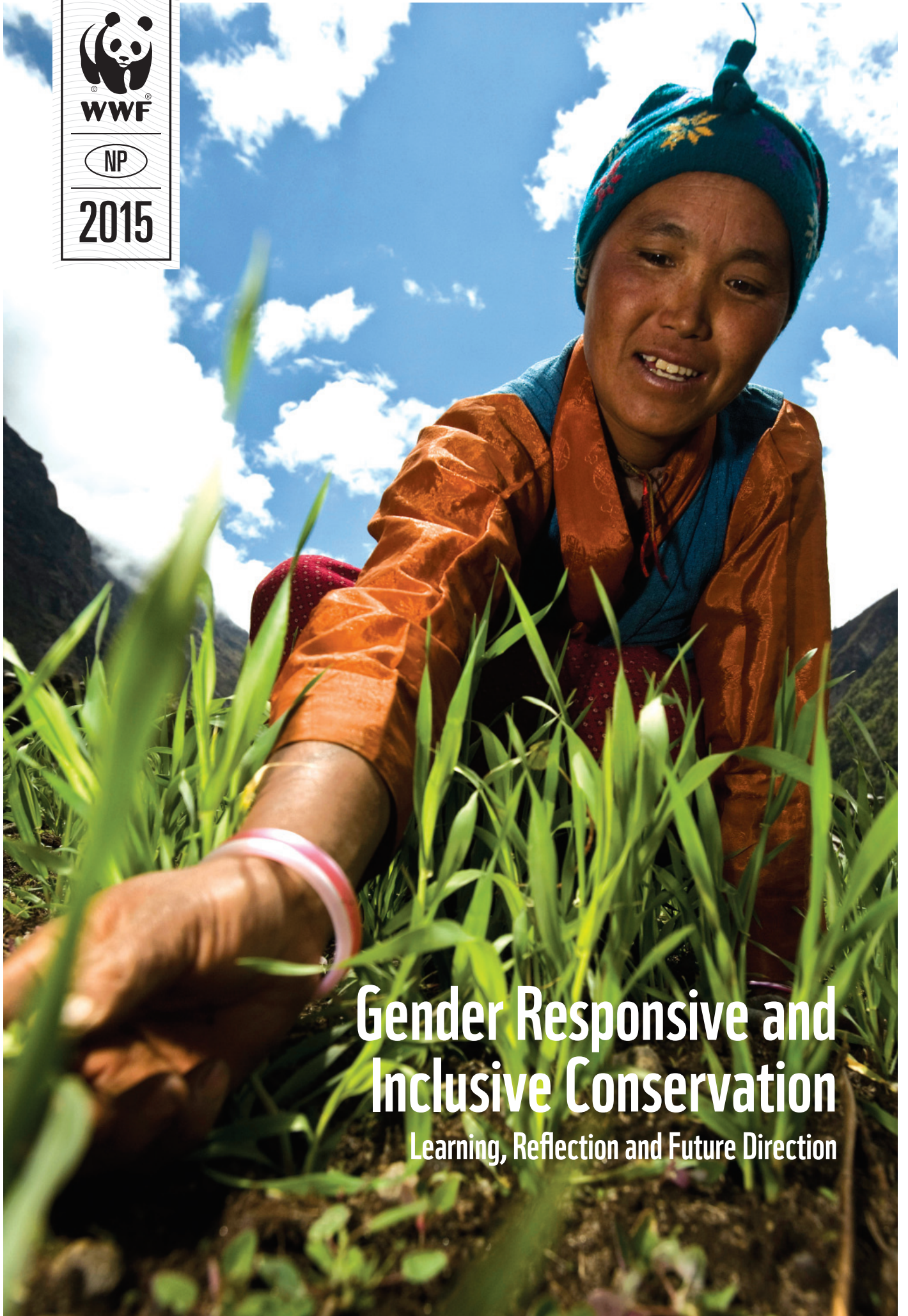




WWF

NP

2015



Gender Responsive and Inclusive Conservation

Learning, Reflection and Future Direction

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Front Cover Photograph: © Simon de Trey-White / WWF-UK

“A conservation and sustainable development strategy should consider whether it limits and narrows the role and relation between men and women and other groups, increases inequality, makes dependent communities more vulnerable or excludes them from benefits and opportunity derived from conservation. This is the main essence behind mainstreaming gender responsive and inclusive planning, budgeting and auditing in all stages of the program cycle.”



@ Nabin Baral/WWF Nepal/Hariyo Ban Program

Broom grass is a source of rural subsistence.

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FOREWORD

The role of women and marginalized communities residing in Nepal's remote high mountains and fringe areas of national parks and buffer zones are very crucial in safeguarding natural resources given that they are the ones living in the frontlines of conservation. These people on the other hand have limited livelihoods options which has made them more vulnerable from any changes in the quality and quantity of natural resource. The mainstreaming of Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles therefore becomes an imperative for any biodiversity conservation program that seeks to promote harmony between people and nature.

Over the years, WWF Nepal has taken meaningful steps in empowering women and marginalized communities to further nurture their stewardship in biodiversity conservation thereby ensuring its conservation programs promote the GESI agenda. A key focus has been on encouraging equitable access, benefits and control, and participatory decision making in sustainable management of natural resources together with nurturing entrepreneurship through preferential micro-credit schemes. Facilities such as girl stipend and child care centers, and the creation of women's groups have helped provide further opportunities for women in education and conservation engagement. These efforts of WWF Nepal have been designed to support and facilitate the GESI policies and directives of the government's Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. WWF Nepal has a dedicated team to effectively integrate and mainstream GESI issues in each stage of WWF's conservation program cycle right from designing the program to its implementation and audit. WWF Nepal understands that the GESI agenda cannot be taken forward by a single entity and therefore needs wider reflection, sharing and incorporation with partners, stakeholders, supporters, and donors in all conservation work. This document is a step and means in that direction.

I would like to express great thanks to the team from WWF Nepal, consortium partners of the Hariyo Ban Program, implementing partners and their representatives who provided valuable inputs while developing this document. I would also like to express my gratitude to our valuable partners and donors particularly the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Department of Forests, Ministry of Finance/Gender Responsive Budgeting Cell, Social Development for Conservation (SD4C) network and the Living Himalayas Initiative team for their technical inputs. I would also like to thank WWF UK, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland/WWF Finland and WWF US for their financial and technical support.

I believe this document will be a valuable reference for individuals and organizations working towards mainstreaming the GESI agenda in biodiversity conservation, and safeguarding social equality issues.



Anil Manandhar
Country Representative
WWF Nepal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This document is a historical accumulation of WWF's efforts in mainstreaming the issues of gender and social inclusion in conservation in order to enable more equitable use, access, control and decision over natural resource management. This publication is an outcome of learning and reflections with our implementing partners, frontline conservationists, community-based natural resource management institutions and civil society organizations.

I would like to thank the WWF Nepal team, District Forest Offices, National Park and Wildlife Reserve, Buffer Zone Management Council and Committees, Community Forest Coordination Committees, users groups, Integrated Water Resource Management Committees, and all the participants of the GESI and Gender Responsive Budgeting and Planning trainings and consultations.

I would also like to acknowledge the feedback and technical support received from Ms. Kanchan Lama, Gender Expert, Ms. Sabitra Dhakal, GESI Coordinator, Hariyo Ban Program/WWF Nepal, Ms. Sikshya Adhikari Rana, GESI Officer, NTNC and Ms. Poonam Panta, GESI Officer, FECOFUN. I would also acknowledge the valuable support received during field consultation from TAL-PABZ, TAL-CBRP, SHL-LNPBZ, IRBM and KCAP. I would thank to Ms. Mamata Pokhrel for editing and proof reading this report.

I am also grateful for the critical and technical inputs from the regional and global network, WWF UK, WWF Finland, WWF International, WWF India, WWF Indonesia, and WWF Pakistan.

I consider this a breathing document whose contents will gather more strength and comprehension over time as we build on future learnings in mainstreaming GESI principles in conservation.



Tara Prasad Gnyawali
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WWF Nepal

ACRONYMS

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project	IWRMC	Integrated Water Resource Management Committee
ADRA	Adventist Development Relief and Action		
BZCFUG	Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group	KCA	Kangchenjunga Conservation Area
BZMC	Buffer Zone Management Council	LFP	Livelihoods and Forestry Program
BZUG/C	Buffer Zone User Group/Committee	LGCM	Livelihoods and Good Governance Change Monitoring
CAMC	Conservation Area Management Council		
CAUC/G	Conservation Area User Committee/Group	LHI	Living Himalayas Initiative
CBRP	Corridor and Bottleneck Restoration Program	LNP	Langtang National Park
		LRPs	Local Resource Persons
CFCC	Community Forest Coordination Committee	M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
CFD	Community Forestry Development	MoF	Ministry of Finance
CFUG	Community Forest User Group	MoFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
CIHR	Conservation Initiative for Human Rights	NMCP	Northern Mountain Conservation Project
CLAC	Community Learning and Action Center	NTNC	National Trust for Nature Conservation
CNP	Chitwan National Park	PABZ	Protected Area and Buffer Zone
CRF	Compensation Relief Fund	PHE	Population Health and Environment
CSO	Civil Society Organization	PPA	Partnership Program Agreement
DFID	Department for International Development	PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
DoF	Department of Forests	RePoP	Reaching the Poorest of the Poor
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal	SAGUN	Strengthening Actions on Governance for Utilization of Natural Resource
FPAN	Family Planning Association Nepal		
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SD4C/AP	Social Development for Conservation/Asia Pacific
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion		
GLOF	Glacial Lake Outburst Flood	SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
GoN	Government of Nepal	SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
GPF	Global Program Framework	TAL	Terai Arc Landscape
GPSE	Gender Poverty and Social Equity	SHL	Sacred Himalayan Landscape
GRB/P	Gender Responsive Budgeting and Planning	UNDP	United Nations Development Program
GSF	Girl Scholarship Fund	WiCAS	Women in Conservation and Social Transformation
HBP	Hariyo Ban Program		
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict	WTLCP	Western Terai Landscape Complex Project
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Program	WWF	World Wildlife Fund
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development		
IGA	Income Generation Activities		
IRBM	Integrated River Basin Management		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) agenda into the conservation planning process is a priority for WWF Nepal so as to ensure that conservation efforts narrow the gender inequality and gender and social based discrimination in the practices of resource management groups, committees, institutions and projects in the landscape.

WWF Nepal's efforts on GESI mainstreaming have focused on diverse areas. Early efforts emphasized social development activities to encourage people's participation in conservation efforts and focused on their immediate needs, rather than adopting GESI as a strategic approach in conservation programming. Several capacity development, livelihoods, and empowerment activities were conducted in the field, but were occasionally reflected in strategic outcomes. In early stages, some assessments, research and analysis were conducted but they were more project driven, rather than as part of the program and project strategic plans. Eventually, these efforts began taking shape from a GESI perspective together with organizational reflections on learnings and strengths.

Strategic thinking and planning on the GESI agenda began during the strategic planning for the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), and the development of WWF Nepal's strategic plan, where the target groups and activities were clearly outlined. Similarly, TAL, and the Sacred Himalayan Landscape (SHL) strategic plan, including Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) management plan and sustainable livelihoods strategy emphasized on the data and results disaggregated by gender and social attributes. However, these activities focused more on reflective responses to GESI issues rather than addressing the relation and role of men and women to society, institutions and power.

WWF Nepal's focus on GESI issues have been reflected in its Strategic Plan 2012-2016 and the Sustainable Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy, 2011. The implementation of these strategies had clearly defined GESI results, targets, and strategies, including their linkages with conservation outcomes. During this period, the awareness on GESI amongst Community Based Organizations (CBOs), partner institutions and the local community also increased significantly through improved understanding of gender role and relations, and increased capacity to seek rights, roles, accountability and participation, access information and benefits, and take part in decision-making on issues that affected them. These efforts helped increase equality and equity, and made CBOs and community members more accountable together with making program planning and development, and monitoring and evaluation more aligned towards GESI principles. This was further augmented when WWF Nepal introduced Livelihoods and Good Governance Change Monitoring, and Change Monitoring that prioritized gender and social inclusion, making these components of the conservation and development process visible by monitoring change annually and periodically. These two change and outcome monitoring approaches have defined indicators, a format for narration, guidelines and linkages with the WWF Standard of Conservation Program Cycle as well as the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) strategy for gender and social inclusion mainstreaming. Supportive approaches like the WWF Global Gender Policy Statement 2011, MoFSC Forest Policy 2015, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy 2007, WWF Global Social Policies 2008, Hariyo Ban GESI Strategy 2013, Ministry of Finance Directive on Gender Responsive and Inclusive Budget Auditing and Planning 2012, and Community Forestry Development Guidelines 2008 are important in making the WWF conservation program more responsive, inclusive, transparent and accountable.

The involvement of WWF Nepal's human resources, including field staff, in the implementation and monitoring of gender and social inclusion agenda in conservation impacts our understanding of strategic approaches, role and accountability, and existing practices, making conservation and development efforts more inclusive and responsive. Capacity building, human resource development, guideline development and comparative analysis are in their early stages, but their scope for implementation and impact looks sound. A critical need is a common understanding of gender inclusive, responsive planning process among all program and project management teams. This should not be the sole business of a focal team, but should be established as an integral component of the conservation program cycle planning process. Recent analyses and assessments show a critical gap in common understanding and prioritization among program staff, including senior staff and field project staff. An exception is the Hariyo Ban program, where a majority of the program staff and consortium partners' staff practice GESI approaches, and leave a significant impact on community forest management. The program is a good example of achieving tangible GESI outcomes in conservation programs, through enhanced staff understanding, and incorporating these approaches while planning, budgeting and defining impact indicators.

As a partner to the government, WWF is committed towards the effective and efficient implementation of the Government's GESI Strategy 2007 and Gender Responsive and Inclusive Auditing Directive 2012, as well as WWF's own Global Gender and Social Policy Statement 2011. WWF Nepal has been facilitating and engaging on GESI issues through the following key interventions: (i) Implementation and orientation of the Community Forestry Development Guideline 2008; (ii) Engagement with MoFSC Working Committee on Gender, Poverty and Social Equity (GPSE); (iii) Social Development Action Plan for Asia Pacific Region; (iv) Regional Gender Position Mapping; (v) Gender Gap Study Analysis 2013; (vi) Training of Trainers on Gender and Social Inclusion Gender Responsive and Inclusive Budgeting and Auditing Directive; (vii) Gender Livelihoods and Conservation Linkage Case Study Analysis; and (viii) Livelihoods and Good Governance Change Monitoring surveys. These efforts aim to enhance resource persons' and respective committees' understanding of linkages between conservation, poverty disparity, social and gender inequality issues, and build their capacity to reflect on these issues.

1. CONTEXT

In Nepal, a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural country rich in natural resources, the dominant livelihoods strategy has been to pursue a diversity of approaches. The society is made up of communities in diverse development stages such as hunting gathering, tribal stages, feudal and semi-feudal agrarian stages with terrace farming, agrarian stages, and developed societies with modern life styles. A blanket development and conservation approach can neither effectively reach out to all communities, societies and geographical areas, nor provide equal and inclusive benefits to all.

Recently, development strategies and policies have been introduced to ensure all parts of society benefit in fair and inclusive ways. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), prepared during the Government's Tenth Plan identified social exclusion and marginalization as major elements of poverty. Several national policies, guidelines, documents, strategies, as well as donor-supported projects and programs are becoming more gender inclusive and responsive.

Gender equality, social exclusion, and marginalization issues have received significance in conservation, natural resource management, and particularly in forest management after the introduction of community forestry, which introduced inclusion and governance as major components to be addressed while preparing forest operation plans. The Community Forest Development guideline (CFD: 2008) and Forest Sector Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2007 both made a significant impact in raising awareness of all stakeholders, including the Government of Nepal (GoN). Most resource issues are related to women, marginal farmers, minorities, and the poor who rely on forests for subsistence, fetching wood, water, food, fodder, feed, grazing, timber and medicinal assets to sustain their life. Their ownership, access, use, control and decision over the resources they are dependent on has been an issue of discussion during policy and strategy formulation.

To implement conservation programs, WWF Nepal is working with two major government agencies: the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and the Department of Forests (DoF), with the inclusion of other departments and ministries as required.

The national context, current practices, and reports and facts from diverse sources indicate that gender and social inequality remained a major challenge to the achievement of WWF conservation targets in situations where a large majority of people were living in and around the protected areas, buffer zones, community and national forests, watershed areas, river banks or streams. Unless we build a common understanding on gender equality, social inclusion, and its linkages with conservation threats, drivers and challenges, and mainstream gender equality and social inclusion issues in all stages of planning process, our national and global conservation targets will remain out of our reach.

To achieve the GESI goal through effective implementation of national and global policies and strategies and efficient mainstreaming of gender responsive and inclusive budget planning, we need to work closely with our partners. WWF aims to empower and build the capacity of its grassroots service providers (e.g. CFCC, BZUC, CAMC, IWRMC, CFUG, Management Council), helping them develop an in-depth understanding of the gender and poverty dimensions of conservation, their inter linkages, and the policies and strategies that prioritize marginalized people's ownership, use, control, and decision-making over resources. Service providers at the community level and government regulatory entities (e.g. Central, Regional and District Office, Local Offices etc.) need to enhance their understanding of GESI, and gender responsive and inclusive budget planning practices. To achieve this, WWF needs to articulate its own vision, and intervention strategies to ensure GESI goals are achieved.

WATER SOURCES

Water and wetland resources are a source of livelihoods subsistence particularly for river-dependent communities such as *Majhi*, *Bote*, *Tharu* and landless people.





2. OBJECTIVE

The major objective of this document is to reflect on WWF's past initiatives in integrating gender equality and social inclusion principles in planning and implementation, to extract lessons that can provide guidance in moving towards more gender responsive and inclusive conservation efforts.

Specific objectives were as follows:

- To review WWF Nepal's experience with integrating and mainstreaming GESI in landscape conservation, and extract lessons.
- To conduct an evidence-based conservation livelihoods and gender linkage analysis and articulate recommendations for the future.
- To assess the status of GESI Strategy 2007, GRB directive 2012 and CFD guideline 2008 within the context of WWF Nepal conservation planning process.
- To establish a GESI/GRB baseline for organizational reference.
- To develop a comprehensive learning and reflection document for a broader audience.

Box 1 : Tools and Techniques

- Desk Review
- Focus Group Discussion
- Key Informant Interview
- Semi Structured Interview
- Case Study Analysis
- Participant Observation/Transect walk
- Survey
- Seasonality/Mobility Trend Analysis

3. METHODOLOGY

Diverse methodological tools and techniques have been used to assess the effectiveness of GESI policies, directives and strategies integrated in WWF conservation planning cycles over the years. The analysis framework approaches and techniques applied include the Gender Analysis Framework, Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, Knowledge Management and Participatory Learning Assessment, and questionnaire survey. Qualitative tools for gathering historical information and reflections on changes included PRA/PLA, Participant Observation, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, Semi Structured Interviews, Pile Sorting and Preference Ranking, Trend and Mobility and Seasonality Mapping, Case Study and Desktop Review study analysis. Most of the quantitative data come from early surveys such as the LGCM Survey 2010, 2013 and 2014, Socioeconomic Survey 2007 and 2011, Sustainable Village Promotion Rapid Survey 2014, and Change Monitoring Assessment Summary 2014.

The qualitative data and related perception analysis come from direct interactions with respondents i.e. management and users' committee members, representatives and participants of the GESI and GRB training and case study consultations.

Similarly, focus group discussions and key informant interviews provided detailed information and the inside story on gender mobility, work drudgery and quality, seasonal resource variation, and their linkage with economic engagement. Vulnerability trend (shock, stress and trend) analysis, and resource holder mapping were also used to generate qualitative information during the consultations. Transects walks and direct observation were used to generate primary qualitative data. To establish linkages between the conservation and livelihoods interventions, outcomes and GESI, a conceptual framework focused on linkages was developed.

Early efforts on GESI mainstreaming in planning and interventions have been documented through review of early literature including reports, case studies, evaluations and periodic assessments. Some project documents were reviewed, compared with field visit reports, and later verified with key informants during the field visits, through the "early recall" method. Some of the information generated was further triangulated with members of other groups in the same place. Some historical evidence was also extracted through "storytelling" tools which was very effective in providing information on the sequence of events and process chains. Milestone events such as elections or disasters were also used to date the information collected. Information for the GESI baseline was collected from different periodic surveys (e.g. LGCM, Change Monitoring etc.) whereas the baseline for GESI responsive planning and budgeting have been generated through the GoN/MoFSC GESI and GRB analysis framework. The GRB/ GESI analyses were project-specific whereas the case studies were either issue-specific or site-specific, covering various ecological zones.

A status analysis of gender budget planning was conducted on four different project sites based on their implementation modality. This substantial exercise was undertaken with support from respective projects. The analysis was performed on two levels. First, the project support and allocation status was determined, and community based resource management committees selected at least two sites from each project, as samples for the current baseline. The gender responsive budget audit and GESI Planning audit were conducted using Pentagon Analysis Model (also known as spider model).

This document has gone through various stages, with successive applications of diverse tools and techniques for review, learning and reflection. A list of the tools and techniques applied is given in Box #1. Though the document set out to outline all WWF-Nepal GESI efforts so far, it has morphed into a valuable learning reference for national and global audiences.

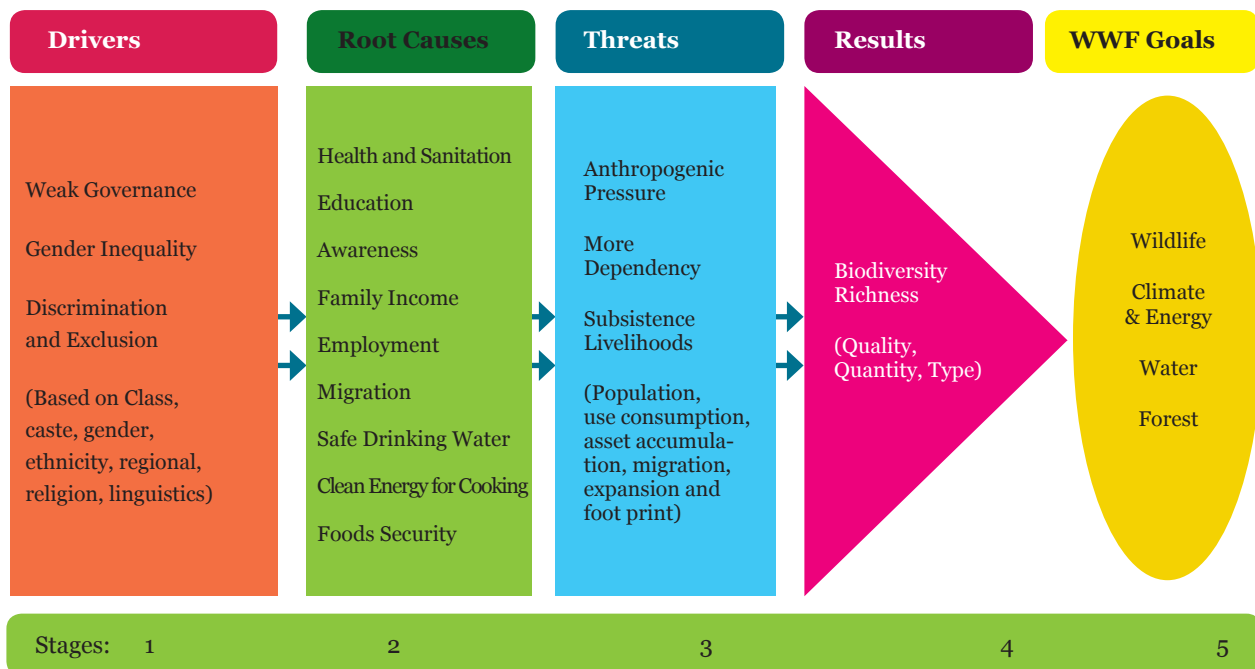
3.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

WWF's GESI mainstreaming, as well as its gender responsive budget, audit and planning processes have contributed to GESI sensitive conservation and livelihoods in diverse ways. Most of the activities and programs have made lasting contributions to gender empowerment, enhancing economic and productive roles for women. Gender responsive project management and leadership building has significantly changed women's roles, decreased their workload, increased their influence, negotiating capacity, and resource management capacity. This has resulted in inclusive benefit sharing, representation, decision, and control by marginalized groups, and made significant contributions to ensuring their livelihoods security (e.g. foods, water and energy).

Small and improved infrastructure and services installed as part of conservation initiatives resulted in positive impact on women's work, quality of life, role in society and meaningful participation. Similarly, technical innovation and innovative approaches to water conservation and agriculture and livestock management contributed to the economic empowerment of women, allowing them to move from domestic, reproductive and productive roles, to leadership roles within NRM groups and civil society.

To understand the changes brought about by the new conservation and livelihoods approach, strategies, interventions and activities, they have been linked to threats and drivers identified and defined in various project documents, outlined in the conceptual framework for linkage analysis given in figure # 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (gender, livelihoods and conservation linkages)



The conceptual framework (see figure # 1) outlines the drivers such as weak resource governance, inequality and discrimination based on gender, class, caste, ethnicity, remoteness and exclusion. Presence of these drivers in service delivery limits resource dependent communities, women and marginalized farmers' access, use, control and decision over improved services in areas such as health, drinking water, natural resources, and land use. Lack of these services eventually generates threats to biodiversity, particularly habitat, species and forest due to unsustainable harvesting, use, and consumption. Lack of control and ownership of resources, combined with high ambitions of asset accumulation to cope with future uncertainty generates stress, shocks and vulnerability that further weakened these groups' survival resilience.

Such unsustainable and unexpected anthropogenic pressures cause changes in the quality, quantity and type of existing biodiversity resources, including scarcity of drinking water, land productivity, wetlands, and grazing spaces. Eventually these affect the habitat, ecosystem and fauna in terms of food, prey and predator, adversely affecting sustainable living in harmony with nature. WWF and its conservation and development experts should understand this important linkage which works to gradually accelerate threats to biodiversity. Our conservation effort should focus on understanding these linkages while planning, designing, developing and evaluating programs, as they are the root causes of conservation threats, and drivers of poverty, environment degradation with severe biodiversity loss, posing a challenge to human lives.

The conceptual framework presented outlines the linkages of prime WWF conservation goals¹ with their expected results, root causes, hindrances and the drivers that accelerate undesirable conditions, with correlated impact on outcomes related to gender equality and social inclusion, as well as gender responsive planning, budgeting, and auditing. The framework indicates that existing conservation and livelihoods programs needed to give more attention to GESI inclusion during planning and design. Current WWF interventions and strategies have capitalized on opportunities from forest, freshwater and wetlands conservation, technical innovation in agriculture, clean energy, water harvesting and irrigation, eco-tourism, improved livestock management, and green enterprises. All these interventions generated opportunities in areas such as seasonal employment, economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, leadership and negotiation, access to technology, information and market competence, contribution to foods and culture, and value addition to local product.

Interventions related to forests, wetlands and freshwater conservation, clean energy, and climate change have contributed to diversifying workloads, building coping and resilience capacity, increasing food security and land productivity, and building leadership and negotiation capabilities. Other cross cutting activities in areas such as livelihoods, good governance, policy, and communication have increased the recognition of women and disadvantaged communities' contribution to conservation, reaching a wider audience with messages on the linkages between gender, conservation and livelihoods.

¹ WWF Nepal Strategic Plan 2012-2016, WWF Nepal Kathmandu (Major conservation goals are Species conservation, Forest Conservation, Fresh water conservation and Climate change and energy respectively)

3.2 NATURE OF DATA

Most of the primary qualitative data were obtained directly from consultations, training, assessment and monitoring conducted during field visits. Secondary data were collected from desk review, records of project achievements, and learning from diverse sources. The quantitative data for the period under study were obtained from surveys. A thorough literature and document review, including consultation with resource persons from partners were held on policies, guidelines and strategies, bringing more clarity on the concept and vision behind the relevance of gender equality and social inclusion to conservation.

For the gender responsive budget analysis, raw data were sourced directly from respective project records for the last fiscal year (2013-2014) which was taken as the base year. The data was further triangulated and verified with the finance team responsible for each project's budget, and during interactions with user committees who received project grants during that fiscal year. Mixed techniques have been used to arrive at the conclusions, which provide WWF and its partners with the way forward for further implementation and mainstreaming of GESI to achieve visible and tangible outcomes. The gender responsive budget analysis, gender equality and social inclusion auditing methodology and matrix are based on the Ministry of Finance (MoF) Directive 2012 to the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC).

3.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

This document is divided into six major chapters: Introduction, Methodology and Tools, Desk Review and Learning, Outcomes, and Recommendations. The Introduction covers the contextual analysis of national and regional scenarios. The objective behind documentation of learning, methodological tools, and conceptual framework for linkage analysis are included under the Methodology chapter. Review of GESI issues in national, global and regional conservation strategies, policies, and programs, as mandated by the Government of Nepal have been described under this heading, beginning with the policy formulated by GoN, with implementation mandated to MoFSC. The chapter is followed by a review of WWF global, regional and national strategies, conservation approaches, and guidelines.

The last chapter concludes with a focus on outcomes achieved, with case studies focused on the linkages between gender, conservation and livelihoods. The chapter is followed by conclusions and concrete recommendations for further learning and design of interventions. The chapter also details the baseline status of conservation budget analysis from a GESI/GRB perspective.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

One of the strong attributes of this document is that it reflects learning from programs and projects with a wide variety of themes and implementation modalities such as protected area and buffer zone management, conservation area management and integrated river basin management that generated substantial learning. The document also reflects on the early history of strategic, thematic and project specific learning, along with partnership and peer review to outline how WWF built on its early practices to transform its work by incorporating GESI issues.

This learning and reflection document has been developed based on early records, documentation of practices, reports, surveys, case studies, and field interactions. While organizational portfolios and work landscapes are diverse, our consultations were site-specific. This, combined with limited institutional memory and records mean that this document might not be able to reflect all of the evidence, as desired. However, through individual consultations with key informants, direct observation, and field visits by experts have been carried out in order to make the evidence incorporated as comprehensive and reliable as possible.

We have introduced the concept of a three 'R' (rights, responsibility and results) stage process made up of *Learning, Action and Reflection* phases to account for WWF Nepal's two decades of work on integrated conservation and development efforts. This framework might have some limitations in looking through a gender lens, as indicators do not talk about gender issues as separate topics, but as integral parts of activities and outcomes.

5. FOUNDATION

5.1 REVIEW, LEARNING AND REFLECTION

WWF's early work on GESI, including gender responsive budgeting and planning has an unusual history. In the early days, the focus was on species conservation, at the expense of integrated conservation and development approaches that preferred building community infrastructure, improving community basic services, and addressing women and development. The process of institutional engagement with GESI issues can be broken down into three major parts as incubation and conceptualization period, transformation into action, and reflection and learning to influence the institutional buy-in process. All three processes are reviewed in detail in this document.

5.2 GESI IN NATIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

5.2.1. Forest Sector GESI Strategy² (2007)

The Government of Nepal has mandated gender and social inclusion through its three year interim plan comprised of three major pillars related to gender equality and social inclusion: social development, targeted program and good governance, and human rights. Based on these three pillars, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) has developed its vision, (See Box # 2) strategy and outcomes with a focus on two broad based objectives: a) improve the condition of forest based resources through sustainable and productive forest management and b) ensure participation and equitable access of the poor and excluded to forest management, forest resources and services with a commitment to be a more gender inclusive and socially responsive organization and ensure equitable benefit sharing, increase and ensure access to forest resource by all stakeholders, identifying major areas for changes³ (See Box # 3).

Looking at its vision, strategy, expected outcomes, expected change areas and broad based objectives, including detailed operational guidelines for these intervention areas, WWF Nepal's conservation activities are closer to achieving most of the expected outcomes and results (defined in GoN/MoFSC GESI Strategy) that set the minimum standard of conservation expectations. Through its partnership with MoFSC, other sectoral ministries, and thematic and special programs such as Global Environment Facility (GEF), WWF is committed to ensuring GESI sensitive and responsive program development, budget planning, and implementation at all levels. In some key areas particularly Protected Areas and Buffer Zone (PABZ) management, existing policies and regulations contradicted the Forest Sector Policy and GESI strategy, requiring policy analysis, revision and reformulation,. WWF Nepal has commissioned a study to find out

Box 2 : GESI Mainstreaming

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that women and men have equal access to and control over resources development, benefits and decision-making at all stages of development process, projects, program or policy”

² Forest Sector Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Singh Durbar, June 2007

³ Ibid page 2

the achievements and gaps in GESI mainstreaming including early mainstreaming, with reference to PABZ management in two sites: Chitwan National Park and its buffer-zone (part of TAL) and Langtang National Park and its buffer-zone (part of SHL) have been taken as pilot sites. The study aimed to make concrete recommendations to address the issues in existing conservation and sustainable development practices to make them more gender and socially inclusive, responsive and sensitive.

WWF Nepal also complies with the Government of Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (GoN/MoFSC) GESI strategy and the Gender Responsive Budget Auditing and Planning Directive (Ministry of Finance; 2012). Therefore, the WWF team felt no need for a separate strategy or directive for PABZ and other natural resources management, and worked to facilitate implementation of existing strategies, policies, and directives, including Community Forestry Development Guidelines (CFD: 2008) and reflect as much of these as possible into our conservation program and processes. Our implementation of the Government's GESI strategy and GRB directive is aimed at achieving its outcomes, and has increased emphasis on enhancing forest products and related services to ensure participation, equity, distribution, governance, representation, and decision-making that secures the basic livelihoods of those dependent on forest resources. The GESI strategy document further focuses on basic standards for the participation and representation of women, excluded and the poor, responsive program and budgeting, leveraging services from other sectors, monitoring, and scaling up impact. It also addresses these groups' food security and productivity, healthy forest ecosystem, employment, economic engagement and abolition of all forms of discrimination in the management of forests and related resources. The GRB directive emphasized minimum standards in budget auditing and the planning process, including budget allocation and action plan development. These approaches ensured sustainable development and conservation opportunities benefit target communities by securing budget allocations for target activities at the outset of the planning process. WWF Nepal's current efforts aim to support all stages of the planning cycle to help conservation and sustainable development interventions become more inclusive and responsive. Recent efforts are also focused on implementing and integrating the recommendations of the gender gap analysis study conducted two years ago,⁴ with a particular focus on protected area and buffer zone management processes. The study recommendations emphasized making conservation and livelihoods strategies more gender responsive, socially inclusive and sensitive by mainstreaming GESI principles, elements and processes at all stages of buffer zone management plans.

Box 3 : Major Change Areas

1. GESI policy, rules and regulations and directives
2. Equitable governance and gender and social inclusion responsive institutional development
3. GESI sensitive budget, program and monitoring
4. Equitable access to resources, decisions and benefits

Source: Forest Sector GESI Strategy 2007, GoN/MoFSC, Nepal

⁴ Gender Gap Study Analysis, 2013, WWF Nepal Kathmandu

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The grasslands are managed by the Community Co-ordination Forest Committee (CFCC). They provide wildlife with suitable habitat and are also a source of livelihoods for rural communities.





5.2.2 Forest Sector Policy-2015

Recently, GoN/MoFSC has published a new Forest Policy-2071⁵ that ensures forest governance focuses explicitly on women, poor, excluded, indigenous and forest dependent marginalized communities. The forest policy emphasizes restructuring of institutions, public and civil society organizations involved in forest resource management. Further, it stresses the significance of GESI inclusion and promotion in all organizations, institutions and programs; technical resource and technology promotion in forest management; capacity building of all human resources involved in forest resource management; information management, transparency and modernization, equipping with required resources and enhancement, foreign aid mobilization, management efficiency and transparency maintenance.

The current policy was formulated in order to focus on forest resources as a source of employment and income. The policy also aimed to promote good governance in management, more inclusive and responsive forest management, and strengthening of participatory forest management system, sustainable use of forest resources, particularly those that support subsistence, balance environment sustainability and ensure good governance principles are fully mainstreamed in forest resource management. The policy emphasized forest resources as a major source for livelihoods and income generation for a majority of poor and marginalized communities and people accounting for almost 70% of total fuel consumption, 40% of total livestock feed and other revenue to the government and local institutions such as CFUGs, and generating direct and indirect employment opportunities.⁶

According to the policy, 2.2 million households have benefited from forest resources through their participation in 18,000 community forest users groups (CFUG). Similarly, about 75,000 thousand households under the national poverty line have been directly benefiting from their membership in 7,000 leasehold forest management user groups (LFUG), and 0.6 million households in the Terai, have been benefiting from collaborative forest management practices. About 6.27 million people have directly benefited from buffer-zone forest resource management.⁷

All these factors are evidence of the extent to which the poor as well as other communities and families depend on forests and related resources. More inclusive and responsive planning and budgeting that incorporate gender, social and geographical perspectives are required to ensure marginalized and discriminated groups benefit from ecological services. WWF Nepal has been supporting this agenda through the landscapes conservation programs that cover most protected areas, community forests and buffer-zones, including conserved forest areas where more than 3000 forest and water resource management groups are working for environmental sustainability and livelihoods security.

Though its primary conservation business emphasizes species, forests, fresh water and climate change, WWF can't be isolated from this recent government priority for gender and social inclusion. It is time to focus on people who are dependent on, and affected from conservation to ensure more inclusive, responsive conservation planning processes, ensure social and gender equality and equity, and benefit sharing. WWF understands these as comprising of three major areas: social equity, environment sustainability, and economic efficiency.

⁵ GoN/MoFSC Forest Policy (2071-BS), Peg no 1, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Singha Durbar Kathmandu, Nepal

⁶ GoN/MoFSC Forest Policy (2071-BS), Peg no 1, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Singha Durbar Kathmandu, Nepal

⁷ Ibid peg 2

Box 4 : MoFSC Vision on GESI and Expected Outcomes

Vision: "Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation is a gender and social equity sensitive and socially inclusive organization practicing good forest governance to ensure equitable access to, benefits from, and decision making power over forest resources of all stakeholders."

Expected Outcomes

- Favorable policy environment that is GESI sensitive/responsive conservation
- Resource, services and benefits made available to the women, poor and excluded in a transparent and accountable manner
- GESI responsive program budget and monitoring system institutionalized in all service delivery in conservation
- Rights to equitable access and utilization ensured resources, services and benefits

Source: MoFSC, GESI Strategy, 2007

The recent forest policy addressed, in a clear and detailed manner, those people who actually benefit from forests and natural resources. However, the policy does not include gender and social inequality as prime challenges for forest and natural resource governance and management, choosing to address forest governance in generic language, even when the GESI agenda has been clearly identified in GoN/MoFSC's CFD guideline (2008). WWF commissioned its own research that revealed the status of inequality and the GESI agenda in natural resource management regimes.⁸ The forest policy emphasized green jobs, social inclusion and justice, institutions and users groups' management efficiency, employment and income generation activities, good governance, equal access to benefit sharing, land productivity as well as building more climate resilience approaches for deprived and affected communities, in order to benefit these groups and ensure their integration in planning processes.

5.2.3 Buffer Zone Management Guideline⁹-1999

The GESI agenda in buffer zone management has been reflected implicitly and in an integrated way in its guidelines, rules and regulations. Though, the modality of buffer zone management is comparatively different from community forest management that complies with basic norms and regulations defined in National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (2052). Given their prime focus on protecting endangered species and their critical habitats, and controlling and diversifying anthropogenic pressure, Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUC/G) s have the liberty to design appropriate strategic responses to meet their goals, with participation of affected groups, and representation complying with existing rules and regulations. Provisions for inclusion indicated in the guideline have been defined vaguely as "area of common benefits". However, there are legal provisions to allocate 30% of the budget for community development, and 20% for income generation and skill development programs¹¹. If these provisions are implemented effectively, with target groups who deserve these allocations well defined, this can also bring about real changes. The guidelines also stress collective decision-making and focus on diverse opinions, including a requirement for group sanction for further budget break down in the annual work plan to contribute to meeting five year targets.

⁸ Ibid Peg 2

⁹ GoN/MoFSC Buffer Zone Management Guideline 1999, Approved by MoFSC on August 1999, Kathmandu, Nepal

¹⁰ GoN/MoFSC BZ management Guideline 1999, peg 3, arrangement-4 clause (d)

¹¹ Ibid p3, User group work-plan section 1 clause (b) and (c)

This is an indication of efforts to make the buffer zone management process more transparent and responsive to budget justice concerns. Administratively the warden was tasked with influencing user's groups so they become more inclusive, with female proportional representation. This makes it look like the process is controlled by the park administration rather than run with a community forest management modality although there are provisions for the selection of community development and income generation activities, with a focus on micro level interventions and activities¹². The inclusion of development activities in users' groups' work plans¹³ has taken the focus away from priorities on gender equality and inclusion of women. The guidelines emphasized community development and income generation that deserved about 50% of the total budget. However, in practice, most of it has been used for infrastructure and management improvement through trainings and exposure visits, instead of being spent on programs that tangibly benefit the vulnerable and deprived¹⁴. It is not only a question of benefits for women, but about ensuring that processes are transparent, participatory, able to deliver services efficiently, have internalized the importance of gender roles in buffer zone management. It is also important that the leadership understands the linkages between gender, livelihoods and PABZ management. Hence, the question of who is responsible for processes, who has control and decision-making power, and who can influence budget allocation and planning processes is important. It is unlikely that current decision-makers, including Park Administration Senior Officials have a deep understanding of gender equality and social inclusion issues and their linkage with sustainable conservation and development needs. Are they able to predict the consequences of exclusion and/or context of local and national development needs and priorities with meaningful participation of women, men and wildlife affected communities at all levels of decision-making. This gap in understanding of issues can be observed in reports that focus on the number of women and men who participated in meetings and signed the minutes. A precondition for the formation user committees is representation of at least three female members. However, whether these members have influence, negotiation and decision-making skills, and capacity to make substantive contributions to the user group's work plan and budget allocation, or are just token representatives, is a real question¹⁵. The buffer zone management guideline and working committee member election and representation process is more focused on equity and proportional opportunity, rather than equality and affirmative reservation. There is a lack of women to compete, participate meaningfully, and negotiate with the national park or council body to ensure the budget is responsive to gender needs. The number of affirmative reservations for women or their representation is not the issue. The real issue is whether the decision-making entities have substantial understanding of women and men's role in buffer zone management, whether women have the capacity to influence and negotiate for gender needs, and whether their voices are heard during work plan development, budget allocation and fiscal management. The amount allocated in the BZMC budget for developing negotiation skills, budget advocacy and improving leadership quality, vis-à-vis other topics is important. The guideline's assumption that women and men start out from equal positions, and can compete for the same post in BZUC is not completely fair, as shown by the recent gender gap analysis study.

Lack of meaningful representation of women and excluded groups in decision-making affected the prioritization process that could have made the work plan more responsive and inclusive. If equality measures rather than equity measures were taken there would

¹² Ibid peg 13, clause 16

¹³ Ibid p section 5, sub section 7 and clause 11

¹⁴ GoN/MoFSC BZ Guideline 1999, BZ guideline, p 23 clause 8)

¹⁵ GoN/MoFSC BZ Guideline 1999, BZ guideline, p 23 clause 8)

Box 5 : MoFSC/GPSE Indicators

Primary Level Indicators:

- Percentage of HHs of poor and excluded groups
- Percentage of women members in executive committee
- Percentage of poor and excluded (including women) in executive committee
- Mean percentage of women in executive committee
- Mean percentage of women in executive committee
- Percentage of forestry related groups comprise with at least one women in key position and one women in other executive position
- Percentage of poor, excluded and women in employment opportunity as staff

Advance Level indicators

- Poor and excluded sensitive policy and strategy
- Poor and excluded sensitive indicators in M & E system in organization
- Provision of GESI responsive budget and budgeting process
- Provision for involving poor and excluded groups in policy and strategy formulation process
- Percentage of poor and excluded expressing that executive committee decision
- Percentage of budget allocated and spent for GESI mainstreaming and livelihoods activities

Source: MoFSC, GESI Strategy, 2007

be more inclusive decisions over available resources, strong control on budget leakage, and less diversion to other priorities and administrative purposes. The current trend of last-minute decisions to ensure the budget is spent within the fiscal deadline to avoid budget freezing could also be avoided. The gender gap analysis study has strongly advocated enhancing the capability of women and men to increase their meaningful representation, participation in decision making, and understanding of gender relations and priorities in order to ensure an inclusive, responsive buffer zone planning and budgeting process that can sustainably safeguard critical habitats, while benefiting women, men and marginal groups equally. The study further recommended economic engagement, entrepreneurship development and building a common consensus on women and men's roles to ensure environmental sustainability and basic livelihoods security (food, water and energy). The study also indicated that lack of understanding of gender relations in the leadership affects the whole planning process, and produces dissatisfactory results. The study concluded that women and men's economic engagement, with meaningful leadership, responsive and inclusive budgeting and planning would be concrete interventions that could be introduced by WWF and its partners who might play a crucial role in buffer zone management.

5.2.4 WWF engagement in GoN/MoFSC GESI strategy development

In 2006, an effort was made under the leadership of MoFSC to create an independent unit to lead on gender and poverty issues. The Gender, Poverty and Social Equity¹⁶ (GPSE) working group was formed. As part of the group, WWF provided technical and financial support, and was involved in preparing the groundwork for MoFSC's Forestry Sector Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy¹⁷ (See Box 5). In 2008, a turning point emerged when the Community Forestry Development Guideline¹⁸ (CFD Guideline 2008) was published. The guideline was a milestone since it was more pro-poor, gender responsive and socially inclusive than earlier documents. Its format and indicators were more sensitive to gender and poverty concerns, and had the potential for real impact if its core essence was reflected in the community forest management process. From the benefit sharing and governance points of view, the guideline format was closer to ensuring benefits and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, particularly resource deprived, excluded and forest dependent communities, as well as forest users who lived at a distance.. There was debate on whether the guidelines could be implemented on the ground, given many CFUGs' existing capacity for administration and implementation. The guidelines were complex, with several matrices and indicators, requiring enhanced technical, financial and administrative support for effective implementation. Community forests supported by international organizations and projects were more project objective driven, instead of focusing on instituting a system of community forest management that could deliver sustainable results and strengthen community forest governance. Due to their complex matrix and monitoring formats that required quantitative and consistent professional monitoring, the guidelines remained on paper as a fundraising asset for the project, and a reference for other projects and non-governmental actors. During implementation of these guidelines, WWF Nepal team received critical constructive feedback with technical help from Federations of Community Forest User Nepal (FECOFUN) district chapters; and District Forest Offices in TAL-DoF program areas¹⁹. The lessons learned from guidelines implementation was that reaching out to the poor, deprived and excluded communities was more challenging than envisioned. The TAL-DoF field office team, with support from FECOFUN and District Forest Office, developed a simplified approach named Livelihoods and Goods Governance Change Monitoring (LGCM) without losing the basic essence defined in the Government's CFD Guidelines 2008. The LGCM approach comprised of a diverse range of outcome indicators. The GESI and Good Governance component is one of the five major impact areas of change, and is also interlinked with WWF livelihoods and governance outcomes. Support was provided to organize orientation sessions on MoFSC's CFD guideline 2008 to enable stakeholder understanding of the linkage among gender and social equality, access, use, power dynamics, and empowerment with context of LGCM approach. The LGCM survey 2010 and 2013 were conducted to generate the baseline for GESI and Governance in WWF work in TAL-CBRP²⁰. During the orientation, it was learnt that very few CFUG practiced, maintained or and reflected the CFD guidelines, or followed its matrix and format though it was mandatory. Most CFUGs had received frequent orientation on the guidelines but this was not translated to reflection and learning from the guidelines. It was also learnt that the prescribed format and matrix in the guidelines are very complex, requiring highly technical skills that CFUGs rarely possessed. The LGCM survey narrowed down on this and generated a range of results, guidelines, summary sheets orientation guidelines and datasets. This survey showed that the internal dimensions of asset holding and

¹⁶ Gender, Poverty and Social Equity Working Groups, MoFSC/DoF, 2006, Kathmandu, Nepal

¹⁷ Forest Sector Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy, 2007, MoFSC/DoF, Kathmandu, Nepal

¹⁸ Community Forestry Development Guideline, 2008, MoFSC/DoF, Community Forestry Division, Nepal

¹⁹ LGCM Survey and Training, a lesson learning report 2010, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu

²⁰ LGCM Survey and Training, a lesson learning report 2010, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu

role change in institutions which provide support to women and marginal households could be triangulated with the economic empowerment and equality context. The GESI and governance matrices included were adapted from MoFSC GESI strategy results, GEPSE indicators from the CFD guidelines, and the methodology of collection, format, techniques and human resources followed the TAL-DoF working modality. This effort did not lose the basic essence of GESI, governance and objective of CFD guidelines for pro-poor and GESI oriented monitoring framework. (See box 5)

5.3 WWF GLOBAL/REGIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

5.3.1 Global Program Framework

The Global Program Framework²¹ (GPF) is a strategic document that supports building a conservation vision according to thematic priorities. The document supports with guidance for monitoring and evaluation against global targets defined in spaces, species, footprints, and other priorities. The document defines three major goals: the priority was on place related, species related targets under the biodiversity goal, while the footprint goal emphasized sustainable consumption, market demand and distribution. The document also guides WWF member countries to choose investment areas that support reduction of its footprint that affect species, habitats and human populations. The member country should build on the document's priorities, strategic directions and policies, particularly in species, critical ecosystems and their major threats, and under rooted drivers and determinants. Each threat and driver (total 22 drivers under two different categories) defined in the document are broad and need further analysis within one's own country context (See box 6). Under these drivers, poverty, inequality, consumption choices, national policies and strategies, corruption are some specific areas, but they need to be clearly defined and further linked with gender equality and social inclusion. For example, agriculture has been linked to extensive habitat loss, especially in key crops such as soy, palm, oil, cocoa, rice and bio-fuels. This problem needs further specific and contextual analysis that includes the role of women and small marginal farmers, their subsistence economy, their decision-making power and access to available services, land tenure and security, productive use of land that empowers small farmers

Box 6 : Global Program Framework: Priority Threats and drivers

Agriculture (with conversion causing extensive habitat loss, specially by key crops)

Forestry

Natural system modification- specially altered hydrologic regimes causes by dams and water management and use

Fisheries

Wildlife trade and whaling

Land use changes- specially grazing and ranching

Infrastructure development –specially housing and commercial developments relating to tourism

Invasive species (and other problematic species and genes)

Transportation and communication and Infrastructure -specially roads

Aquacultures

Source: WWF Global Program Framework-2008

²¹ WWF Global Program Framework 2008-2020, July 2008, WWF International, Switzerland

**AS THERE ARE
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THAT ACCELERATE
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EXCLUSION
PERSPECTIVE.**

and women, leading to food security. The underlying root causes of the driver need to be further analyzed and contextualized. For example, within the context of agriculture expansion (as a driver), we need to analyze the causes behind expansion. These could include land tenure ship, unequal distribution of land, low land quality and productivity, control by small farmers and women, or lack of land use policy. All these need to be further understood from a gender and social inclusion perspective.

With these issues in the picture, the various dimensions behind agriculture being a driver of threats to the critical ecosystem as defined in the Global Program Framework. However, the guidance document is yet to clearly identified social and gender inequality, exclusion and marginalization as indirect causes that drive broader threats. However, human health, healthy ecosystems and livelihoods are addressed²² and defined as challenges to achieving the GPF goal, and could be the entry point for work on social and gender equality to ensure people make a sustainable living. The livelihoods outcomes are defined in the monitoring framework, under regional and local livelihoods²³ with two major outcomes clearly defined as: a) income level of respective country and b) income level of WWF program affected communities. This could be another entry point for WWF Nepal where existing country specific strategy could own, develop, and incorporate more pro-poor, gender and social inclusive and responsive conservation approaches that build on current programs that increase incomes to narrow the poverty disparity, gender and social exclusion in natural resource management in Nepal. The GPF matrix welcomed development of conservation strategies that are more gender and social inclusive and responsive, as well as pro-poor, contributing to income goals, with the underlying linkages defined in GPF drivers. The global priority drivers are human-related direct and indirect threats in nature that act as root causes for biodiversity loss and increase human ecological and carbon footprints. The broad category of threats includes changes in land use, resource extraction and energy production, emission, modification and movement of organizations and natural processes. Similarly, the broad category of drivers includes demography, economic process (such as consumption, production, markets and trade), the role and participation of women and marginal small farmers and their involvement in decision making processes, their access to improved services, all of which add significant value and determine whether interventions make their living more sustainable or more vulnerable. That's why, while analyzing the threats, drivers and root causes, and their underlying features and causes, the social and gender issues should not be isolated and segregated. All of these should either be a part of each direct threat or driver, or should be reflected as a separate key driver that helps sustain ecological services. This is particularly important in Nepal and other countries that are mostly developing, farming dominant, and natural resource dependent, with a subsistence economy, and traditional gender roles that have affected socio-cultural and religious practices and understanding. A majority of Nepal's rural families' economy and livelihoods are crucially affected by the prevalent social, gender, cultural and asset holding based discrimination, and WWF should not ignore or under profile such issues in its broader conservation framework.

In conclusion, the WWF Global Program Framework at this time, looks almost gender neutral. It is yet to recognizes social and gender equality as direct root causes and drivers of broader conservation threats. More efforts is required in conservation program development to build socially and gender responsive and inclusive conservation planning and budgeting processes. Internalization of these important, cutting edge issues, is completely lacking. However, WWF Nepal has realized this agenda as crucial for environmental sustainability and sustainable development. Our

²² Ibid Peg 2

²³ Ibid peg 28, outline monitoring plan for GPF result monitoring

on-the-ground learning in Nepal shows that only gender and socially inclusive and responsive conservation approaches, where women and disadvantaged communities have diversified opportunities, ensure equality and equity among communities dependent on natural resources.

5.3.2. Social Development for Conservation/ Asia Pacific Region (SD4C/AP)

Social Development for Conservation (SD4C) is a global and regional hub for WWF. The hub conducts social and poverty policy review, and provides recommendations, policy formulation and strategic feedback to the conservation science committee, and promotes learning and sharing in respective country and network initiatives. The global team is comprised of three regional apex teams; the Latin America team is currently based in and led by Chile, Africa led by Mozambique and Asia Pacific Region led by Indonesia. The team has common agreed global and regional specific agenda that emphasize social, economic and contextual issues that threaten biodiversity and limit policy support, building equality and sustainability in livelihoods program and policy in order to contribute to broader conservation policy and strategy designed and administered by WWF. Being a core member of SD4C global team and a founder member of SD4C for Asia Pacific regional team, WWF Nepal has been involved in developing several social and poverty policies. Among them, the Gender Policy Statement 2008, Social Poverty Policy 2007, Conservation Initiative for Human Rights (CIHR) 2013 (draft) are some of the significant policies and strategies that ensure social inclusion and responsive regional program development. In 2012, a significant task on Gender and Social Policy Mapping in the region was completed, consolidated, and shared, reflecting the status of gender and social policy and its effectiveness, inclusion in conservation initiatives that bring equality and ensure fair and inclusive benefit sharing. Similarly, SD4C has recently produced a Social Development Action Plan (2014) that is aimed at implementation through all member countries, from a broader perspective. The plan has defined results in diverse areas including food security, freshwater, illegal trade and wildlife crime, indigenous people's rights and gender equality and social inclusion, and women leadership in resource management. The agenda behind developing the social development action plan is capacity building and expertise development for enhancing regional leadership, mirroring the voices on poverty, livelihoods security and gender equity and equality, tapping human resources expertise from Asia-Pacific and global networks, and integrating these issues into biodiversity conservation strategies. An effective regional learning and sharing hub with a defined role, it is expected to have shared responsibility for making conservation strategy more gender friendly, inclusive and responsive, contribute to efficient mainstreaming of conservation and social development goals, and make evidence-based recommendations to conservation science committees. The regional hub has its own Terms of Reference (ToR) and portfolio of activities, with each country bearing the responsibility for reflection, contextualization and sharing, thus contributing to developing the country's human resource expertise on social policy, innovative approaches, and regional leadership capacity to transform WWF into a leading gender and social and pro-poor inclusive and responsive conservation organization working in biodiversity conservation in the region. The SD4C is the only regional and global hub where social, gender, poverty, indigenous and human rights issues are intensely discussed, country and issues specific learning is shared, expert human resources are built, and solutions are explored in order to ensure integration of more social, gender and pro-poor conservation approaches, policies and strategies that contribute to sustainable safeguarding of critical biodiversity, space and species that have been defined in the Global Program Framework (GPF: 2008-2020) for a living planet.

5.3.3. Living Himalayas Initiative

The Living Himalayas Initiative (LHI) focuses on the negative impact of climate

change on ecosystems, including adverse impact on rural livelihoods of the people living in the region. Food and water security and rights of indigenous community to access, use and control to build climate resilience are significant. These strategies look comparatively more inclusive and responsive in terms of gender and social equality and livelihoods security in the region. The strategic document emphasizes human need and vulnerability, linking them with critical ecosystems, where the wildlife and human beings are interdependent and both are negatively impacted by change in climate, and both need to be addressed simultaneously. This is a significant reflection of livelihood issues. The document also focuses on agriculture productivity, food security, and water issues as part of a regional perspective (Nepal, Bhutan and India) with a transformational strategy development that guides and aims to ensure the effective management and conservation of natural and cultural heritage of the Himalayan region, raising global awareness through the combined actions of the three governments involved. A large majority of the global population living in this region is directly dependent on the Himalayas for their survival, and might be in vulnerable due to rapid melting of water towers, reduced freshwater flows in the rivers, and increased risk of major disaster due to Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). The strategy document looks gender and social inclusion neutral, and emphasizes adopting two major strategies under this initiative, as given in Box # 7. There is broader scope for building a more inclusive and responsive sustainable livelihoods strategy that contributes to effective implementation with appropriate interventions and development of a subsidiary strategy. For example, gender and social inclusion could contribute and add value to the strategy by ensuring equality in regional and local leadership, and reflecting affected community voices at the regional and global levels. Under the LHI, two major strategies are significant in providing space for social and gender inclusion under livelihoods security. They are: a) Broaden and upscale local stewardship of forest, grasslands and wetlands for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods, and b) Promote and facilitate regional management strategies and empower communities and institutions address to human-wildlife conflict and illegal wildlife trade²⁴.

Under this, WWF Nepal, including its major projects such as Hariyo Ban, have been addressing livelihoods, building a more inclusive and responsive strategy, and mainstreaming it in four major conservation themes: species, freshwater, climate change and forests in its country specified strategy plan, as well as the three major results of the Hariyo Ban program: Sustainable Landscape, Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation. Gender and governance, and livelihoods are highlighted as cross cutting issues that contribute significantly to achieving LHI results and effectively implementing LHI transformational strategy. Some issue-specific approaches and strategies (micro projects) such as RePoP –reaching out to the poorest

Box 7 : Threats and challenges relating to social issues in the Living Himalayas

Habitat loss/conversion (Forest encroachment, loss)
Habitat loss/degradation, unregulated tourism, unsustainable resource extraction, over grazing, succession of grasslands, invasive species
Habitat loss/fragmentation: Oil and gas extraction, large infrastructure development.
Species Loss: retaliatory killings, poaching trade
Environmental Flow, Alternation, Hydropower development, climate change
Climate change: Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)

Source: Living Himalayas Initiative Strategy, 2008

²⁴ Living Himalayas Initiative, Strategy Document, 2008, WWF

of the poor, Women in Conservation and Social Transformation (WiCAS), sustainable village promotion, micro finance and cooperatives, Population Health and Environment (PHE), Decent Work and Healthy Environment (DWHE), and Community Learning and Action Center (CLAC) are all significant activities which are more inclusive and responsive to gender, social and economic equality and the participation of all groups. These are the staples in terms of the broader inclusion agenda in the region. Other significant areas for further intervention include: Indigenous community issues in India, Nepal and Bhutan and their equitable ownership, usage rights, access and control over resources; ensuring benefits from payment of environmental services accrue to upward to downward communities, particularly in water and food security issues; regional women leadership, case studies, learning and sharing; and building governance capacity of country staff, and civil society. A regional peer review of social and livelihoods interventions was conducted in 2008, and provided learning and sharing on these issues, with impetus for further work, but gender issues were left behind to an extent. However, the regional review meeting produced a WWF definition for livelihoods is more inclusive, responsive and reflective, addressing equitable and fair access to, and benefits from natural resource management. (See Box 7)

5.3.4. WWF Global Gender Policy Statement (2011)

After establishment of the Global Social Development for Conservation network in 2007, WWF Nepal actively participated in the formulation, development and revision of various social, poverty and gender policies. During its engagement with the social policy network, WWF developed its Gender Policy Statement 2011 (See Box 8), which was reviewed rigorously by the core team and reflected learning from the ground. At a series of meetings at the global and regional level, lessons learned and evidence from member countries were discussed to finalize the policy draft before submission to the coordination committee for ratification. WWF Nepal has been accountable and responsible for effective implementation and reflection of GoN/MoFSC GESI strategy. As the country program office of WWF, it was also committed to incorporating the WWF Global Gender Policy into its conservation program cycle, tailored to the local context, and country policy environment.

In related meetings, seminars and forum, WWF Nepal has regularly shared its work on addressing GESI issues in biodiversity conservation. These include: integration of gender specific indicators in strategic plans, orientation and capacity building to project mobilizers, documentation of lessons learned, inter-linkage analysis and policy review within the MoFSC context. Existing intervention strategies have been reviewed from WWF and MoFSC gender policy perspectives, and document how WWF initiatives contributed to gender, livelihoods and conservation impacts; and how they contributed to increasing women and men's role in conservation, and their influence on policy.

Box 8 : WWF Gender Policy Statement

The objective of this policy statement is to ensure that WWF's conservation policies program and activities benefit women and men equally and contribute to gender equity as part of WWF's broader commitment to strengthen the social dimensions of its projects programs and policy work. It describes the rationale for gender mainstreaming in the context of WWF mission, biodiversity and foot print goals and outlines WWF commitment to integrate a gender perspective in our programmatic and operational structures and procedures

Source: Gender Policy Statement, WWF © May 2011

5.4 WWF NEPAL STRATEGY AND PROGRAM

5.4.1. The beginning (1993-2003)

WWF is committed to bringing equality in communities dependent on nature through a standardized process oriented and issues based analysis at all stages of the conservation program cycle. After establishing its physical presence in Nepal in 1993, it has integrated various women and poor related development and conservation interventions and plans through an Integrated Conservation and Development Program (ICDP) approach. Most of the activities were focused on overall development of forest users groups, mothers groups, youth clubs, conservation area committees, buffer-zone management committees, women skill development and related areas. The weakness of this approach was that it focused on income generating skills within natural resource management groups rather than the relationship between women and men, their socio-culturally defined roles in conservation that eventually became bottlenecks within our conservation efforts. The overall control of development activities, even those targeted for women and disadvantaged groups, was confined to a few leaders and their management committee members, dominated by elites and men instead of the target groups. Similarly, local revenue and institutional income from buffer zones and CFUGs were mostly used for physical infrastructure development, daily administration expenses, office management, training, exposure visits, and monitoring. Excluded groups could not hold them accountable due to their limited understanding of the conservation agenda's priorities, and the exclusionary nature of decision-making and control.

The turning point of women empowerment and engagement and their leadership in conservation was institutionally reflected after the introduction of Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project (KCAP: 1998)²⁵ and Northern Mountain Conservation Project (NMCP: 1996). The stakeholder consultation meeting on scaling the impact for both projects during 2005²⁶ and 2008²⁷, showed that changes in mother group's mobility and roles brought about by the projects were significant milestones in women's participation in the conservation process, leading to institutional sustainability, women's empowerment, and leadership. In Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA), mother's groups were initially formed and mobilized, with limited support from WWF, to enhance their leadership, safeguard conserved biodiversity, and diversify pressure on resources by building alternatives, including management capacity on micro finance saving/credit activities. Mothers' groups were managed surprisingly well. They not only capitalized their saving seed money significantly, but led the whole conservation and development processes at the ground level, and built capability to negotiate with user committees and council bodies, building their leadership confidence. For example, Satyalung mothers' group of KCA started with a seed capital of NRS 65,000 (US\$ 722.2), which they increased by more than five times to NRS 375,000/- (US\$ 4166.6). In the process, they induced multiple micro enterprises and income generating opportunities, supported seasonal economic engagement. Within six years of work²⁸, they received the Abraham Award from WWF for their noteworthy performance. Similarly, in Gurjakhani VDC of NMCP, a mothers' group received NRS 30,000 (US\$ 333) as start-up seed capital in 1999. Within nine years, they had increased it more than thirteen times to NRS 400,000 (US\$ 4444), while accelerating support for community development, leadership, micro hydropower, bee keeping, village road trail, guest house construction, cultural clubs, women's handicrafts, and preserving cultural and religious antiques. All of this was possible due to the strong foundation of being led

²⁵ Mid-term evaluation of Kangchenjunga Gender and Development Project, by SAMANTA for WWF Nepal, 2001

²⁶ Field visit report on Mother group and social mobilization, 2005, KCA, WWF Nepal

²⁷ Field visit report on Mother group and social mobilization, 2008, NMCP, Gurjakhani, WWF Nepal

²⁸ Field visit report on mother group and social mobilization, 2005, KCA, WWF Nepal

IF WOMEN'S
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AND HELPS SUSTAIN
ECOLOGICAL
SERVICES.

and managed by mother groups, reflecting their commitment and deep understanding of the value of biodiversity conservation where they live and depend on. During the insurgency, abductions and force donations demanded by insurgents were challenges. However, these mother groups neither stopped their activities, nor lost any resources to insurgent groups as levy. All state machinery and formal financial and local governance institutions were either coercively depleted by insurgents or their infrastructure destroyed, no local governing entity or civil society was present on the ground to assure communities. However, the mothers' groups never lost their will, commitment, or passion. This proved that if women are given leadership and management roles, they do not only sustainably conserve the biodiversity but safeguard the achievements. Surprisingly, none of the mothers' group members have any formal leadership training, gender orientation, or formal degree. WWF recognized their strength and started to make them central to conservation and development efforts in the region.

Early learning from Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP: 1986) and its historical contribution to gender issues were a strong reflection of early WWF involvement in co-management of community owned conservation area (e.g. Annapurna Conservation Area Project, 1986; Manaslu Conservation Area Project: 1998). Building on this early learning, the role of women and marginal communities in conservation were reflected more strategically and mainstreamed later in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, 1998 and Northern Mountain Conservation Project 1994²⁹. The major learning was that if women and their efforts are legally, institutionally, economically and socio-politically recognized, it generates multiple positive impacts, and helps sustain ecological services. Women's roles should not only be seen in terms of representation and participation, as they had demonstrated leadership capacity to influence, negotiate, and manage capably, so the best way would be to build a shared responsibility. The project invested on capacity building for project management, and institutional and legal recognition for groups. At the same time, it also invested in education, literacy, girl scholarship fund, child care center, clean energy technologies, infrastructure services, and mobilization of mother groups, conservation area user committees, and forest user groups and associated councils. Another factor behind enhanced women's leadership is their meaningful engagement, and adoption of democratic processes and principles within the group, ensuring their representation in almost all CBOs and project frameworks (e.g. Mother Groups to CAUC, and CAUC to CAMC). This inclusiveness of their institutional framework, set up during project design, has made them one of the best examples of a responsive institution.. As a result, these efforts have not only enhanced livelihoods and institutional services but also built and delivered strong women's leadership and representation. Evidence for this can be found in their receiving a series of conservation awards, funds leveraged from other programs in that area, representation in academia and institutions, recognition as citizen scientists and green entrepreneurs. Involvement of women and deprived communities in conservation areas added value through financial sustainability, education enhancement, local leadership, legal empowerment, access to improved basic livelihoods services, leveraging ecological services, and sustained biodiversity richness, without losing natural capital bases or losing confidence even during the insurgency and post reconciliation periods.

A study commissioned in 2001 for the mid-term evaluation of KCA on gender and development ³⁰ revealed that KCA conservation efforts seemed gender and socially responsive and inclusive. These efforts started by focusing on empowering local women through training and capacity building, balance in recruiting human resources, supporting mothers' groups with institutionalization and start-up capital, ensuring their

²⁹ Based on the discussion with Conservation Program Director, and Project Field Manager-LNP, WWF

³⁰ Mid-term evaluation of Kangchenjunga Gender and Development Project (2001), WWF Nepal

education and participation in the management of non-formal education and literacy classes with endowment and matching funds, as well as supporting their dependent girl children with stipend to continue their education. Similarly, promotion of income generation activities aimed at their economic empowerment. Seasonal employment was generated by providing skills and leveraging matching grants in kitchen gardening, off farm skills such as handicraft and entrepreneurship, and commercial nursery establishment. Efforts were also made to increase access to improved health, sanitation and nutrition care. The project later supported the communities with clean energy, basic infrastructure services, and sustainable tourism that contributed to their economic and socio-political empowerment, and transformed their role from domestic to productive and community managing.

TRANSFORMATION INTO STRATEGIC ACTION

5.4.2. GESI in Strategic Actions (2004-2011)

During the development of the Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy³¹ (2005) for WWF Nepal, the GESI agenda was reflected in lessons learning to an extent. It was the first time that WWF Nepal team involved in designing livelihoods strategy and interventions reflected on making them more inclusive and responsive, with clear logical linkage between GESI issues and livelihoods conservation outcomes. However, gender relations and issues got overlooked and diluted again with the focus on biodiversity threats, and by defining them as issues, rather than an opportunity to bring social harmony to nature and sustain equality in practice. During the design phase of the landscape project in 2001, the gender equality and social inclusion agenda was considered as part of an integral strategy to tackle biodiversity threats. It was defined as an underlying root cause that generated challenges to achieving broader conservation outcomes, among them were socio-cultural and political exclusion that deprived communities from access, use and control over resources, disempowered them, and excluded them from benefits, building poverty disparity among the landscape resource dependent³². During this period, the WWF UK team, in their PPA support, gave special attention to mainstreaming gender equality and equity issues, making conservation efforts more gender responsive and socially inclusive. In 2004, the PPA program team supported making the program's log frame more gender smart and responsive. The targets and results in reports were dominated by conservation priority and outcomes, with gender issues taken as "business as usual," and not central to threats to biodiversity. No specific indicators at the results level had been outlined. Neither the project document nor the reporting formats were required to include gender and social inclusion indicators. It was never reviewed, analyzed and reflected on from a gender relation perspective, focusing only on conservation achievements. Similarly, these issues were not highly prioritized during the WWF strategic plan³³ development, (WWF Strategic Plan 2001-2006) though several activities implemented on the ground directly contributed to women's empowerment, gender role transformation, sexual, reproductive and environmental health, leadership quality enhancement, social advocacy and inclusive representation in NRM led CBOs. The major shortcoming is in establishing linkages, and reflecting these results in each stage of reporting and documentation. The WWF Strategic Plan (2001-2006) focused on conservation education, where women's literacy, education and participation in productive work are preferred, but are defined as interventions to address drivers of conservation threats, rather than as gender indicators and targets.

³¹ Sustainable Livelihoods, a Sustainable Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy 2005, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu.

³² TAL Strategic Plan (2004-2014), MoFSC, Kathmandu, Nepal

³³ WWF Nepal Strategic Plan 2001-2006, WWF Kathmandu, Nepal

**GESI IS
AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR LONG TERM
INVESTMENT
TOWARDS
SUSTAINABLE
ECOLOGICAL
SERVICES.**

5.4.3. GESI in Sustainable Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy (2011)

Gender and Social Inclusion issues were discussed during the Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy development. The Livelihoods Strategic Document 2011 focused the agenda on linkages between GESI issues and conservation and livelihoods outcomes. GESI issues are defined as the root causes that increase the challenges to meeting broader conservation results and sustaining social harmony. The document identified that most of the indicators of conservation threats and livelihoods have linkages correlated with GESI and governance interventions. During the strategy development period, WWF Global Gender Policy³⁴ was also ratified and endorsed, which WWF Nepal incorporated into its strategic plan and interventions. WWF Global Gender Policy Statement-2011 (See box 8) emphasizes equitable and fair sharing of resources; programs and projects need to incorporate WWF global commitment on its conservation and sustainable development activities, into its operational structures. The statement is a result of learning from WWF early practices, and peer sharing, and is obviously has limitations on its priorities, but does emphasize that gender equality and inclusion issues should be reflected through broader thematic conservation outcomes. WWF Nepal has now focused on gender and social inclusion issues linked with broader conservation and livelihoods goals. The project, its implementers, partners, human resources and beneficiary representatives have begun thinking in more inclusive and responsive ways that narrow the inequality between men and women, limit the vulnerability, recognize the gender and social dimensions to conservation and sustaining ecological services and achieved both results simultaneously. To ensure sustainable consumption and conservation practices in an equitable and fair way, WWF also focused on efficient use and value for its limited resource investment on cross cutting agenda without compromising the minimum requirements of natural capital base³⁵. However, there is still scope for further research on linkages between poverty and the environment, and correlations between conservation and livelihoods activities to explore possibilities of incorporating gender equality and social inclusion. WWF should focus research, learning and reflection on these areas so that innovative strategies, policies and interventions can be designed in inclusive, responsive and result oriented ways.

When learning from our experience on GESI mainstreaming, instead of defining social and exclusion agenda as causes, WWF should take the opportunity to see how conservation efforts narrow gender and social inequality, poverty disparity, empower women and marginal farmers economically, politically and socially and improve overall wellbeing. WWF should think of GESI issues as an opportunity for long term investment towards sustainable ecological services. For example, in water-shed management, our focus learning area might be: "How watershed conservation contributed to increasing land productivity and water security, reducing workloads, and improving sanitation behavior" rather than increasing investment on drinking water supply to meet the community's wish list. These efforts also add value to conservation work, focusing on responsive and inclusive interventions, and improving the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of watershed management strategies. Such learning and documentation also draw the attention of policy makers, development practitioners and partners to how conservation based livelihoods strategies have been generating multiple benefits by bringing changes in women's and men's roles, increasing access to economic opportunity, reducing workloads and transforming women's roles from domestic caring to productive and leadership roles. An intervention for watershed catchment conservation that included improving its degraded water stream and renovating ponds in different sites was observed to see how it contributed to bringing changes in traditional cropping patterns, seasonal economic engagement, equal control on domestic income, household food security/sufficiency, availability of nutritious food, improved sanitation and health behaviors, household cleanliness, land productivity, shared responsibility in agriculture, and supply of raw material for energy and biogas, food, fodder

³⁴ Sustainable Livelihoods, Sustainable Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy 2011, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu

³⁵ WWF's Livelihoods and Social Works Peer Review Team, 2008, Kathmandu, Nepal

and feed. Eventually we looked at the broader impact on environmental sustainability, social equity and building the communities' economic efficiency and management. This evidence has been collected through in-depth consultations with users group, integrated water resource management groups, community forest and buffer zone management groups, mother and women saving and credit groups during our field visits,^{36 37}. This conservation strategy has generated seasonal economic engagement of their idle domestic labor force, improved their marginal land productivity (deprived due to irrigation facility and low soil fertility), promoted sustainable agriculture practices, reduced women's workload significantly, and transformed their role from domestic to productive and economic. This evidence generated inquiry into whether conservation is a real opportunity to ensure women's economic empowerment, workload reduction, and work diversification, ensure their equal and fair access, use, control and decision over ensuing opportunities and resources; and whether such interventions can reduce unexpected shocks, stress and seasonality from climate change and build more resilience and coping capacity, particularly in women and deprived families.

This shows how biodiversity conservation contributes to ensure environmental sustainability, economic efficiency, and social equality in the long term. It proves that conservation of natural resources is an opportunity to bring changes in the quality of life of beneficiaries, generate opportunities in co-management and community engagement, and safeguard government and civil society achievements on basic services e.g. those defined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

WWF Nepal has reflected a strategic approach to GESI implicitly in both its Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy, and Conservation Strategic Plan. Objective 5 of the Livelihoods Strategy³⁸ directs the integration of social, gender, and good governance policies and principles to meet broader conservation outcomes and bring changes in women, deprived and excluded who depend on biodiversity resources for subsistence. The strategic document also highlighted monitoring and integration of gender smart indicators, and gender and socially dis-integrated data management to visualize the gender and poverty disparity in the natural resources dependent community and track changes. A broader result expected by the livelihoods strategy is to ensure social security and safety nets of vulnerable and nature-dependent communities, and ensuring their participation, representation in decision making, and share of benefits while planning, implementing and selecting priorities for conservation and livelihoods interventions. The strategy aimed to ensure that women and excluded groups benefited from the ensuing opportunities and services, leading to their economic empowerment. The initiative on *Strengthening Action for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resource-SAGUN*³⁹ project with Care Nepal, the *Population Health and Environment-PHE initiative* with Nepal Red Cross Society and ADRA, and *Sexual and Reproductive Health issues in Environment-SRH*⁴⁰ with Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN) are all evidence of WWF priority on gender, good governance, community engagement, population, and environmental health issues, alongside its core business. These initiatives are aimed at first addressing broad conservation threats. Subsequently, all conservation and livelihoods interventions are made more gender responsive and inclusive during the planning process, raising questions about the initiative's commitment to GESI issues. However, what has been defined in the process is not as important as how efficiently, responsively and inclusively

³⁶ Field consultation and visit notes, document and report from Indrawati, Tipeni, Sunderbazaar, Mouli of Pankhu of Dudhkoshi, Dhaibung of Kalikasthan of Rasuwa and Ghyangfedi of Nuwakot respectively, field visits notes, 2014, WWF Nepal.

³⁷ Field consultation and visit notes, document and report from Kalapani CFUG of Dang, and Madhuban CFUG of Bardiya respectively, field visits notes, 2-8, March 2015, WWF Nepal.

³⁸ Sustainable Livelihoods, a Sustainable Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy, 2011, WWF Nepal, P 27.

³⁹ SAGUN is an USAID funded joint initiative project that focused more on governance, inclusion and social equality issues natural resource management have been launched jointly with Care Nepal during 2002 at NMCP, WWF Nepal

⁴⁰ PHE is an USAID and Johnson and Johnson funded joint initiative project and SRH is Ministry of Finland funded project that contributed to address population health and environment issues including sexual and reproductive health of youths and women particularly in Terai have been started 2006 and 2010 respectively.

these initiatives have been enabling changes in the economic and environmental wellbeing of communities. Our earlier focus was on cumulative input and output, rather than understanding and reflecting their linkages with broader social equity and gender empowerment outcomes. The Livelihoods Improvement Plan (LIP), Girl Scholarship Fund (GSF), Compensation and Relief Fund (CRF), Child Care Center (CCC) and Community Learning Centers (CLC) through Women in Conservation and Social Transformation (WiCAS), Reaching out to the Poorest of the Poor (RePoP) initiatives are good examples of strategies that capitalized on conservation opportunities to benefit these marginalized groups. Their approach, meaningful engagement, leadership decision, and control is not publicized, but can be found in institutional documents and learning reports. Compared to earlier strategic plans, current sustainable livelihoods strategies have defined their impact areas such as food, water, energy, economic and social security in comparatively more inclusive and responsive ways⁴¹. This reflects a gradual change in priorities and understanding of the value of gender equality and social inclusion issues in conservation strategy and planning processes. More evidence based results would show how WWF efforts are slowly transforming overall conservation and sustainable development making them more GESI smart, responsive and inclusive, encouraging meaningful engagement, leadership, and enhanced capacity of women and socially excluded groups to safeguard biodiversity and secure their livelihoods.

5.4.4. GESI in Conservation Strategic Plans (2012-2016)

After WWF set up a physical presence in Nepal in 1993, it started thinking strategically on sustainable conservation practices, exploring the possibility of scaling up its approach from site-specific to landscape, and issue-specific to threats and drivers based conservation that required more strategic partnerships and interventions. As a result, different levels of strategic plan for landscape conservation has been developed including identification of key project sites, critical habitats and corridors and bottlenecks for interventions. The learning from general to particular and simple to complex on issues such as social, economic governance, gender and livelihoods have also been identified simultaneously, and appropriate strategies and interventions have been developed.⁴²

In addition to the periodic conservation strategic plans, thematic strategic plans (Sustainable Livelihoods, Forest, Freshwater); issue specific plans (Rhino Action Plan, Tiger, Snow Leopard) and project specific plans (KCA, ACAP, NMCP, CBRP, PHE, SAGUN) reflect GESI issues to some extent, intertwined with biodiversity threats.

This overview of WWF strategic efforts for GESI responsive planning shows that there are a diversity of priorities at different stages of planning. Although GESI concerns were well reflected at activity and intervention levels, there is a big gap in broader strategic and planning stages, particularly at the central level. An in-depth understanding of gender and social issues, their dimensions and their linkage to achievements on the ground have been rarely documented as learning. The GESI agenda can be reflected strategically in WWF's overall efforts through its own organizational conservation strategic plan with three major stages. These can also be reflected in landscape strategic plans with multiple stakeholders and partners, which emphasize issues and conservation priorities related to landscape threats e.g. tiger habitat in the Terai and snow leopard habitat in the mountains). Social and gender issues are underlying factors that have not been addressed as desired. However, the GESI agenda was better reflected in the Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy (2011) and Conservation Strategic Plan (2012-2016) compare to earlier plans.

⁴¹ Sustainable Livelihoods : a Sustainable Livelihoods Mainstreaming Strategy 2011, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu

⁴² TAL Strategic Plan 2004-2014 and SHL Strategic Plan 2006-2016, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu

Gender equality and social inclusion issues, twinned with good governance principles have been integrated in the WWF strategic plan, as overarching goals of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development⁴³. The strategic plan further internalized weak resource governance, inequality, discrimination on the basis of gender and ethnicity, and ambiguous policies as major challenges to achieving broader conservation and sustainable development goals. However, strategic reflection through a GESI lens is often lacking in its conservation strategies. Some GESI related concerns such as equitability, empowerment of women, poor and disadvantaged groups, social inclusion, sustainability, community partnership and leadership are taken as guiding principles while designing intervention strategies⁴⁴. Social inequality and exclusion, lack of accountability and transparency, inequitable benefit sharing are defined as drivers and causal factors for biodiversity loss, and reasons for past political conflicts. WWF strategic plan emphasizes the tangible and visible linkages between these drivers and underlying causal factors, and their relation to conservation and sustainable development results. The WWF Strategic Plan: 2012-2016 emphasized livelihoods security of asset deprived, socially excluded, locally identified poor, and climate and wildlife vulnerable communities, including women as a major priority. This marks the beginning of an explicit reflection of GESI thinking, and a move towards making conservation and livelihoods strategies more responsive and inclusive during planning. This U-turn has transformed conservation efforts from gender neutral planning processes to inclusive processes. The existing strategic plan (2012-2016) addresses GESI issues more visibly and tangibly, with disaggregated indicators (particularly at output and outcome levels) that ensure benefits to women, and vulnerable communities are measured and achieved. This shows WWF conservation strategic plans becoming more responsive, inclusive and sensitive to GESI issues from the outset, and becoming more accountable to program communities, particularly those who are dependent on natural capital for their subsistence.

Resources most frequently benefit communities and households; and WWF has emphasized benefits to households in order to improve their overall capability. Women's role in the household economy and management are critical and WWF conservation efforts aim to enhance household and community capability and economic empowerment, ensuring benefits accrue to all family members and are equitably shared in the community. This contributes to diversification of work, shared responsibility of domestic chores, and reduced pressure on biodiversity through diversification of use, and reduced dependence⁴⁵.

Scaling up benefits from particular interventions from a gender point of view often became challenging. For example, installation of a biogas plant benefits all household members, but women and children benefit more from the reduced work load from not having to fetch firewood, and reduced stress because of not grazing livestock in forests full of predators. However, the higher level of care for biogas processing requires additional time and labor, adding another role to both women and men. While both benefit from an air pollution free household, clean kitchen, stall feeding, and livestock rearing. It is difficult to disaggregate the benefits from such interventions by gender, and requires a more in-depth analysis. Unless the attitudes of the family's head and other men change, and women's role in domestic care is well-understood, such role transformation will remain ineffective in reducing work pressure on women. In practice, most biogas plants and their loans are registered in the name of the male member, indicating the community belief that it is still the man's role to control family income and take responsibility for loan repayment, while the woman cares for the biogas

⁴³ Strategic Plan 2005-2011, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu Nepal

⁴⁴ Ibid page 20, and 31

⁴⁵ Lesson learning from linkage analysis of BZUG and IWRMC users in Langtang, Indrawati and Chitwan, field note 2014

plant and livestock⁴⁶. Our registration process based monitoring overlooked exact beneficiaries from conservation, because the focus was only on the registered name, and a huge gap was visible when disaggregating the data by gender. This shows the need for a monitoring process that focuses on all household members rather than just collecting registered names that doesn't give the inside story. It is not necessary that only the registered person gets benefits from the biogas plant. This sort of intervention needs more household-level analysis. Aside from a few critical concerns, resources must be targeted to the household, building the household's own capability, and building understanding on the men and women's roles and priorities.

There is a need for attitudinal change and increased understanding within the household, community and society in order to make a difference, but the lessons learnt reflects very few examples of this in practice. The introduction of interventions in the name of women or men are not enough to achieve desired results. Some interventions benefit invisible and deep-rooted forms of discrimination. Unless we take up the serious challenge of reviewing and modifying existing impact and change monitoring practices, the underlying GESI agenda will rarely be integrated in the documentation and planning process, and can hardly ensure a more responsive and inclusive conservation and sustainable development effort.

5.4.5. GESI in Landscape Strategic Plans (TAL 2004-2014) and (SHL 2006-2016)

The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Strategic Plan (2004-2014) has emphasized sustainable livelihoods comprising of income generation, based on forest, agriculture, tourism, skills and off farm activities. The strategic plan also clearly targeted subsistence and marginal farmers who were under the poverty line for livelihoods improvement, evidence that the plan is GESI responsive and inclusive. Its strategic focus on equity meant that the planning process emphasized fair access to benefits derived from natural resources. The strategic plan clearly defined its beneficiaries as those who are asset deprived, excluded and disadvantaged, spelling out a critical role for their meaningful participation for effective and efficient implementation. The TAL strategic plan is a collective vision of multiple actors including WWF, and is subject to various institutional influences from their funding sources. For example, WTLCP is influenced by UNDP, BISEP-ST by SNV, LFP by DFID, TAL-CBRP by WWF, SAGUN by Care Nepal and GoN/MoFSC, and others⁴⁷. The landscape program is a living learning and sharing platform for diverse social issues related to conservation strategies where each actor has defined their geographical and thematic priorities on which the broader landscape program cycle build its synergy. The strategic plan focuses on the enabling environment within the landscape, so that all actors, community and family members including men, women and marginal families derive opportunities, income, and services to secure their livelihoods in fair and equitable ways⁴⁸. Diverse program actors have distinct specialties e.g. WWF Nepal for biodiversity conservation, Care Nepal for social equity and governance, and DFID for sustainable livelihoods. These specialized key roles added value and ensured that landscape conservation was more inclusive of and responsive to GESI concerns. The program has not spelled out individual, case-specific indicators for social groups, instead defining beneficiaries as households under the poverty line and small farmers.

Unlike this, the Sacred Himalayan Landscape Strategic Plan (SHL: 2006-2016) emphasized cultural aspects of resource governance and showed a deep awareness of indigenous rights to ensure equity and equality in remote and deprived populations' access to available opportunities, benefits and services. Non-timber forest products,

⁴⁶ Reflection of Changes, user group consultation and discussion note (2013), Madhuban, Khata, TAL, Nepal

⁴⁷ TAL Strategic Plan 2004-2014, GoN/MoFSC, Kathmandu, Nepal, page 14

⁴⁸ TAL Strategic Plan (2004-2014), GoN/MoFSC, Kathmandu, Nepal, Page 30

hydropower, market services, entrepreneurship, environmental and ecosystem wellbeing are the major areas identified for improvement at all stages of landscape program management cycle in order to improve the livelihoods of women, children and dependents, and deprived indigenous and ethnic households. The strategic plan is also a multi stakeholder joint effort led by GoN/MoFSC, and comprised of regional governance institutions such as ICIMOD as major partners, and including WWF, TMI and others. Though these landscapes are rich in cultural, indigenous, ethnic and religious diversity (Bouddhism, Kirati and Bonpo), they are often deprived of access to market services, opportunities and subsistence requirements. They have also failed to benefit from the tourism business from sacred and religious heritage site, which are mostly captured by larger tourism businesses and travel management entrepreneurs, with the locals were deprived of fair opportunities and improved services. The strategic plan has focused on these groups, working for their sustainable living with diversified options, particularly from agro-forestry, tourism and watershed. Heavy migration⁴⁹ not only from mountain and mid-hill to plain Terai but to India and abroad for seasonal economic and employment engagement are significant remittance sources, but result in a shortage of productive labor force to safeguard biodiversity. Remittance is a major source of family income for a rural communities, and a large majority of productive youth are attracted to it without awareness of its long term negative consequences. Women and children who remain behind struggle to conduct subsistence farming on the terraces and slopes. They become more vulnerable, and their workloads increase but can barely meet their food, water and energy needs for sustainable living. Homogeneity in culture, combined with geographical diversity is a challenge to maintaining equitable access, use, control and decision on limited resources and opportunities. Utilization of substantial natural capital stocks have also been challenged by natural disasters like flash-floods, landslides and erratic changes in climate, seriously threatening the lives of women, children and asset deprived⁵⁰. To tackle the severity of challenges in the landscape, the strategic plan envisioned addressing GESI, focusing on women and men's economic empowerment, access to infrastructure services, improved agriculture farming practices and opportunities derived from non-timber forest products. The existing strategic approach enables spaces for women and men, and motivates them to participate in safeguarding biodiversity, understanding and respecting nature, and preserving cultural and ethnic diversity, within the context of mountain livelihoods that are always impacted by a changing climate, and its impact on the fragile natural capital.

5.4.6. GESI in Hariyo Ban Program: (2012-2016)

Hariyo Ban Program has adopted gender equality and social inclusion as cross-cutting issues reflected in its strategic plan. A consortium of partners of the program (HBP) formed a GESI Action Group to share knowledge and experience, and influence GESI responsive policy development at program and institutional levels. This consortium was set up for sharing and reciprocal learning on challenges, mapping out future directions for effective GESI mainstreaming, and enhancing organizational response to gender and ethnic-cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

Hariyo Ban Program (HBP) is a USAID funded program, led by WWF Nepal, in a joint venture with other consortium partners,⁵¹ working closely with government bodies, particularly MoFSC at the national and district levels. A positive development can be seen in HBP, which designated a senior level GESI focal person who could take charge to ensure that the overall GESI policy and strategy in all four partners' programs and

⁴⁹ Migration Study Commissioned by WWF/Hariyo Ban, draft report 2014

⁵⁰ Sacred Himalayan Landscape, Interim Implementation Plan 2011, WWF Nepal, page 13

⁵¹ Hariyo Ban Program (HBP) is a joint venture program leading by WWF Nepal with other consortium partners including Care Nepal, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Federation of Community Forest Association Nepal (FECOFUN).

planning processes. Though, MoFSC has designated a person for GESI issues, s/he was often the only person responsible, with a need for more team support within the Ministry and its line departments. Unbiased development outcomes is already a great challenge, on top of this, women, poor and marginalized groups are becoming more vulnerable from newly emerging issues of Natural Resources Management. HBP is connecting with, and influencing the GESI Working Group of MoFSC, sharing lessons from HBP and its consortium partners to help in implementation.

One of the consortium members, FECOFUN provided some best practice examples which effectively influenced policy and procedures for mainstreaming the GESI and pro-poor agendas. The policies and rules formulated and implemented by FECOFUN to include women in decision-making positions is noteworthy. Moreover the federation supports Community Forest Users Group in including women and highly marginalized groups in its decision making body. By law, women's participation in the executive committee of CFUGs has now been legally ensured with a requirement of at least 33%, and a target of 50%. The Community Forest Development Guideline (CFD: 2008) has provisions to ensure access, use, control and decision-making on community forests, natural resources and ensuing opportunities and services, particularly by affected and dependent groups such as women, dalits, poor, excluded and marginalized communities, in order to ensure equitable sharing of forest benefits. While FECOFUN has been successful in holding the government accountable to CFUG members, there are still a lot of challenges. Men and elite domination in executive committees have often marginalized women and vulnerable groups, an issue that is even more serious in protected area and buffer zone community forests compare to other community managed forests⁵². Gender based violence in the natural resource management process is not adequately focused on, or understood. Based on the learning from early reviews, HBP has emphasized development of a new framework that guides engaging men so they understand the role of women and the disadvantaged in forest management. This has resulted in a warmer welcome for women, culturally discriminated and excluded groups.

During the three years of its implementation, HBP has focused on the empowerment process, enhancing communities' understanding on their right to resource use, access, participation, decision and control. This experience is becoming a valuable reference for peers. For example, the community based learning and action centers (CLACs), under HBP, functioned very effectively and inclusively.

Forest governance, and adoption of its principles and assessment tools in regular review and reflection are prioritized as major tasks of the program monitoring framework. This includes strengthening internal governance in natural resource management groups. Efforts have been dedicated to increasing service effectiveness, ensuring participation of government line agencies, and expanding the space for negotiation between marginalized communities and decision makers. This eventually enables an environment where women and other excluded communities can be mainstreamed into the program. The program has been following a good governance led programmatic framework for empowering marginalized citizens, and ensuring public authorities and other power holders become more responsive and accountable to marginalized citizens. The program is promoting gender responsive, inclusive and participatory resource management, budget planning, review and auditing process as part of project effectiveness, efficiency and relevance to support establishment of equitable benefit sharing mechanisms, promote inclusion and responsiveness of service providers, and ensure beneficiary voices are heard by a broader audience.

⁵² Gender Gap Analysis Study, 2013, WWF Nepal Program

6. REFLECTION AND LEARNING

6.1 OUTCOME/RESULT

Building on early learning and experience from diverse programs, projects, regional and global networks, including peers and recommendations received from periodic studies, surveys, review reflections, consultations, field site assessment analysis and impact monitoring, WWF Nepal aimed at effective and efficient mainstreaming of GESI strategies and GRB processes. These were to be institutionalized with a culture of review, reflection, learning and documentation that supported further planning and integration, ensuring an adaptive program cycle management process. The team set a proxy broad GESI goal as: "By the end of 2018, WWF's all program and projects practice will be more gender and social responsive and inclusive," taking the first step towards making the program more responsive and inclusive. This broader impact will be constantly supported, enriched and achieved through constant feedback from field project implementation, peer engagement in the planning process, and incorporation of national policy with its contemporary context. These would accelerate positive changes in conservation practices, making them more gender and socially inclusive. The WWF team also aimed to develop a more comprehensive reference guideline; build CBOs' implementation capacity, enhance understanding on gender and conservation, and promote an enabling environment to achieve higher impact. WWF Nepal's future focus will be on building the capability of local natural resource management institutions by helping in their human resource development, and providing training and orientation to local resource persons, respective project staff, social mobilizers and implementing partners in the landscapes programs, and performing periodic social and gender auditing of all targeted activities.

Incorporation of GESI strategy mainstreaming, gender responsive budgeting and planning, and implementation of diverse study recommendations, (including peer and cross theme learning, particularly from recent assessment on community forest management, water-shed catchment management, protected area and buffer zone management, livelihoods and network social policy) have substantially nourished gender equality and social inclusion issues, and provided insights into the role of gender responsive budget planning and auditing in conservation. The strengths and opportunities generated from conservation interventions and gaps in institutional governance at respective user committees will be further areas for learning and interventions. Building on these learning areas, the following major outcomes have resulted.

6.2 GoN MoFSC GESI STRATEGY (2007) AND CFD GUIDELINE (2008) IMPLEMENTATION

Key recommendations of the study on gender gaps analysis (2013)⁵³, experiences from early history and efforts on GESI mainstreaming, and peer learning from other non-conventional partners (development and human rights organizations, and the

⁵³ Gender Gaps Study Analysis, 2013, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal

international community) show that WWF conservation efforts cannot be isolated from other concerns. This understanding was partially reflected during development of the two major strategies: WWF Nepal Strategic Plan 2012-2016 and Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy 2011. GESI issues were clearly integrated with conservation and livelihood issues at different levels of the strategic plan framework. Indicators and results were separately defined and disaggregated. But still there are some gaps in creating more gender and socially inclusive and responsive conservation budget and plans, by taking GESI issues as integral processes of capacity building, and developing a gender sensitive monitoring framework. At the input level, it is noteworthy that a number of events, activities and interventions on the ground look GESI sensitive, and are documented in a disaggregated format in progress reports. Yet, these are neither linked to broader GESI outcome indicators, (see Box 9) nor reflected as part of reporting in the organizational technical progress report. All these achievements are mostly reported as regular activities under set themes, rather than in disaggregated form in the regular reporting documents.

Box 9 : Gender Responsive Budget Planning and Auditing Indicators

- Women participating in capacity building activities
- Women participating in planning, implementation and decision making
- Womens share in access, benefits and opportunities
- Women in employment, income generation activities
- Women work quality improvement and work drudgery reduction

Source: Gender Responsive Budget Auditing and Planning Directives, MoF/GoN Nepal 2012

6.3 GENDER GAPS STUDY ANALYSIS (2013)

A study was commissioned to carry out a Gender and Social Inclusion gap analysis in two protected areas, and buffer zone management in two ecological zones: mountain and tearai. The study identified the following areas as key challenges i) Lack of Gender and Social Inclusion related policy ii) Lack of GESI responsive institutional framework iii) Lack of GESI responsive programming; iv) Lack of effective good governance in PABZ management; v) Lack of transparent and equitable access to decision, control, use and benefits sharing over the generated opportunity and services by women and marginalized communities; v) GESI responsive and GRB auditing and capacity orientation training; vi) at least 50% of the employment and/or economic engagement opportunities generated in buffer zone committees, councils and communities reserved

Box 10 : WWF Engagement during Policy/Strategy development

GAD/GESI/SD responsive activities (KCA and NMCP Projects (from 1998)
 Review and development of WWF UK-PPA program from SLA/Gender lens (2003/4)
 Sustainable livelihoods mainstreaming strategy development (2005)
 Implementation of GESI supporting projects: SAGUN (2002, 2005, 2008)
 and PHE-SRH (2006, 2008, 2011)
 Involvement in Gender Poverty and Social Equity Working Group-GPSE 2005-2006)
 Involvement with GoN/MoFSC's GESI strategy development process (2006/7)
 Involvement with GoN/MoFSC's Community forestry development guideline development (2008)
 GESI issues integration more explicitly in WWF Conservation Strategy 2012-2016
 GESI issues integration explicitly in WWF Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy 2011
 GESI indicators integration in LGCM survey during 2010, 2013 and 2014 TAL and IRBM)
 Peer learning from Hariyo-ban program on GESI/GRB/GRP Policy, Convention)

Source: Desktop review and analysis, WWF 2014

GENDER ROLE CHANGES

Gender role change is influenced by seasonal occupations particularly when plantation, harvesting and storage are in the peak season. Involvement of women needs to be understood from roles analysis to identify whether this seasonality limits economic empowerment, education and leadership opportunities.





for women, dalits and affected communities, endorsed in legislation as positive discrimination; vii) GESI mainstreaming at all stages of conservation program cycle from the ground to center; viii) GESI inclusive and smart indicators at all levels that ensure linkages among the results ; ix) Ensure GESI knowledge and resource person at all forest coordination committees, buffer zone user committees and councils to sustain GESI change monitoring; x) Effective implementation of CFD Guideline (2008), GESI Strategy (2007) and GRB Processes (2012) to capitalize on equality and benefit.

6.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGET AUDITING DIRECTIVE (2012)

WWF mostly follows its own planning processes according to conservation program standards, but also complies with the Government of Nepal's fiscal policy. Most of WWF projects are implemented in partnership with the Government of Nepal/Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, and these mandatorily follow the government's fiscal policy due to their joint implementation modality. As a facilitation and implementation partner, WWF supported implementation of the Gender Responsive Budget Audit Directive in its projects in the last fiscal year (2013-2014)⁵⁴. This experience has become a case to review, analyze and extract lessons for looking at the conservation budget planning process from a GRB auditing lens. GESI implementation in those projects initially looked at two issues; i) To figure out how aware of, and responsive to GESI related issues of the project management decision-makers are, whether these issues are reflected in the required budgeting at the project management level, and how much influence users groups/committees have in budget planning; and ii) To review how aware the user committee is about their rights, responsibilities, and accountability, and whether they are able to adapt this awareness to the process of implementation and allocation of available budget to make the program more accountable, responsive and inclusive.

Box 11 : Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Scale

Description		Weightage
1	Women in Planning and Implementation	20
1.1	Women in planning and budgeting	4
1.2	Women in implementation	12
1.3	Women in monitoring	4
2	Women 's Capacity Building	20
2.1	Women capacity in decision making implementation	6
2.2	Women participating in capacity building	7
2.3	Gender sensitivity and context	7
3	Women's access to benefit and opportunity	30
3.1	Women's access to benefits	8
3.2	Understanding of gender gaps and obstacles	6
3.3	Gender friendly environment and mechanism	7
3.4	Gender disintegrated budgeting	2
3.5	Gender disintegrated monitoring and evaluation	7
4	Women's employment and income generation	20
4.1	Employment opportunity	8
4.2	Income generation and entrepreneurship	7
4.3	Equal wages	5
5	Women's work drudgery and quality	10
5.1	Enabling of work performance and work drudgery	4
5.2	Long term vision for women's role change	6
	Total	100
	Direct Gender Responsive	50+
	Indirect Gender Responsive	20-50
	Neutral	>20

⁵⁴ The GRB Directive have been implemented initially in Chitwan PABZ, TAL-CBRP in TAL and LNP PABZ and IRBM Indravati sub-basin and Dudhkoshi sub-basin in SHL as pilot site.

**BUDGET
PLANNING PROCESS
ON THE GROUND
NEEDS MORE
NEGOTIATION,
ADVOCACY,
AND INFLUENCE
FROM USERS'
COMMITTEES TO
ENSURE GENDER AND
SOCIAL RESPONSIVE
AND INCLUSIVE
CONSERVATION
PLANNING.**

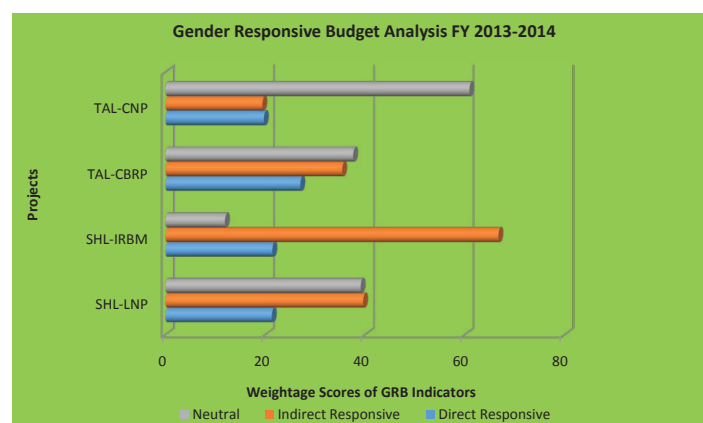
The Gender Responsive Budget and GESI in the planning process have been audited and analyzed based on recommended indicators in the Government of Nepal/MoF Directive 2012 (See Box 11). The indicators and matrices in the auditing framework have been administered directly after consultations with beneficiaries and implementers. This analysis is reflected in WWF grant budgets to projects that have supported implementation of TAL and SHL programs. A detailed analysis has been conducted on five major indicators, with weighted scores, which can be observed in detail in the figure below. This is an initial step by WWF Nepal, augmented by a commitment to learning, in order to support implementation of the Government's commitment, gender policy, and strategy, mandated to MoFSC, our partner on the ground. These early efforts need more learning, reflection, documentation and assessment, with internalized downward accountability and GESI sensitivity at all levels of key actors in different stages of the conservation program cycle.

The analysis (see figure below) illustrates the budget planning for the recent fiscal year (2013-2014). The figure shows that the budget status for TAL-CBRP is more gender responsive and inclusive (33.8% of total project allocated budget), compared to the others (around 20% for LNP/SHL, 19% for CNPBZ and 20% for IRBM). Except TAL-CBRP, the figures are moderately low, even in the Government's total budget for the fiscal year (21.75%, 2013). A large amount of the budget for CNP BZ is gender neutral (60%) compare to others: TAL CBRP (38%), IRBM (13%), and LNPBZ (39%) respectively. The share of indirectly gender responsive budget is significantly high for IRBM (68%), followed by LNPBZ (39%), TAL-CBRP (37.5%) and CNPBZ (19%).

This initial analysis shows that the budget planning process on the ground needs more negotiation, advocacy, and influence from users' committees to ensure social and gender responsive and inclusive budget planning. This is mostly dependent on social mobilizers, and the decision-making committee within the users' committees, which is mostly represented by male members and people that are not entirely dependent on conserved resources. The result indicates that the budget planning process is project driven rather than community driven, particularly in these sample study cases, because the GRB directive had just come into force in 2012, and project partners had not received orientation on it.

A large chunk of the budget has been allocated benefitting directly to households and communities, neutral budget under project planning and management is high (CNPBZ:60% netutral budget). This is an indication of excessive control, and influence. It also shows the importance of understanding and incorporating GESI issues during budget planning, rather than having them influenced by political and other concerns

Figure 2: Gender Responsive Budget Analysis Status



of project and government officials. Although a majority of the budget is gender neutral due to the nature of its core business nature yet, further classification to make GESI issues more visible is required in planning and budgeting for conservation and sustainable development. This is not a matter of budget allocated under specific titles, rather of understanding, and prioritizing specific, focused activities.

When we compared project budget status, TAL CBRP (see figure 2) seemed more responsive and inclusive. This is because of its nature and modality of community engagement that enabled forest dependents to be represented through Community Forest User Groups (CFUG) and Community Forest Coordination Committee (CFCCs). Early orientation on gender and inclusion issues, experience and learning from CFD Guideline implementation, and involvement of the international community and right based organizations in empowering NRM CBOs all contributed to this outcome. Also, projects funded by the IRBM and PABZ budgets had a greater focus on physical infrastructure, patrolling, and institutional strengthening within protected areas and water streams. If we review their budget allocations, we see that where women and deprived communities are more vulnerable, more resources are required for service improvement, and social and environmental safety infrastructure, and deserves more priority. For example, budget for solar fencing to prevent crop raiding by wildlife is neutral from a gender perspective, but it contributes to increased food sufficiency, reduced stresses to the family, and wildlife encounters. Of course, women, children, the disabled and deprived families that have to move frequently might suffer more in its absence, so it ensures their benefit in the long run. Therefore the downward linkages and dimensions of interventions need to be analyzed from a people-centered perspective, rather than leaving them confined to budget headings only. Understanding budget planning and allocation is not sufficient to understand this linkage, and ensure gender equality and inclusion. While developing and designing interventions, it is important to consider how such interventions will generate opportunities to improve the wellbeing of all, while building rich biodiversity and increasing the natural capital stock that they depend on.

The recent budgeting and planning practices in conservation programs are based on more conventional approaches, resulting in gender neutral and indirect responsive budget. This leaves room for budget reclassification under other sub-headings that often negatively impacts the agenda of making the budget more gender responsive and inclusive. For example, budget allocation for people living in landscape under “community health service improvement” activity seem indirect responsive/inclusive, and could be made more visible with further specification as: “improve community health services for wildlife vulnerable groups”, which is more inclusive and responsive. This will ensure that the allocated budget is only for “wildlife vulnerable groups’ health concerns” living in landscapes and limit the potential for unexpected political and bureaucratic influences to re-classify, transfer, and divert the budget to other concerns.

Similarly, even gender neutral or indirect responsive budgeting could be made more participatory and inclusive if social and gender inequality are recognized as major issues while designing and planning conservation budgets. This ensures participation of target groups in every stage of the development and conservation planning processes. A gender budget planning and GESI auditing is not just the process of allocating budget for women, rather it is a process that ensures participation, inclusion and understanding of gender roles, relations and inter linkages among activities, within the context of women and men’s needs in society. Recent planning, budgeting, and design of interventions and activities required a more in-depth understanding of poverty, gender and environmental roles, linkages and the rationale behind gender responsive planning and budgeting.

Besides those mentioned above, market access, remoteness, ecological types, leadership and influence and a deep understanding of environmental sustainability and its linkages with social equality and economic efficiency are all factors in gender responsive and inclusive planning and budgeting. In the given table, we can see that those committees which have effective leadership, influence and market opportunities emphasize income generation, energy, and women empowerment activities. These have been generated due to availability and accessibility of the market, which has increased local productivity, leading to more productive roles and higher engagement. To summarize, budgets with large amounts that are indirect responsive need further analysis of their nature, dynamics, respective beneficiary groups, and impact. Only then can we find out whether they contributed to bringing positive changes in beneficiary groups' roles, leadership, economic engagement and empowerment, whether they enhanced their control, and use of resources, increased their involvement and influence in decision-making and decreased their work drudgery to ensure gender equality and inclusion leading toward environmental sustainability, economic efficiency and improvement of overall wellbeing.

Existing budget planning and processing expenditures indicate that WWF is more responsive on development and social equality activities but focuses on threats and driver related interventions in critical corridors and habitat areas. Species focused programs are more intensive, and the budget practices there are more neutral or indirectly responsive. While this is natural, WWF GESI/GRB mainstreaming should ensure robust participation from women, affected communities and small farmers while designing the budget, action plan and interventions, rather than diverting budget priorities to core business. Such budget planning processes required a higher level of understanding and participation from such groups, with the need to build their understanding of the issues. WWF is working on biodiversity with emphasis on these interventions, focused on the role of communities that would add value while planning and designing project, program, budgets and interventions. This transparency during the planning, budgeting and communication activities will increase ownership, decrease grievances and improve the process.

6.5 GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGET AUDIT ANALYSIS

The conservation budget formulation and planning goes through different stages of processing with involvement from key actors in each stage i.e. CFUG to CFCC and CFCC to District Forest Office including the TAL project support office in this illustrative case. These key chain actors need an in-depth understanding of gender's role in conservation while planning budgets and activities in accordance with the relevant goals, activities and strategies. Which activities should receive a larger chunk of the budget is not

Box 12 : Contribution to Girl Retention in Villages

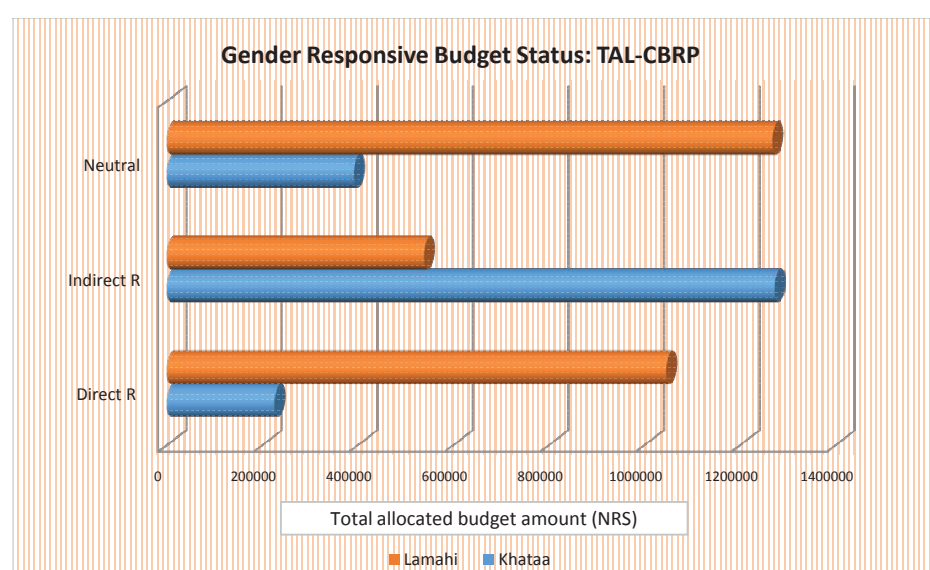
Until few years ago, young girls from Ghyangfedi village were victims of trafficking. Lack of job opportunities in the village allured them to migrate which eventually got them into the brothels. But the situation has now changed. The initiation of cooperatives and homestay program have created jobs in the village which has supported their economy and decreased the number of migration as a job seeker. The homestay has made them earn money and made them socio-politically empowered. Now they have more social interaction between each other and outsiders who come as a tourist in their homestay. This has increased the level of awareness in terms of girls trafficking and other form of violence against women.

Source: Based on Sirjanshil Women Group and Ghyangfedi Homestay Management Committee, Nov 2014

important. It is more important to understand the rationale behind why particular activities or strategies require a particular budget, and how they benefit communities, and establish positive relations between women and men, poor and well off families, affected and non-affected communities, and marginalized and advantaged families. This differentiation and prioritization of issues in budget allocation and planning (particularly wish list and influence) has been extracted from the comparative analysis of two bottlenecks and corridors (See Figure 3) namely Khata and Lamahi. Khata is one of the globally known functional biological corridors whereas Lamahi is one of the bottlenecks that connects forests across the landscape from east to west and northern foothills to the southern border with India, and includes watersheds and streams. These two corridors have different biodiversity and social values to conservation and development since Khata is mostly affected from human wildlife conflict, illegal poaching and trade, and flash flooding from the Karnali, and its potential lies in ecotourism. On the other hand, Lamahi is affected from being near a growing market hub, with pressure on the forest from distant users, weak governance, and grass and fodder pressure. All these affect their respective budget planning processes.

According to the figure, Lamahi has a more directly responsive gender budget plan compared to Khata. This is because Khata is affected by human-wildlife conflict and required activities in neutral priorities such as waterhole, forest fire, physical assets, in-stall feeding, drinking water and sanitation, and energy whereas Lamahi required more interventions in entrepreneurship, improved community services and producing commercial products for the market. However, it is often difficult to differentiate between direct and indirect responsive nature of interventions. Since most community services, energy and sanitation targets are for the benefit of all family members, this process does not reflect intra-household dynamics. With care, there is scope and space for small WWF efforts to make existing program and budget planning processes more responsive and inclusive. This will require project and partner staff to have skills for deep analysis and understanding of GESI issues, so they may incorporate them in planning and implementation.

Figure 3 : Gender Responsive Budget Planning Status, TAL CBRP



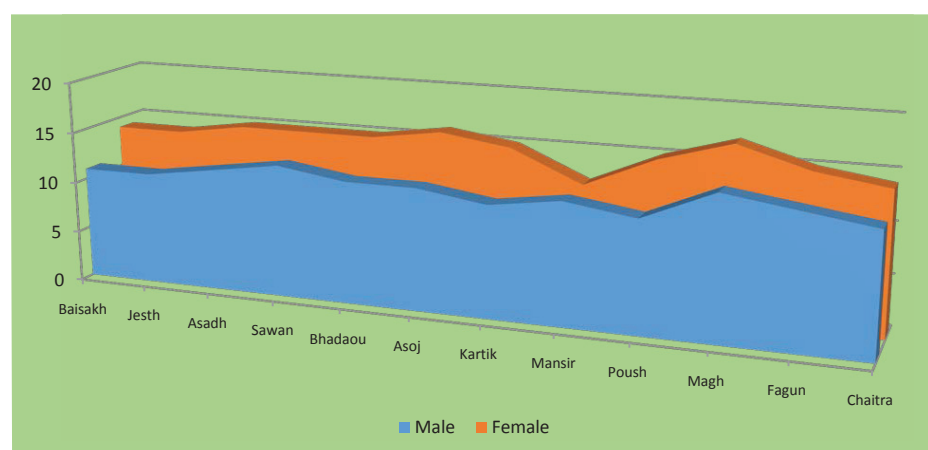
WWF should focus on reviewing, reflecting on, and learning from its existing planning and budgeting processes with a gender and social inclusion lens. This requires WWF and its partners to possess skills and understanding of gender based budgeting and planning processes. WWF should take care to analyze the effects of a particular strategy to see whether it limits and narrows the role and relation between men and women and other groups, whether it increases inequality, whether it makes dependent communities more vulnerable or excludes them from benefits and so on. This is the main essence behind mainstreaming gender responsive planning, budgeting and auditing.

A few of the government's gender responsive and inclusive budget audit indicators are beyond WWF's core business. Whether our interventions provide support to ensure equality in male and female wages is one such example, as this is mostly determined by society, market competition and labor force demand and supply. However, WWF does ensure that its work does not increase the disparity in wages, or discriminate based on gender or social attributes when it provides compensation to communities. WWF is also committed to equal opportunity in terms of human resource development, recruiting process and encourages its implementing partners to comply with social equality while distributing benefits and opportunities, living allowances, or sharing subsistence costs. WWF also does not discriminate, providing the same benefits for the same portfolio and role, regardless of gender or social differences.

6.6 GENDER, LIVELIHOODS AND CONSERVATION LINKAGES

When issues and interventions were linked with outcomes on gender, conservation, and livelihoods, an interesting story was visible. The linkages among the issues and interventions often differed by management and implementation modality, understanding and interpretation of actors involved, and their capacity to capitalize on and design strategies and interventions in diverse ecological zones. The figure below represents three different issues and resources. Madhuban of Khata corridor is mostly affected by crop depredation, and is known as a human wildlife conflict zone. Kalapani of Lamahi bottleneck is known for its earlier degraded, barren and deforested areas, while Tipeni of Indrawati River Basin Management is a fragile ecological zone with floods, soil erosion and less productive land. The analysis shows how the roles and responsibilities of women and men have been affected by seasonality, months and type of works and ecological zone. Any changes in type, quality and quantity of natural resources directly impact women and men role, change workload. A positive change in assets secure livelihoods, decrease vulnerability with shared responsibility.

Figure 4 : Seasonal workload mapping status, Lamahi bottleneck/TAL

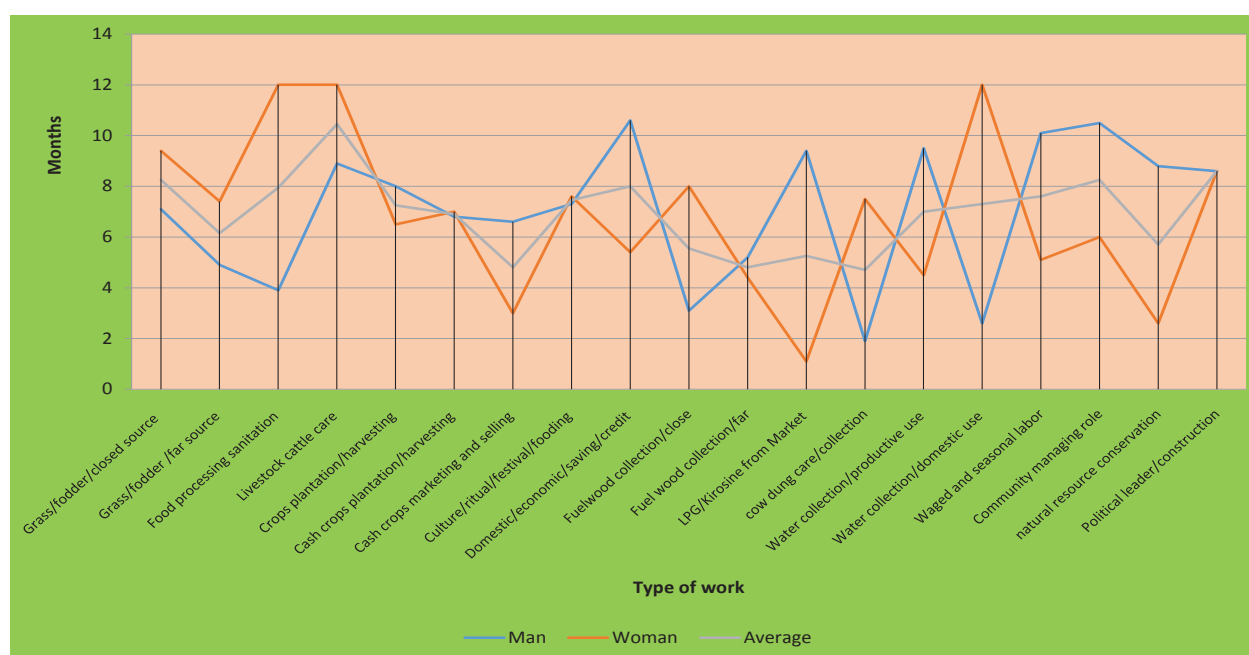


The two figures show two diverse scenarios. one is focused on men and women's workloads by season, while the other is focused on role changes and workloads according to the type of work which can be changed through market led interventions, improved access to services and opportunities, and empowerment activities that reduce workloads and encourage role sharing (see figure 5).

A recent example comes from the Langtang buffer zone area. Scarcity of firewood, improved access to the road and markets, and income generated from selling seasonal vegetables built communities' capacity to buy liquefied petroleum gas (LP Gas). Most of the women's work of fetching firewood has been partially shifted. It has become the male's role to collect gas cylinders from the market, take care of commercial farming, and engage in productive work, reducing women's workloads. Some positive changes for women include economic benefits, seasonal and partial economic engagement, and employment. This had improved their role sharing, household economy, access to market services, stress free participation in groups, and improved their negotiation capacity.

WWF interventions on conservation and livelihoods provide evidence of changes not only on men and women's roles, but overall paradigm shifts in the whole conservation planning processes, with these concerns mainstreamed as an invisible part of the organizational effort on conservation and development. Projects should focus on diversification and balance on women, landless, poor and small farmer's dependency on natural capital stock, build their control over management decisions, and enhance their capacity to cope with market imperfections through diversified livelihoods options.

Figure 5 : Workload by work-type. Indrawati, IRBM/WWF





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WWF Nepal through its Sustainable Livelihoods program aims towards reducing the dependency of local communities on forest resources.

In conclusion, if we intend to sustain natural resource and ecosystem services, the conservation organization should invest substantially in the agriculture sector, which a majority of households are dependent on for their subsistence and livelihoods security, and are mostly led by women. Half of disadvantaged families' women are overloaded with agriculture and subsistence work. Until there are innovations introduced in farming technology, value addition process, and harvesting agriculture products, and acquiring energy, fodder, grass, and water; women's workloads won't be reduced, and they won't be able to get rid of traditional roles. Technological innovation and improvement in the management process adds value, producing higher priced products, increasing economic empowerment and competence to market farm products, reducing dependency on harvesting and unsustainable use of natural capital stock, and building communities' resilience even during seasonal shocks and stresses. Without a strategy for long term sustainability, and a deep understanding of the inter-linkages among these components, gender equality in the conservation effort would be seen as separate from the environmental sustainability goal. This is a major opportunity for WWF globally, since it works mostly on natural resource priorities, environmental and livelihoods security, and can contribute to empowerment, engagement and wellbeing with minimum social and economic risks, ensuring that women, men, the poor and small farmers could benefit equally.

6.7 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

WWF Nepal's Gender and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming strategy aimed at developing GESI knowledge pools at local institutions such as BZMC, CFCC, IWRMC and Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Committee (KCAMC) to enhance the understanding of linkages between conservation and livelihoods and gender roles to enable achievement of GESI goals. Building the capacity of a local resource person is an important strategy to ensure efficient and skilled human resources who consistently support GESI mainstreaming in local institutions, including government agencies. WWF Nepal has organized a number of field based capacity building training and orientations. The objective behind this training is to ensure gender responsive planning, budgeting and auditing practices on the ground and provide monitoring support to partner CBOs.

According to the given table (Table #) there was significant participation of women (53%) in TAL CBRP compared to other landscapes and projects, in part due to the WWF effort for over a decade now, and also because of the effective implementation of CFD Guidelines (2008), and to some extent due to the knowledge and awareness generated by other humanitarian and resource management organizations in the region. The objective behind developing human resources is to support natural resource management committees and groups in forests, buffer zones and watershed management areas to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender and socially responsive

Table 1 : Training participants by gender and projects

Participants in GESI/GRB Orientation			
Projects Sites	Participants		
	Women	Men	Total
TAL-PABZ	10	12	22
LNP-PABZ	12	12	24
Indrawati Sub-Basin Project	20	15	35
TAL-CBRP	18	14	32
Total	60	53	113

and inclusive natural resource conservation planning process, to maximize the opportunities and benefits to women and deprived communities. The diversity of participants was also noteworthy; most of them represented different caste, ethnicity, linguistic and ecological groups, and were intensively involved in natural resource management for a long time. Participants from civil society organizations were also invited to safeguard and watch the mainstreaming process, minimize the grievance, and to act as negotiator, if required.

The orientation training was inclusive, with participation from the local resource person, and the chairperson, member secretary and treasurer of each management committee. The rationale was to build an understanding of the role of local resource person vis-a-vis committee members, so that they could coordinate when they required technical support on these issues. There was significant representation of women and indigenous communities, almost equal to the male participation. The trained local resource persons were expected to contribute to their respective users committee's understanding and implementation of the GRB directive (2012), CFD Guideline (2008) and GESI Strategy (2007), as well as the WWF/HBP GESI strategy 2012 and WWF Gender Policy 2011. The resource persons were also expected to serve as local facilitators during the annual budget planning, intervention design, change monitoring, and mainstreaming practices to see whether practices at the local level are becoming more inclusive and responsive and ensure these issues reflect and enhance the empowerment processes, contributing to conserving biodiversity, improving livelihoods, as well as narrowing inequality between women and men.

6.8 GESI/GRB IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT

To encourage and ease implementation, a comprehensive gender equality and social inclusion, and gender responsive budget planning and auditing guideline has been drafted in the local script (Nepali). This document is aimed as a reference for natural resource management committees, and intends to avoid misunderstandings and facilitate operations during administration of GESI Auditing and Gender Responsive Budget Auditing framework recommended by the MoF and mandated to MoFSC. The guideline also provides guidance on how to calculate, scale and categorize to see whether the conservation budget is gender neutral, or direct responsive and inclusive. Auditing of gender inclusion has been broadly categorized into five major areas: women participation in different stages of the planning process, women's decision making and leadership, engagement in economic and employment, monitoring and evaluation, and contributions to improve women's work quality and reduce work drudgery.

6.9 THE GESI/GRB BASELINE ESTABLISHED

The Livelihoods and Good Governance Change Monitoring (LGCM) surveys are a comprehensive outcome monitoring method designed based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework Approach (SLAF), and has been conducted since 2010. Though the effort did not start out with GESI indicators, indicators have been revised, with specific GESI outcome indicators added. The methodology has also been refined to make it more measurable and quantitative.⁵⁵ The refined methodology was administered again during 2013 as part of regular outcome change monitoring in livelihoods, governance and GESI changes. The survey has defined five major components and their linkages. Among them are: a) Institutional Capability and Sustainability, b) Gender

⁵⁵ Livelihoods and Good Governance Monitoring Manual, 2010, WWF Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Table 2 : GESI and Good Governance Baseline, TAL-CBRP, WWF Nepal

GESI and Good Governance	Units	Scale	2010	2013
GESI/Pro-poor CFOP/legislation	CFUG	%	76	73.9
Regularly Organized PHPA	CFUGs	%	59	78
Better off HHs	Number	%	13	21.5
Middle HHs	Number	%	46	46.7
Poor HHs	Number	%	41	31.8
Women-occupied key positions (CFUG)	Number	%	48.38	63.73
Men-occupied key positions (CFUG)	Number	%	51.62	36.27
Dalits (oppressed) in executive committee	Number	%	8	8.9
Indigenous in executive committee	Number	%	41	57.9
Brahmin/Chhettri/Sanyasi in executive committee	Number	%	31	29.7
Others minority in executive committee	Number	%	20	3.5
Directly benefited from forest resources	Number	%	53.82	93
Benefited from CF products with fees	Number	%	57	16.2
Benefited from CF products without fee	Number	%	43	83.8
Forest Guard Female	Person	%	NA	10
Paid Staff in CFUG/Cooperative-male	Person	%	NA	76.2
Paid Staff in CFUG/Cooperative-female	Person	%	NA	23.8
Cooperative Share member female	Person	%	NA	48
Source : LGCM Survey 2010 and 2013, TAL/CBRP, WWF Nepal				

Table 3 : Livelihoods Vulnerability Baseline, TAL-CBRP, WWF Nepal

Livelihoods Vulnerability	Units	Scale	2010	2013
Food deficiency (arround the year)	HH	%	62	41.8
Grass/fodder deficiency from legal source (arround the year)	HH	%	86	60.6
Pregnant women deprived of TT vaccine	HH	%	22.88	8.6
Pregnant women deprived of ANC care	HH	%	26.32	9.8
Affected from water, air and vector borne diseases	HH	%	7.09	3.59
Affected from livestock depredation by wild animal	HH	%	3.5	2.5
Affected from crop raiding by wild animal	HH	%	18	11.3
Use of chemical fertilizer (all crops/vegetable)	HH	%	74	80
Use of peticides/insecticides (all crops/vegetable)	HH	%	56	59.6
Firewood/Straw/Agri residues users (regular)	HH	%	93	87.2
Children (6-16 yr) deprived to education	HH	%	5	7.5
Dependent on wetlands for subsistence	HH	%	25	67.1
Dependent on wetlands for vegetable/fruits	HH	%	22	62
Dependent on wetlands for culture/rituals/tradition	HH	%	26	23.4
Loan obtained from informal sources with high interest rate	HH	%	56	59.6
Source : LGCM Survey 2010 and 2013, TAL/CBRP, WWF Nepal				

Equality and Social Inclusion and Good Governance, c) Livelihoods Resources (assets), d) Livelihoods Strategy and Dependency and e) Livelihoods Vulnerability.

The change monitoring process started in 2014 with defined format to increase the capability of local management committees to compare the linkages between different outcomes and interventions, looking at changes with a poverty, participation, and governance focus. This approach also generated substantial information on gender and social inclusion, and the empowerment process. The tool covered a specific site community in-depth, compared to the LGCM approach which covers a wide range of landscapes and projects. This change monitoring is a part of the regular monitoring process and is frequently conducted whereas LGCM is a periodic comparison among the five major components defined in the LGCM framework.

The objective behind this LGCM approach is to see the changes in overall quality of life and livelihoods (short and long term) with a focus on institutional sustainability, wellbeing, women's empowerment and engagement, people's dependency on natural resources, and their resilience capacity, and coping options against adverse climate, nature and other human induced vulnerabilities such as shocks, stress and seasonality. This approach generated substantial quantitative information on natural resources, livelihoods, GESI and good governance and their linkages, particularly focused on women and deprived family's access, control, decision, participation, representation, influence and benefits from natural resource management, value addition, and productive engagement with transformation of roles from productive and domestic to economic and social management. The survey supported establishing a baseline for livelihoods status, including GESI⁵⁶. (See table 2 and 3). These periodic change monitoring surveys also complemented qualitative GESI assessments to show the trend of women's work load drudgery, economic change, and effective decision makes processes to ensure inclusive and responsive budget planning and social auditing practices, enhancing leadership quality and negotiations skills, and leveraging resources beyond their limited orbit. Both approaches support comparisons of gender responsive budgeting, planning and auditing that show how budget allocated for a specific theme, area and issue related intervention can bring changes in the quality of life for women, deprived families, and their communities. A baseline for LNP, CNP, TAL-CBRP and IRBM has been established and the remaining work will be completed soon. The current LGCM survey (2014) and change monitoring format of user committees for the project mobilizer have been designed based on learning from earlier surveys and analyses on gender and social inclusion gaps in WWF, general overall conservation approaches, and approaches in protected area and buffer zone management in particular. They are comprehensive, and look at available resources, themes and nature of project modality and role diversity of major implementing partners.

The GESI and governance baseline retrieved from two main LGCM surveys i) Integrated River Basin Management projects: Indrawati and Dudhkoshi, at two different sites during 2014, and ii) 2013 LGCM survey in a critical corridor and bottleneck restoration project in TAL-DoF (See table 2 and 3) generated substantial quantitative information. Both the reports revealed variation in progress, challenges, gaps and significance, particularly on women's economic engagement and representation in overall leadership and decision-making processes, which was mostly lacking. Women's representation in the executive committees is significant in TAL-CBRP but lacking in TAL-PABZ, SHL and IRBM related institutions. Women's participation in meetings, their influence, and contribution to making local planning more gender and social inclusive and sensitive was found lacking.

⁵⁶ LGCM Survey 2010, 2013 for TAL-CBRP, and 2014 for IRBM, WWF Nepal

Gender sensitivity, responsiveness and inclusion outcomes are strongly affected by a program's management and implementation modality. WWF Nepal is working under four partnership modalities in its conservation and sustainable development interventions. These are a) helping in conservation of endangered species in protected areas and buffer zones i.e. PABZ support program, b) community management of forests in bottlenecks and habitat corridors i.e. CBRP, c) integrated river management to conserve and manage watersheds i.e. IRBM and d) supporting local management councils in managing community protected areas i.e. KCAMC.

All of these modalities include working in coordination and partnership with relevant departments of the Government of Nepal and their local line agencies, non-government organizations and groups, and representatives of citizen groups. Challenges arise because partner agencies have their own gender and social strategies. They have differing institutional priorities and goals, and their own definitions of what project results should be. The results achieved in terms of GESI/GRB issues will be determined by the priority assigned to these issues by our partners.

Direct involvement of WWF and its staff in inducing changes in GESI and GRB practices of partners is neither possible nor feasible. As a solution, building on earlier experiences, a simplified approach of change monitoring has been designed in 2014, with a format for information collection. The rationale behind this approach and format is to build GESI monitoring into local NRM groups' regular monitoring process, so they can collect the data and perform reviews themselves. This will support local planning and budgeting from a gender and inclusion perspective.

Recently, with WWF support, changes in KCAMC and LNP have been assessed and reviewed. This process was less costly, more effective, and allowed for more local participation during the process. These periodic surveys and annual change monitoring processes will help local organizations as well as WWF with a snapshot of the GESI status. The process is expected to show whether our conservation and sustainable development activities are narrowing gender and social gaps by looking at which groups are benefiting from activities, which groups are in decision-making positions, and looking through gender, good governance, and social audit lenses. In relation to this, our most important current challenge is how to bring partners (including local CSOs and CBOs) with differing priorities on the same page on GESI issues and GRB capacity.

7. CONCLUSION AND LEARNING

Since 2013, WWF has started mainstreaming GESI/GRB issues strategically, and in a planned way, with the vision that by the end of 2018, all conservation and development efforts of WWF and its implementing partners will be more inclusive, responsive and sensitive to gender and social equality. WWF also aimed to build an in-depth understanding on gender, conservation, and livelihoods linkages among those involved in biodiversity conservation, particularly at the strategic and planning levels, as well as produce tangible evidence of learning and social transformation in issues specific conservation, and share these with broader audiences at national, regional and global levels.

To move from learning and reflection into action, some assessment tools have been developed, tested and contextualized for WWF Nepal's diverse portfolio, scope, work priorities and limitations with peer organizations, as well as the national and global context. When formulating the Interim Plan, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), highly emphasized making all development budget and plans responsive to gender equality and social inclusion concerns⁵⁷. Though WWF has been conducting activities that address gender and women's economic empowerment, this has not yet been well reflected in its planning and strategic documentation and reporting as separate components. It has been felt that addressing this agenda is a challenge for WWF because of limited resources, including a lack of human resources and technical expertise to address GESI and GRB issues. It is necessary to allocate budgets to address these issues, with priority given in each level of the planning process. Currently, WWF has been working primarily in four different conservation modalities with other INGOs and the Government of Nepal as key strategic partners. Among them, the significant ones are: Protected Area and Buffer Zone Management, Community Forest Management, Community Conservation Area Management and Integrated River Basin Management, implemented through different strategic partners who have their own GESI and GRB perspective and learning. Mainstreaming of the GESI agenda through diverse management and implementation actors is neither an easy task, nor do we have a commonly agreed consensus on WWF approach that would help streamline and bring them on the same strategic page. WWF has felt that there is no need to develop a separate GESI/GRB strategy, rather preferring to contribute to effective and efficient implementation of existing government policies and directives. Another rationale behind this is that WWF does not have any other objective besides providing implementation and facilitation support for MoFSC's existing policies, strategies and directives regarding biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, MoFSC and its departments are a major strategic partner for WWF, making our role that of a facilitator and implementer of MoFSC aims.

Recently, WWF has completed GESI/GRB capacity building orientation to fully implement and mainstream this agenda in all stages of the conservation program cycle. This will require more commitment and support from our conventional and non-conventional donors, strategic and implementing partners, and civil society in the long run. WWF is also working on narrowing the knowledge gaps on GESI linkages

⁵⁷ Gender Responsive Budgeting Directive (2012), Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu

with program outcomes, enhancing institutional learning and understanding initiatives from a lens that focuses more on gender, conservation and sustainable development linkages. We are developing an analysis methodology, inclusive and responsive indicators, and integrating these in all stages of the monitoring framework, as well as building the capacity and understanding of those involved in our work. This learning and reflection processes emphasizes peer learning and sharing with national, regional and global audience and partners, documentation of learning, and aims to find relevant entry points through regular review, reflection and adaptive management to ensure issues are properly reflected, addressed and integrated in the conservation planning process. All these will eventually transform WWF Nepal's conservation and sustainable development interventions, making GESI issues an integral part of planning and design of WWF programs and projects.

OUR LEARNING

- Conservation and sustainable development is an opportunity to transform the traditional roles of women, vulnerable and small farmers from subsistence to productive, community management, and leadership.
- Conservation of wildlife does not always generate threats to livelihoods, it also adds value through generated revenue (e.g. 50% of National Park Revenue goes back to communities through BZUC) that could be used for most affected and excluded groups, support to narrow gender inequality.
- Richer biodiversity (e.g. increase in tigers and rhinos) affects the role, access, and use of services by women, farmers, children and most affected communities living in and around core area. For example, during a wild elephant scare, most of the women savings & credit organizations introduced indoor enterprises at Madi Valley of Chitwan. Similarly, increasing numbers and movement of tigers have made parents of children in the Khata corridor anxious as their children have to go to school through the corridor jungle.
- To ensure sustainable conservation, priority should given to resources rather than services or a development wish list. For example, conservation of watersheds sustain life and increase land productivity, but direct services might generate disparity. Ensuring sustainable sources of water is more valuable to the community than construction and distribution of water taps. If water is available at the source, the community can figure out a way to use it themselves and develop their own distribution mechanism.
- Women's groups are more effective at mobilizing endowments and revolving funds to bringing changes in their subsistence dependency. Their leadership at the local level can bring changes in the entire landscape.
- Increased involvement of women, affected communities, and small farmers in conservation and sustainable development ensures higher community contribution, producing more leverage.
- Most of the budget allocated for biodiversity and wildlife indirectly benefits communities, and linkage analysis is required to reflect this in documentation.
- Most biodiversity budgets are either neutral and or benefit indirectly when it comes to gender equality and social inclusion issues.

WOMEN IN ANTI-POACHING

Engagement of local youth and women through CBAPUs significantly contributed to control poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Their role needs to be recognized while sharing revenue received from national parks for economic empowerment and to develop conservation leadership.





- Gender responsive budgeting and planning has not been owned as a priority at the project and management committee levels.
- Gender responsive budgeting and planning is better understood and applied in community forest management, when compared to protected areas and integrated river basin management.
- Gender and social inclusion issues have not been systematically incorporated into the planning process though most interventions generate opportunities and services that benefit the community.
- LGCM and Change monitoring processes are effective approaches to periodically and annually monitor and document gender and social inclusion and its relation to the conservation process.
- A diversity in conservation project management and governance modalities have led to diverse GESI impacts that depend on the project's priority and nature. Community forest management has allocated budget for direct GESI responsive activities compared to IRBM and PABZ. However, investment in wildlife and watershed conservation has potential for more sustainable ways of narrowing gender disparity and vulnerability. For example, availability of water sources reduces the workloads of women, and revenue from wildlife through parks generates employment and empowerment opportunities. This is a long term investment and provides enduring benefits to women and wildlife vulnerable communities.
- WWF's global and regional conservation strategies and priorities have often overlooked gender and social inclusion issues as root causes of biodiversity threats, although there is ample scope to look into this.
- Ownership and practice of gender responsive budget planning and GESI auditing is a challenge at user committee and project levels.
- A Social Development for Conservation approach might be an effective platform for building common understanding and enhancing ownership of GESI and GRB issues in national, regional and global partners.

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+100

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1961

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+5M

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