Ensuring gender sensitivity when addressing governance challenges for REDD+** The Participatory Governance Assessment for REDD+ (PGA) is an inclusive process involving different stakeholders from government, civil society, private sector and academia with the view to analyse the current state of governance and produce robust and credible governance information to track progress and feed into and support government’s policy-making, planning and strategies; and as such act as a starting point for governance reform. In Indonesia, the PGA included gender sensitive indicators and reviewed information on the gender dimensions of forests and peat lands, land use planning, land tenure and local governance issues. Gender equality was also considered when deciding on the composition of groups of stakeholders involved. *Sources:* UN-REDD Programme, 2013.  |

With reference to Bangladesh, lan et al. (2017) argued that there is insufficient priority of government for protecting and managing the ecosystem services that the country receives from forests. Moreover, the governance issues are manifested in many ways identified in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Manifestations of forest governance issues**

Insufficient staff in the Forest Department (FD); Inadequate funding to the FD & Low overall capacity of FD staff

A certain level of corruption that is reportedly widespread in FD

Political interference

Lackof ability or capacity to assign land tenure & Insufficient land use planning

Inability to apply the existing good policies or to practice proper sustainable forest management despite planning

Lack of inter-departmental consultation on resources development

**Forest governance issues are manifested in various ways**

**Resulted in deforestation and forest degradation through the multiple direct drivers**

*Adapted from: lan et al. 2017.*

In mid-nineties, the above issues were partly being addressed by the Bangladesh government's initiative of co-management approach through the Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) involving grassroots level bodies such as forest user groups and patrol groups.

However, there is a data gap in Bangladesh regarding gender dynamics around REDD+ and broadly forest use and management. The information that was available were about projects being implemented, but not detailed out women's active participation in decision-making regarding forest use and management. With reference to Bangladesh, governance issues are noted as the following:

*Related to insufficient priority of government for protecting and managing the ecosystem services that the country receives from forests. It is manifested in lack of sufficient staff in the Forest Department (FD); inadequate funding to the FD; low overall capacity of FD staff; corruption that is reportedly widespread in FD and judiciary, political interference; lack of ability or capacity to assign land tenure; insufficient land use planning; inability to apply the existing good policies or to practice proper sustainable forest management despite planning; and a lack of inter-departmental consultation on resources development that have all resulted in deforestation and forest degradation through the multiple direct drivers(Thompson et al., 2017).*

**5.1 Women's Engagement and Gender Dynamics in Forestry in Bangladesh**

In Bangladesh, women are being given priority when selecting the beneficiary of social forestry by the Forest Department. Furthermore, if any beneficiary is a married man, his wife will automatically also be a beneficiary and vice-versa. About 50% women were participants of social forestry programmes. Women were nearly 30% of the total 133,080 people who received benefits from social forestry programme in Bangladesh[[1]](#footnote-1). Moreover, 100% beneficiaries were women in social forestry programmes at Comilla, Jamalpur, Jessore and Patuakhali. Further, 20% of the positions on the co-management councils in 16 Protected Areas and 50% (or 733) positions with the People's Forum (PF) for the Protected Areas have been reserved for women members. In addition, 33% of the positions with the Village Conservation Forum (VCF) are reserved for women from the villages adjoining the Protected Areas. Thus, a total of 16,240 women are involved in providing motivation for the conservation of forests in the Protected Areas (Bangladesh Forest Department, 2018).

Apart from timber the forest supply fuel wood, thatching materials, honey, fish and wax etc. However, with widespread deforestation, the forest is gradually failing to supply the increasing demand. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (1995) carried out grassroots level workshops, professional and other interest group workshops, and questionnaire surveys in order to capture people's perception of forests and environment concerns. It demonstrated that people at the grassroots level are quite aware of the problems. Large numbers of participants, both male and female, from a wide geographical range, have reported environmental concerns related to forestry sector and most of these are on the rapid depletion of forest resources, both natural and village forests. About 2,369 participants from 272 thanas, expressed concerns related to forestry sector. Among them, 72.77% were men and only 27.23% were women participants, showing the gender inequalities that exist within decision-making and engagement processes in the forestry sector within the country. These consultations also revealed the viewpoint on the importance of forestry, wildlife and bio-diversity in the life of common people,. People from different geographical areas having different setting like plain land, forested plain land, mangrove forest area, upland forested area, had different specific concerns but one concern was universal that trees and different life forms are disappearing with adverse effect on their lives (Ministry of Environment and Forest, 1995). Additionally, these consultations also drew out the following perspectives on how to improve this current situation:

* Increase employment of the landless poor, marginal farmers and women
* Encourage social and community forestry
* Bring vacant land under tree cover
* Conserve, develop and augment forests with a view to sustain the ecological balance and meet the socio-economic needs and prevailing realities
* Develop and encourage use of substitutes of forest products.

Furthermore, at the grassroots level consultations on REDD+ PAMs held in Bangladesh during 2017 which we attended, women were less represented although they are active in forest conservation. Being less in numbers, they hardly could articulate their views and opinions. The outcomes of the meetings hardly had any specific recommendations on gender related issues on deforestation and forest degradation (Consultation meetings at Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Tangail on December 2017).

During the Co-Management Committees and community patrol groups, women members articulated their concerns of forest degradation and deforestation. They categorically said that women of forest dependent communities are the main collectors of fuel wood. Women of marginalized groups have no other choice as they are dependent on dried twigs, leaves and fruits. The collection of fallen dried fruits has a negative impact as it could have geminated new plants. Due to scarcity of the above types of fuel woods, they also dig the roots of forest trees causing harm to the forest trees. In this context, women articulated that alternative fuels as well as livelihood support are needed. With regard to alternative fuel, they expressed their disappointment in using the improved cooking stove which is not women-friendly. Furthermore, they suggested solar stoves or use of biogas as fuel (Consultation workshop in Cox's Bazar on REDD+ PAMs, 9 December 2017).

In Modhupur and other areas tribal women are involved in social forestry. In the Northern region women from Santal community have been trained on modern vegetable cultivation techniques (Begum, 2014).

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| **Box 3: Forest conservation and women's empowerment** Review of 17 studies in natural resources management demonstrates that increased participation by women leads to improvements in local natural resource governance and forest conservation efforts in India and Nepal (Leisher et al. 2016). Women’s participation is associated with a 28 percent greater probability of forest regeneration (Agrawal 2006). Additionally, forest initiatives, which include women and poor communities in forest management such as reforestation, forest surveillance, can measurably improve their livelihoods (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2008). Research from West Bengal (India) reveals that gender-sensitive participatory forest management decreases the labour and time women put in collecting non-timber forest products and increases their input to family income (Das 2011). Similarly, research from Nepal shows that inclusive forest governance led to increased income for poor communities, especially poor women (McDougall et al. 2013).*Source: Habtezion, S. 2016. Training Module 6 Gender and REDD+, UNDP 2016.* |

**5.2 Role of Women in Co-Management for Forest Conservation in Bangladesh**

Women and men have different needs and priorities, as well as different perspectives and specialized skills. Brasell-Jones (1998) demonstrated that the involvement of women in natural resources management is crucial if there is to be balanced decision making. Therefore, adequate representation of the views of both men and women is crucial to realizing management decisions that incorporate the full range of local experiences and livelihood requirements.

The government had initiated co-management through the Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) with more grassroots level bodies such as forest user groups and patrol groups. There were both men and women forest user groups comprising of members from numerous households within a single village or community. In Bangladesh, the NSP selected Lawachara National Park (LNP), located in Moulavibazar district, as one of its pilot sites. The villagers are Khasia ethnic group and grow betel leaf in forested areas earmarked for them by the Forest Department. In exchange, they supply labour for forest protection and by planting activities. The indigenous group collects their fuel wood for consumption and derives timber for construction. NSP, in partnership with Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS), formed a total of 53 forest user groups (FUGs) in 16 of the villages surrounding Lawachara National Park (LNP).Among the forest user groups (FUGs), there are 21 all men and 32 all women forest user groups (Shewli, 2008).

Participation of women has been encouraged in the livelihood programmes like forest patrolling, microcredit operation, nursery development, handicrafts making, etc. Khan (2010) pointed that women, who arguably bear the major brunt of livelihood challenges, have not been offered any guaranteed places on the Co-Management Council (CMC) which exercises the highest political power for decision making. The female members have a quota of 10 seats in the Co-Management Council only, which operates more as a general assembly (Forest Department, 2007).

Merchant (1995) and Steel (1996) found that women are more concerned about environmental issues and more likely to join environmental groups compared to men. They opined that local women should be included in the current co-management approach and efforts should be made to teach them about potential impacts of the project on their livelihoods and decision-making.

However, Shewli's study revealed that almost all women faced problems in attending forest user group meetings and training programmes arranged by NSP, although women reported that they are interested in joining these activities. The main constraints faced by women were household work, childcare, duties for their husbands, and social attitudes. They were also discouraged from both their neighbours and husbands from degrading the forest. Still women were interested because they felt that forest user group could help them to earn and save money. Many women were also interested in preserving biodiversity (75%) and protecting the forest (38%), and some (21%) wanted to be in the group because they thought it would help them to organize a women's collective(Shewli, 2008).

Furthermore, the study found that 54% women did not receive any training in Alternative Income Generation Activities (AIGA) from NSP. There was a considerable gap between their interests and the training received, especially for the three most popular AIGAs namely poultry rearing, vegetable cultivation and cattle rearing. About 92% women were interested in receiving training in poultry rearing, but only 8% got such training; 92% were interested in vegetable cultivation training, but only 25% got this training; and 63% were interested in cattle rearing training, but only 4% received such training. Therefore, women's needs and interests were not adequately reflected in training activities and AIGA training being provided was insufficient to meet local demands. Without active involvement of women in co-management activities, NSP could not achieve its goals of promoting conservation and improved livelihoods. There was lack of awareness of co-management activities supporting the conservation of forest resources and biodiversity and NSP activities among the women. Most of the women living in Ballarpar and Longurpar villages are very poor and have many expectations from NSP. For example, they wanted to receive useful and need-based training so that AIGAs could improve their livelihoods and reduce their dependency on the forest. But the AIGA training provided by NSP was insufficient to meet local demand and, for the most part, did not match local needs and priorities (Shewli, 2008).

The study concluded that while women's forest user group are a step in the right direction, still they have not proven sufficient to gain awareness and support of women on a broad scale. The study findings suggest that increased involvement of women in a broad range of co-management activities is not only beneficial for their own socio-economic well-being but also imperative for sustaining the livelihoods of their communities (Shewli, 2008).

**5.3 Role of Women in Community Patrolling and Protection**

In Bangladesh, women are part of the community patrol group comprising local people guarding the Protected Areas. Sharma and DeCosse (2012) elaborated on the community patrolling initiatives and highlighted the women patrol groups that were formed having a distinct approach. They identified what emerged from Nishorgo's efforts to engage community members through the Co-Management Committees (CMCs) for the purpose of patrolling Projected Areas. Forest User Group (FUG) formation was modified. Initially it was assumed that Alternative Income Generation (AIG) through skill development training for groups of poor women would create a social force in favour of conservation while reducing the actual extraction from the forest. The focus was changed to Community Patrol Groups (CPG) that would receive livelihood benefits in return for taking a direct role in forest protection. Community patrols were organized under the aegis of the CMCs and allocated access to benefits in return for their patrol work. The new approach included providing patrolling equipment including torch, whistle, battery, uniforms, and boots to the CPG members in addition to Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) motivation and public awareness activities.

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| **Box 4: Women patrol groups supporting forest conservation** Women of Mochoni near Teknaf and Baligaon village to the east of Lawachara have been different in their approach from the male patrol groups. The women spend relatively less time walking through the forest and more time going house-to-house in the periphery, at times trying to educate residents about the forest and at others, searching for people who have stolen logs or fuel wood from the Protected Areas. In both sites they have been far more social and interactive in their approach to supporting conservation through patrolling. Women place a high value on the opportunity to associate with other women outside their homes in a socially acceptable activity. In villages where large women’s gatherings are usually restricted to family events, they took up the opportunity to meet and move through the forest in groups of 15-20 which appears to be very attractive, more so than for the men.*Source: Sharma, R. S. and DeCosse, P. J. (2012). Incentives for Community Patrolling and Protection. In: P. J. DeCosse, ed., Protected Area Co-Management Where People and Poverty Intersect: Lessons from Nishorgo in Bangladesh.* |

In the Consultation workshop in Cox's Bazar on REDD+ PAMs, women of the community patrol group were threatened by the powerful elite groups who have vested interests in the forest areas. Moreover, if women try to intercept any person involved in illegal logging, then they are told: "Keep your eyes closed as if you have seen nothing." One of the woman participants shared her bitter experience of being severely beaten and received serious injuries while she was patrolling the Protected Areas. Fortunately, she received immediate medical help from the local officials of Forest Department (Consultation workshop in Cox's Bazar on REDD+ PAMs, 9 December 2017).

Given below the honour given to a Bangladeshi woman for her dedicated work in community forest management:

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| **Box 5: Khurshida Begum received Wangari Maathai Award 2012**Khurshida Begum received for the first ever Wangari Maathai Award 2012 for her pioneering role in co-management in wildlife conservation, management of forest resources and her efforts to promote community forest management in Bangladesh. She works at a village in the south-eastern Cox's Bazar district. She was selected for the Wangari Maathai Award 2012 in Rome for her co-management efforts and leadership in wildlife conservation of forest resources in the area. She made the local people aware about biodiversity conservation for future generation. Her exceptional efforts in helping women of her village to form a community patrol group alongside forest department guards to protect the forests and biodiversity of the Tenkaf Wildlife Sanctuary from illegal logging and poaching. The Wangari Maathai Awards were provided by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), of which FAO is an active member, to recognize the efforts to improve and sustain forests and to honour the memory of Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmentalist and the first African woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace. Source: Collaborative Partnership on Forests, 2012. *Wangari Maathai Award 2012*. |

**5.4 Women's Role in Forest Projects in Bangladesh**

With regard to engagement and participation of women in community forestry, the Forest Department at the beginning had engaged the poor women as daily labourers in raising nurseries and plantations. But in a later stage, women were included in the community forestry programs. Women members in the social forestry programmes of BRAC, Nijera Kori, Proshika and RDRS made up 54, 37, 33 and 26 percent respectively. Women do most of the work in the nursery such as preparing soils, bagging soils, seed sowing, watering, weeding, seedling grading, nurturing, etc. Women groups are largely involved in planting trees in most of the government and NGO managed community forestry programs (Zashimuddin, n.d). While addressing to special needs of ethnic women, in Modhupur and other areas tribal women are being involved in social forestry. In the Northern region women from Santal community have been trained on modern vegetable cultivation techniques (Begum, 2014).

In homestead agro-forestry, women perform many activities such as collection and storing of seeds, raising seedlings, planting, watering, fencing, fertilizing, harvesting and processing. It was found that women also took care of the seedlings to save them from theft and being destroyed by cattle, goats and wild animals. Collection and processing of agro-forestry products and preparing them for marketing are an integral part of homestead forestry where women do the maximum work from collection to processing. But most critical is the decision-making process. However, mostly women’s consent is ignored during decision-making. In homestead plantations both the wife and husband play key roles in decision-making. Both husband and wife jointly make decisions to plant trees in all farm categories. But for vegetable production, women are more involved than men regardless of farm categories. Several reports highlighted that women were more interested in planting annual crops than trees because of greater immediate benefits (Zashimuddin, n.d).

**Table 1. Women's Participation in the Social Forestry Programs**

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| **Implementing organization** | **Nature of the program** | **Women's participation** |
| **BRAC** | Mulberry plantation programme for sericulture development  | About 100-200 sericulture women were selected every year to plant 50-100 mulberry trees around each of their homesteads. |
| **Proshika** | Social forestry program having an equal number of women and men groups.  | In 1990-91, a total of 1951 groups were involved in the social forestry programme of Proshika consisting of 1457 women’s groups and 494 men groups. |
| **Swedish Development Corporation (SDC)** | Village and Farm Forestry Project (VFFP)  | Involved more women compared with men in the project activities.  |
| **Forest Department, GoB** | Betagi-Pomora project  | Women planted the maximum number of trees in the project area and spent 3-6 hours per day in the homestead agro-forestry. Khundakar (1991) reported that in the Betagi community forestry project women were involved in preparing land, collecting seeds, raising seedlings and saplings, watering plants, controlling pests and diseases, etc. They were found to make cash by selling fruit, wood, poultry birds, eggs, and milk to meet the cash expenditure of the household. Rahman (1991) reported that women in the same project took part in fuelwood and sungrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) cutting. In Betagi-Pomora project, women’s participation in tree planting was 100 percent but about 46 percent could sell products without the consent of their husbands and they could keep the money in their own custody. The rest could do these jointly with their husbands. Therefore, the project linked women with the market economy and this system may be considered as a phenomenal advancement in the control of resources. The women of Betagi were more enthusiastic to work and sell the products because of joint ownership rights on the land with their husbands. |
| **Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS)** | Social forestry project | Women planted about one million trees every year, with 70 percent of the harvest were ensured to the beneficiaries. About 2000 women are employed as caretakers for a period of three years, 50 percent of them engaged in viable income generating activities after two years of employment. |
| **United States Agency for International Development (USAID) & Government of Bangladesh (GoB)** | Nishorgo project  | A collaborative co-management project of forest conservation venture operating at the protected areas of Bangladesh. In 2004, five pilot sites located in north-east Bangladesh were selected under the Nishorgo Support Project (NSP). The sites areLawachara National Park, Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Satchari Reserve Forest, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary and Teknaf Game Reserve where women were engaged in patrolling, received training on income generation activities. But unfortunately, NSP was not very successful in addressing the needs of women in forest dependent communities.  |

*Sources:*

* Zashimuddin, M. (n.d.). Community forestry for poverty reduction in Bangladesh. *FAO Corporate Document Repository.*
* Khan, M. (2010). The Nishorgo Support Project, the Lawa chara National Park, and the Chevron seismic survey: forest conservation or energy procurement in Bangladesh?. *Journal of Political Ecology*, [online] 17

To increase coastal afforestation in a sustainable manner involving local communities and providing alternative livelihood development support to the forest dependent households in selected areas, Bangladesh Forest Department and Arannayk Foundation, under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, had jointly undertook the Climate Resilient Participatory Afforestation and Reforestation Project (CRPARP) during 2013-2015 with financial support from the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF). The project had four components: participatory afforestation and reforestation program; alternative livelihoods to support forest communities; capacity development for forest resource planning and management; and project management. Arannayk Foundation implemented the Alternative Livelihoods to Support Forest Communities (ALSFC) component which promoted and supported alternative livelihood development of 6,000 poor forest dependent households in 200 villages near the planned afforestation areas and existing forests and plantations that are most vulnerable to illicit felling of tress and other human disturbances. The objective of the ALSFC component was to improve mainly non forest-based livelihood opportunities of poor forest dependent households in selected forest communities, which was to contribute to lessening of pressure on the forest and hence the sustainable use, conservation and protection of forest resources (Ahmed, Quddus and Alam edited, 2016). Listed below, in Box XX are a couple of illustrative examples of how the CRPARP project has benefited communities.

Like many of her poor neighbors, Aktar Begum of Choukidarpara, Kalapara, Patuakhali used to depend on fuel wood collection from the forest (coastal plantation) for the subsistence of her family before joining CRPARP. She got two hens and one cock from the project in 2015 from which she has 16 new chickens now. Meanwhile she has also earned BDT 1300 by selling four birds. Now she spends most of her time in taking care of her poultry birds and vegetable garden and does not depend on fuel wood collection from the forest as before. In Shaherkhali Noyapara village of Moghadia Union in Mirsarai, Chittagong, both Khaleda Akter and her husband JebolHaque used to rely on collection of fuel wood from the forest for the subsistence of their three-member family. As a participant of the alternative livelihood program of CRPARP, Khaleda took a loan of BDT 10,000 from her Union Forest Dependent Group (FDG) Federation in June 2015 and bought two female goats and established a small tea stall beside her house. They do not go to the forest for fuel wood collection (Ahmed, Quddus and Alam, edited, 2016).

Members of the Community Patrol Group (CPG) of Dhulashar, Kalapara, Patuakhali regularly patrol the plantations (both new and old) in and around the village along with the concerned staff of the local camp station of the Forest Department. Due to this intervention, the incidence of illicit cutting of trees from the coastal plantations in Dhulashar has reduced significantly. Arannayk Foundation has mobilized such CPGs in 21 places within its project of livelihood component of CRPARP areas (Ahmed, Quddus and Alam edited, 2016).

**6. Gender and Forest-based Livelihoods**

Women in forest communities can generate more than 50% of their income from forests, compared with about one-third for men (CIFOR, 2013). Several studies have pointed to gender differences between women and men in terms of the extent to which they rely on forests for their livelihoods, and for which purposes. Often, men control the most valuable forest resources that can be sold on the market, such as timber (Aguilar, Quesada-Aguilar, and Shaw (eds) 2011; Agarwal, 2009). Women’s control over resources may be more commonly centred on management and use of fuel wood, fodder and non-timber products. Forest degradation has meant that women have had to walk longer distances into the forests to source materials, with negative impacts on their time, poverty, income and personal safety (FAO and RECOFTC, 2015).

In Bangladesh, women and men’s livelihood dependence on forest produce is different as they obtain different products and receive different benefits from forests. Women’s time, poverty and physical safety concerns limit their access to and use of forest resources in Bangladesh. Security is a major concern for women who travel long distances or travel by themselves to collect fuel wood and their work as unpaid family labour in their husband's agricultural fields. However, their labour is undervalued due to prevailing gender norms and values. Usually, women tend to be busy with household chores such as cooking, child rearing, looking after the elderly which are not considered as income generating. On the other hand, when they are managing plant nurseries near their homestead, it brings income to the family and they are regarded as earners and their decisions are taken into consideration.

Another forest related activity engaging women are homestead forests of Bangladesh, which constitute multiple vegetation of shrubs, bamboos, palms and trees that produce materials for various purposes, including fuel, shelter, structural materials, fruits, fodder, and medicines (Zashimuddin, n.d). The homestead agro-forestry provides multiple products to the household and meets the diversified needs including food, nutrition, and energy securities, producing a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and tree products which are important for women who is in the centre of food management of the household. In addition, it contributes to household income and saving through sales of vegetables, fruits, and other tree products, and to the creation of employment opportunity particularly for the women.

In 2013, Islam conducted a study in homestead agro-forestry in 3 upazilas namely Bagatipara, Singra and Natore sadar of Natore district to find out women's contribution to homestead agro-forestry to sustainable development. Women are the key participants in homestead agro-forestry. After building a new house, women start to plant trees (both fruits and timber) with poultry and livestock then gradually increased several components such as fruits and vegetables because they involve minimal inputs in the form of labour. Inputs required in the homestead farming is diverse that includes seeds, compost, fencing materials, pest control materials, harvesting, collection, storage and preservation which are mostly organized or gathered by women. The main component of compost is cow dung which is also collected by women. At the same time, women managed kitchen wastes and crop residues in preparing compost. Compared to women, there were only few men involved in organizing inputs for homestead agro-forestry. Women mostly prepared the homestead land in addition to homemade compost, pit preparation and sowing of seeds while men were involved in adding chemical fertilizers and planting of trees. Women took part in managerial activities of homestead agro-forestry including trellis preparation, watering, mulching, fertilizing, managing pest, harvesting, cutting of unwanted branches and twigs, artificial pollination and making fence to protect crops from intruders. However women had limited access in market, cash income from homestead produces and eventually no decision making power and control of their incomes. Men alone had the decision making power to spend the money. Women only had the privileged rights in using homestead agro-forestry produces for household consumption. Income derived from homestead agro-forestry was used by women for repayment of micro-credit instalment, children's education and to meet deficits during household crisis (Islam, 2015).

Generally, men and women have different goals for planting trees, rearing livestock and growing of vegetables. Men are more interested in timber trees and cattle for commercial benefits whereas women are more interested in vegetables, fruits, fire wood and poultry for livelihoods. Men had dominating role in marketing of homestead agro-forestry produces. Women are better informed on environmental sustainability because, given their roles, they often feel the effects from environmental degradation. Women's contribution to the homestead agro-forestry is unrecognized due to gender discrimination, limited access to resources, lack of participation in the decision making process and no or limited control over resources and cash incomes (Islam, 2015). However, there are differences of the problems faced by women and men. Men usually lack appropriate technical know-how while women lack adequate information. Whereas both men and women have limited access to finance.

However, the involvement of women in a broad range of home garden management activities is not only beneficial for their own socio-economic well-being but also imperative for sustaining the livelihoods of their communities and at the same time for preserving agro-biodiversity.

**7. Gender sensitive safeguards**

Safeguard policies intend to ensure that people are not harmed by REDD+ initiatives. More specifically, safeguards are procedures and approaches that can help to ensure that REDD+ activities “do no harm” to people or the environment, and rather than just avoidance of risk, looks to also enhance social and environmental benefits. A gender sensitive approach at the national level to safeguards is another entry point to ensure that REDD+ actions 'do no harm' to people or the environment, and rather enhance benefits for both. The approach will consider all forest users including women as primary forest users and ensure that users are not negatively affected and at the same time have access to benefits which in the long term will help promote the sustainability of REDD+ programme (UN-REDD+,FAO,UNDP and UNEP 2013). A good example is the Indonesian REDD+ programme that has addressed integration of gender into national approaches to safeguards and involved women groups in the process.

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| **Box 6: Gender sensitive approaches to safeguards in Indonesia**The Indonesia UN-REDD Programme has supported the integration of gender considerations into national approaches to safeguards. A draft REDD+ Gender Safeguard Framework was prepared, and gender considerations were further integrated into the Government’s principles, criteria and indicators of safeguards in Indonesia (PRISAI: Prinsip, Kriteria, Indikator Safeguard Indonesia). The Indonesia UN-REDD Programme supported the involvement of two women groups, SolidaritasPerempuan and Indigenous Women of AMAN, in this process. Both NGOs were involved in the consultations for the PRISAI and provided detailed feedback on gender issues, most of which was integrated into the safeguards. *Source: UN-REDD Programme, 2012.* |

 Quesada-Aguilar (2013) elaborated on the importance of gender considerations in REDD+ safeguards and standards:

*Safeguards are generally created to protect against social and environmental damage or harm; hence gender sensitive safeguards are meant to avoid actions that would increase the gender gap or create new inequalities. In particular, these gender sensitive safeguards are meant to prevent situations that reinforce negative gender dynamics and norms and guard against new practices that may worsen relations between women and men, limit women’s fulfillment and enjoyment of their rights, marginalize women or place them in a vulnerable position(Quesada-Aguilar, 2013).*

A set of seven social and environmental safeguards which were agreed under the UNFCCC within the Cancun agreements and they should be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities.

**Figure 2: The Cancun Agreement: Safeguards for REDD+**

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Source: Walcott, J., 2014.*REDD+ Safeguards and Safeguard Information Systems*.

A country approach to safeguards is a country-led process to respond to international REDD+ safeguards requirements (UNFCCC Cancun safeguards and other safeguards as appropriate), in a way that is harmonious with national policy goals, by building on existing governance arrangements, including (UN-REDD Programme, 2018):

* **Policies, laws and regulations (PLRs)**: What needs to be done in order to support implementation of REDD+ actions in a manner consistent with Cancun (and other) safeguards, i.e. how safeguards are being addressed.
* **Institutional arrangements:** Mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the relevant PLRs are actually implemented in practice, i.e. how safeguards are being respected.
* **Information systems:** These collect and make available information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation.

REDD+ implementation can help to deliver other important social and environmental benefits-for example, REDD+ implementation may support ecosystem services and biodiversity, or provide livelihood opportunities for forest-dependent communities, including women and indigenous people. A gender sensitive national approach to safeguards, which takes full account of all forest users, including women, as primary forest users has not been addressed effectively in past projects in Bangladesh. For example, in the NSP project, almost all women faced problems in attending forest user group meetings and training programmes. As women had household work, childcare, duties for their husbands, they were discouraged from attending from both their neighbours and husbands. There was lack of awareness of co-management activities among the women which supported the conservation of forest resources and biodiversity. As such NSP activities did not address the needs of women.

This example helps to illustrate that there are potential risks involved in REDD+ initiatives which may be classified into social and environmental risks. Social risks include: failure to recognize customary tenure, use and property rights; undermining of rights of indigenous and local communities; increased exclusion of women and other marginalized groups from decision-making processes and accessing opportunities and benefits of REDD+; corruption; and food insecurity. Environmental risks includes: threats to biodiversity; conversion of natural forests to plantations or other land uses; and displacement of deforestation to other areas (Walcott, 2014).

With reference to Bangladesh, several studies have identified the possible social risks, especially with regard to customary land tenure among the indigenous communities which are not recognized in the mainstream legal framework. Property rights of women are undermined and discriminatory inheritance laws based on religious directives still prevails and it is hard to make changes in this regard. Although Bangladesh has committed to enhance gender equality, but equality in property rights has just to be achieved in spite of women's movements.

In decision-making processes, women are few in numbers whether it is in politics, bureaucracy, local government administration etc. Women are hardly seen working in the forest department. They are seen as beneficiaries who have less power to make decision that effect their lives. As such, projects fail to consider gender responsive participatory processes, such as conducting women-only interviews and gender-specific focus group discussions and consultations. Women need to be represented in large numbers to voice their demands as the needs of men and women differ in the use of forest produce.

Women living in the forest communities with less access to ownership of land can hardly use the land for plantations without the permission of her husband or male family members, They are mostly fuel collectors for domestic use while the profitable forest produce are controlled and dominated by men.

In addition to this, the UN-REDD Programme (2017) identified corruption within the forest management and suggested to eliminate top down management and to implement a fully inclusive forest management system. Although such changes are beyond REDD+ actions, care can still be taken to ensure that all actions taken and funds spent are transparent, and enforcing a no-tolerance policy towards corruption. The lack of proper land-use planning is a major governance issue leading to poor land management, which has resulted in forest loss and degradation. Moreover unplanned agricultural conversion, shrimp farming, and industrial encroachment in forest areas result in deforestation (Thompson et al., 2017).

In Bangladesh, women also bear the burden of corruption as they have less access to public services including access to forest resources. Women hardly are owners of land property as there is discrimination regarding property rights of women which is unequal to that of men. Moreover, rights of indigenous women are undermined, their customary laws and practices are not fully recognized. There are forest dependent women including indigenous women who are often displaced due to deforestation and forest degradation.

Safeguards also helps to ensure participation from people affected by REDD+ e.g. has potential to strengthen recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, including the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

The Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent has elaborated on the following concepts:

* Free refers to a consent given voluntarily and absent of “coercion, intimidation or manipu­lation.”
* Prior means “consent is sought sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commence­ment of activities.”40 Prior refers to a period of time in advance of an activity or process when consent should be sought, as well as the period between when consent is sought and when consent is given or withheld. Prior means at the “early stages of a development or investment plan, not only when the need arises to obtain approval from the community.”
* Informed refers mainly to the nature of the engagement and type of information that should be provided prior to seeking consent and also as part of the ongoing consent process.
* Consent refers to the collective decision made by the rights-holders and reached through the customary decision-making processes of the affected peoples or communities. Consent must be sought and granted or withheld according to the unique formal or informal political-administrative dynamic of each community (Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent, 2013).

UN-REDD Programme aims at:

*A gender sensitive national approach to safeguards is another entry point to ensure that REDD+ activities “do no harm” to people or the environment and enhance benefits for both. A gender sensitive national approach to safeguards, which takes full account of all forest users, including women, as primary forest users which will help promote the sustainability of REDD+, as well as ensure that users are not negatively affected and that they have access to benefits (Peskett and Todd, 2013).*

Nepal is a good example of how benefit sharing mechanisms within community forestry can be promoted. A study on gender situation in the forestry sector in Nepal found that the traditional land tenure system marginalizes many groups of women. For example, 95% of the Dalits women, living in the Tarai, are landless. On the posi­tive side, the benefit-sharing mechanisms within commu­nity forestry as well as equitable representation in forest decision-making bodies are promoted. The findings pro­vide a useful baseline which can be used to inform other gender sensitive REDD+ assessments and processes within the country (Asian Development Bank, 2010).

It is necessary to establish safeguards for REDD+ activities in countries wishing to participate in REDD+ such as Bangladesh, as safeguards are a key component of UNFCCC agreements which aim to ensure social and environmental risks are minimized and benefits enhanced. As an approach to climate change mitigation, integration of safeguards into REDD+ strategies and implementation is essential for the effectiveness of REDD+ due to links that exist among the economic, environmental and social aspects of land-use change. Countries have considerable flexibility to develop and implementing safeguards approach at the national level, and can formulate and change existing policies, laws and regulations (Peskett and Todd, 2013).

But in the case of Bangladesh, changes in property and inheritance laws could present challenges, especially due to built-in constraints of religious principles and customary practices which has impact on women's property rights and decision-making processes.

**8. Women's Property Rights**

Women in poor forest dependent communities often do not fully benefit from their forest conservation activities or efforts to support REDD+ action – this is especially true in countries like Bangladesh where land and forest rights are not equitably guaranteed between women and men (Habtezion 2016). Land tenure and ownership have been at the core of the “No Rights, No REDD” argument. The gendered dimensions of property rights and tenurial security are very complex. These complexities include distinctions between men and women’s access to and knowledge of the forest estate, and distinctions between tenurial ownership not only to land, but also to specific resources such as trees and species. Access to, control over, and ownership of land and resources is mediated by legal constructs including international, customary and statutory laws, de facto practices such as traditional access, and project-based rules (UN-REDD, FAO, UNDP and UNEP 2011).

The importance of gender dimensions of property rights and tenurial security stems from the fact that these provide the means of production, ownership of assets and access to livelihood options. The process can either happen through expanded opportunities for subsistence activities or through access to credit, markets and training.

In Bangladesh, although legislative land reforms were initiated since 1971, land distribution in Bangladesh is highly inequitable. Fifty two percent of the rural population, which accounts for almost 75% of the country’s population is landless or holds less than .5 acre of land (Oleynik 2016). Increasing commercial demand on land is creating challenges for secure and equitable access to land for poor women (UN Environment,2016). This asymmetry in power has a cumulatively negative effect on sustainable development in general and sustainable management of forests in particular. The gender disparities in most cases are even sanctioned by law. A recent study by the World Bank indicates that 9 in 10 countries in the world (155 of the 173 economies covered by the study) currently have at least one law impeding women’s economic opportunities (Iqbal, 2015).

Although the Constitution endorses gender equality, women in Bangladesh do not have equal property rights and rarely holds title to land. In 1996, only 3.5% of agricultural land was titled in the name of women. Fewer than 10% of women have their name included on any documentation of property rights. In rural areas, women access land almost exclusively through relationships with male family members such as husband, father or brother. Moreover, family law and practices are barriers for women to own assets. Their situation is further aggravated by discriminatory inheritance laws, cultural norms and values. Daughters inherit half the share of property received by sons under Shariat law, married women have one-eighth share of their husbands’ property and one-sixteenth of their sons’ property in case the sons predecease the mothers. The system is well articulated in The Succession Act 1925 which is followed in the case of Muslim women. In case of Hindu women, the Hindu Disposition of Property Act 1956 has provided equal rights to the son and daughter over late father's property, but in practice Hindu women are always deprived from inheritance of any property. Overall, Bangladeshi women are unlikely to claim their share of family property unless it is offered to them. Women lack resources and knowledge of the legal rights. Moreover, legal processes are complicated, corrupted and hampered by social and cultural norms preventing women from effectively using the law to protect their land rights (Oleynik, 2016).

In Bangladesh, women have the legal right to purchase and own land. The land laws of Bangladesh ensure that the legal heirs own the inherited land. However, here is a legal limit of private land ownership. In 1961 the highest limit was sealed to 375 Bighas by each family through Ordinance number 15. Furthermore in 1972 the ceiling was lowered to 100 Bighas by Ordinance number 18 and in 1984 through the Land Reform Ordinance the ceiling was again lowered to 60 Bighas.

Some well-to-do urban women owned land in documents to avoid their male relatives’ ceiling limit. If a family purchases land, a woman has no legal ownership right to the land unless her name appears on the deed or other land documents. There is also the question of transfer of inherited land. Once registered in the women's own name, they may be forced, threatened or deceived by husband, brother or son to transfer the control of inherited lands (Sourav, April 2015).

Customarily, male members of the family hold property and women rarely purchase land on their own because of gender stereotype, social constraints and lack of independent financial resources. Social values and norms do not encourage land purchase in the name of both husband and wife. Moreover, the registration system of land is not women-friendly. It is complex, expensive and time consuming, processes of mutation, partition, survey, payment of land development tax are not women-friendly which is an impediment to women's ownership of land (Sourav, April 2015).

Divorced women also have the right on husband’s land. When a woman marries a man who owns land, her marriage generally ensures her access to the land and the produce of the land but it does not entitle her land ownership. On the other hand, when a woman is abandoned or separated, she completely loses access to land and its produce. In Bangladesh, laws regarding separation and divorce are different for Hindus, Muslims, Christian and Indigenous. Hindu, Christian and Muslim women have the right to maintenance if there is a formal divorce, but neither have the legal right to claim any of their husband’s immoveable property. Indigenous women are governed by their own customary practices rather than the codified laws. However, Hindu women have the right to permanent maintenance from their husbands. A Muslim divorced woman can claim any property given specifically to her (Sourav, April 2015).

Bangladeshi laws of inheritance continue to be discriminatory against Muslim women based on religion namely The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act 1937. The Sharia law is not equal between male and female for ownership of land. According to Sharia law, a female is entitled to only of half of what a male receive from the paternal property. But in practice, the female rarely gets what she is legally entitled to get, due mainly to patriarchal family system. Hindu women do not inherit any land according to Hindu laws, which very often make their position in the family and society very peripheral and vulnerable. Still inheritance remains the single most opportunity for women to own land. Since almost all agricultural lands are on private hands, inheritance is the best means of women to own lands (Sourav, April 2015).

**8.1 Customary law and practices**

Customary law continues to govern access to the forest and use of forest products, particularly in areas where the local forest officials are inactive. Some principles of customary law, such as the right to occupy homestead land and to take some forest products for domestic use, have been sanctioned by legislation. State often views customary management of forest negatively, and formal laws leased on customary principles often remain unacknowledged(Oleynik, 2016).

With regard to customary rights and practices, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region which is the principal home of the country’s indigenous people, have a separate legal regime that blends customary and formal law. Principles of land administration codified in formal law are not applicable in the CHT region. Moreover, customary forest rights of indigenous people are enjoyed only to the extent that they do not conflict with existing law. In some instances, customary rights to resources have been formalized and recognized in practice, such as indigenous people’s rights to minor forest produce such as seeds and honey. Indeed, customary law enforced by traditional institutions govern areas of personal law and natural resource use, including land. Officials of government institutions maintain but rarely exercise concurrent jurisdiction (Oleynik, 2016).

**8.2 Land tenure rights and access to forest resources**

Despite legislative land reforms initiated since 1971, land distribution in Bangladesh is highly inequitable. Fifty two percent of the rural population, which accounts for almost 75% of the country’s population is landless or holds less than .5 acre of land (Oleynik, 2016).

Most countries have incorporated reforms in their legal frameworks to guarantee equal land tenure rights to men and women. However, customary laws still represent a challenge to women’s land ownership which is of particular concern in forest restoration and plantation settings, and of agro-forestry investments. Moreover, land ownership is related to socio-economic development and poverty alleviation (Marin and Kuriakose, 2017).

Several studies have documented that land rights empower women by improving their control over household income and bargaining power over resource allocation. It provided security in case of abandonment, divorce or death of husbands. Empowered women who also own land have increased participation in the community and institutions (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2008).

However, men remain the principal landowners in case of inadequate legal reforms and the pervasiveness of customary law which limit women’s land and tree ownership. It makes women dependent on men’s priorities and decisions making regarding land use and put restrictions on their livelihoods options and income opportunities. Women are often not allowed to plant trees or if they do, men determine the place where they will plant trees. On the contrary, research has shown that women do most of the work in the initial stages of tree plantation in farmlands and are solely responsible for the nursery activities (Kiptot, 2015).

Unfortunately, non-ownership of land titles and formal tenure limit women’s decision-making power over the trees planted and the use of the resources produced. Moreover, use of different parts of the tree and access to certain species is also gendered and in most of the cases, men have the complete authority over valuable products (Kiptot and Franzel, 2011) Women’s rights to forest and tree products tend to be restricted to products that are not profitable or have little commercial benefits. Generally, women’s use of forest resources tends to be of low-return while men control the production and commercialization of comparatively profitable forest resources, which may vary among communities (Marin and Kuriakose, 2017).

Usually, the products women have the right to use are fruits, nuts and vegetables, fuelwood, fodder, and manure. Women can process these yields and add value to them; for example, they can produce butter or sauce from the nuts and fruits (Kiptot, 2015). The products under men’s domain include charcoal, timber, poles, large branches and logs (Kiptot and Franzel, 2011). Also, men tend to be responsible for hunting, and collecting and producing honey (Marin and Kuriakose, 2017).

In Bangladesh, the Land Reforms Ordinance (LRO), 1984 has focused on women rights on *khas* land for the first time. In this Ordinance and in 1986 in a Government notification about *khas* land and non-agriculture land distribution indicated that if two acres of land is distributed to a landless family one acre should be given to the husband and one acre should be given to the wife. However, landless women are the most vulnerable group in case of distribution of khas land. Although proper distribution of *khas* land is the only means where the vulnerable women can get access to land, there are women who are struggling for years to establish their holding in the land that was allocated to them by the government for various social and political reasons (Sourav, April 2015).

In Bangladesh men's access and use of forest resources is prioritized over those of women leaving them in a more vulnerable situation. There is lack of information regarding gender dynamics around land tenure. Women's lack of access to land ownership limits their access to capital, as well as training and investment in improved processing and production techniques. Therefore women’s participation in value chains is usually limited to harvesting and small-scale retail trade within the villages surrounding the forests, while men dominate larger businesses and tend to engage in higher value chains beyond the forest areas.

**9. Conclusions**

Women and men are agents of change and their uniqueness and often differentiated perception, knowledge, skills, and experiences with regard to forest are central to sustainable development. Therefore, both men’s and women’s acquired skills and knowledge in forest use, forest conservation and management can add value to the efficiency and efficacy of REDD+ action.

The knowledge of local communities about forests is gender differentiated and deep rooted in tradition. Informed and meaningful involvement and participation of stakeholders, including women and men from indigenous groups and other forest-dependent communities are essential for forest management and governance. Effective engagement of stakeholders and taking their perspectives into account will provide them with the feeling of ownership in forest governance for longer economic, financial and social benefits. It will help to promote buy-in and sustainability in REDD+ processes. Therefore, ensuring the full and equitable participation of women and men within forest dependent communities, in making decisions about the rules that affects their lives, is crucial.

Bangladesh has signed numerous international instruments and made commitments in which gender equality has been recognized as a crucial cross-cutting issue namely International Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goals. The government is also a party to international instruments on climate, environment, forests which have also addressed gender equality namely Agenda 21, Convention on Biodiversity, Convention to Combat Desertification, UNFCCC and Cancun Agreement.

Although the Constitution of Bangladesh 1972 guarantees equality of men and women in its Article 27, still women continue to be deprived of their rights and dignity due to deep rooted gender unequal social norms and values in every sphere of life. There are national laws and policies related to forest conservation such as Forest Act, Social Forestry Rules, Private Forests Ordinance, Environment Policy, National Forest Policy and Forestry Sector Master Plan 1995-2015. The Social Forestry Rules include the participation of women as beneficiaries as well as members of the management committees while the Forest Policy highlighted community participation in forestry which included women.

In Bangladesh, the lack of proper land-use planning is a major governance issue leading to poor land management, which has resulted in forest loss and degradation. Moreover unplanned agricultural conversion, shrimp farming, and industrial encroachment in forest areas result in deforestation. Despite legislative land reforms initiated since 1971, land distribution in Bangladesh is highly inequitable. Fifty two percent of the rural population, which accounts for almost 75% of the country’s population is landless or holds less than .5 acre of land. Moreover, women are deprived of distribution of benefits and sharing, suffer discriminatory land tenure and thereby lack access to resources. In rural areas, women access land almost exclusively through relationships with male family members such as husband, father or brother.

The gendered dimensions of property rights are also complex that include differences between men and women’s access to and knowledge of the forest, and distinctions between tenurial ownership. Ownership of land and access to resources is determined by legal constructs including national, customary, statutory laws and practices. Their situation is further aggravated by discriminatory inheritance laws, cultural norms and values.

With regard to land tenure, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region of indigenous people, have a separate legal regime that blends customary and formal law. Principles of land administration codified in formal law are not applicable in the CHT region. Moreover, customary forest rights of indigenous people are enjoyed only to the extent that they do not conflict with existing law.

As illustrated by the findings in this report, there are many challenges that marginalized groups, especially women and indigenous communities still face around forests. These include lack of rights with regard to effective participation in the decision making process, forest use and land tenure. To overcome discrimination related to land access, ownership, control and decision-making, gender considerations need to be fully mainstreamed in REDD+ action. Gender inequalities prevailing around land and forests need to be addressed, so that women and men can both equitably participate in and benefit from REDD+, wherein they are equitably rewarded for their efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

The greatest challenges in the forests conservation is balancing between mitigation of drivers of deforestation, forest degradation and livelihood of forests dependent communities, marginalized groups, especially women. Benefits and risks depend on a number of factors related to national realities like how policies and measures are designed to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. At the grassroots level, in consultations and workshops to discuss on REDD+ PAMS held in Bangladesh, women were less represented although they are active in forest conservation. Being less in numbers, they were dominated by male members in group work and hardly could articulate their views and opinions. The outcomes of the meetings had very limited recommendations on gender issues related to deforestation and forest degradation.

Therefore there is the need for a gender-responsive and participatory approach throughout the REDD+ policy cycle to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of such initiatives. REDD+ action can help reduce poverty by improving the resource base and rights of marginalized groups, especially women, while at the same time delivering mitigation and biodiversity benefits. In the process of doing so, REDD+ could become a catalyst for progress on all relevant SDGs, including on poverty eradication, gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To ensure that REDD+ activities “do no harm” to people or the environment and rather enhance social and environmental benefits, safeguards should be addressed and respected. Care can be taken to ensure that all actions taken and funds spent are transparent, and enforcing a no-tolerance policy towards corruption. There should be women's active participation in the community and institutions to empower them to make decisions. Only then successful implementation of programmes will contribute in enhancing gender equality, reducing poverty and sustainable development by leaving no one behind.

**10. Policy recommendations**

Recommendations of Deliverable 2 for the **“Gender-responsive governance structures, land tenure, and safeguards for REDD+ in Bangladesh” Report** are being organized under the 3 time span headings: 1) Short term - 0 to 1 year; 2) Medium term - 2 to 3 years; and 3) Long term - 4 or more years. In addition to the above timeframe, responsible party, priority ratings, etc. are also identified. These recommendations are presented in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendations**  | **Applicable thematic area (e.g. governance, land tenure, and/ or safeguards**  | **Responsible party** | **Means of implementation**  | **Resource needs (e.g. financial, capacity, staff, etc.)** | **Priorities (L-Low; M-Medium; H-High)** |
| **Short Term (0 to 1 year)** |
| Recognize women's rights to forests and land resources - the roles they play as leaders, participants and beneficiaries at every stage of REDD+ policy and measures development process.  | Governance & land tenure | Forest Department | Sensitization training of staff |  | H |
| Acknowledge gender-differentiated needs, roles, experiences and knowledge of the forests to be valued equitably in the design and implementation of REDD+ action and components. | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department | Designing REDD+ activities |  | H |
| Create awareness and build capacity on gender issues among stakeholders on the need and benefits of gender-responsive REDD+ processes. | Governance | Forest Department& REDD+ and NGOs, CBOs | Gender responsive meetings, workshops, seminars with stakeholders |  | M |
| Establish evidence base of sex-disaggregated data to identify drivers of deforestation, as well as contributors to sustainable management of forests. | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department | Baseline, periodic assessments and monitoring |  | M |
| Promote progressively change of structural inequities that deny women and other marginalized groups such as indigenous communities(REDD+ safeguards can present critical entry points at the national level for this work). | Land tenure & safeguards | Forest Department & REDD+ | Periodic studies  |  |  |
| Medium Term (2 to 3 years) |
| Promote a human rights-based approach to sustainable development by UN-REDD partner institutions to address inequalities between women and men. | Governance & safeguards | Partner institutions | In all their activities & actions. |  | H |
| Ensure women have equal employment opportunities in new forestry practices, administration and management in REDD+  | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department | Creating employment opportunities for women, establishing quotas for women’s participation, building capacity of women to meaningfully participate in such efforts and structures |  |  H |
| Ensure REDD+ consultations, committees, platforms, taskforces, decision-making bodies, etc., equitably involve women, women’s groups and indigenous communities.  | Governance | Forest Department | Invite and ensure attendance as well as active participation of these groups .  |  | M |
| Develop REDD+ standards and safeguards with full, equitable and meaningful participation from women and men.  | Safeguards | Forest Department& REDD+ | Equitable and meaningful participation of both men and women in meetings. |  | H |
| Promote an institutional culture that supports gender equality and mainstreaming.  | Governance | Forest Department | Motivational and sensitization meetings organized in a gender responsive manner |  | M |
| Communicating potential benefits to women about their participation in REDD+ and develop gender-responsive and enforceable measures so that these are protected and delivered. | Safeguards  | Forest Department & REDD+ | Meetings organized in a gender responsive manner |  | M |
| Encourage accountability and transparency in governance structures for REDD+ and access to dem­onstrate benefits for the rural poor women. | Governance | Forest Department& REDD+  | Communication materials |  | M |
| Ensure tenurial security for women and promoting women’s property rights. | Land tenure | Forest Department, & REDD+  | Advocacy and capacity building among government staff involved in REDD+  |  | H |
| Develop gender-responsive planning and monitoring measures, including targets and indicators in reporting frameworks.  | Governance | Forest Department& REDD+  | Gender-responsive msonitoring and reporting |  | M |
| Conduct gender-responsive and gender-specific assessments which can help establish a gender baseline and identify areas for improvement in REDD+ policies and programmes. | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department& REDD+  | Assessment studies  |  | M |
| Use gender-responsive reporting, monitoring and budgeting in REDD+ planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department& REDD+  | Project reports |  | M |
| Long Term (4 or more years) |
| Integrate a gender approach in the allocation of incentives for REDD+, so that women and men are equitably rewarded for their efforts on REDD+.  | Safeguards | Forest Department& REDD+  | Advocacy & Project reports |  | H |
| Provide alternative and low cost cooking fuel for forest dependent communities by introducing biogas use and solar cooking stoves.  | Safeguards | Forest Department, REDD+ & partner organizations  | Distribute and provide training to forest dependent communities, with a focus on women |  | H |
| Document good practices and lessons learned for gender-responsive REDD+ actions.  | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department& REDD+  | Study reports on good practices |  | M |
| Share experiences of gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment in forestry sector among countries and regions as well as among stakeholder groups.  | Governance & safeguards | Forest Department& REDD+  | National & regional meetings.  |  | M |

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1. Data obtained from the website of Bangladesh’s Forestry Department, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)