



Fauna & Flora International's position on gender in conservation

BACKGROUND

Women and men interact with and use biodiversity and natural resources in different ways; they thus have different knowledge and perspectives, different impacts, and are differently affected by changes in biodiversity and natural resources, including those that result from conservation interventions. In many conservation interventions there has been a tendency to view communities as a whole with not enough attention given to differentiation, diversity and power dynamics within them, and thus the rights, needs and views of women, and other marginalised groups, have been overlooked. Ethically, it is important to consider gender so that women are not further disadvantaged by conservation policy and practice, and there is a growing body of evidence that gender equality and women's empowered participation, alongside men, leads to more effective and sustainable conservation.

The importance of gender in conservation policy and practice is recognised in a range of international agreements including Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD is now implementing its second Gender Plan of Action (2015 – 2020) which includes objectives to mainstream a gender perspective and to promote gender equality in achieving the objectives of Convention, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

EXISTING COMMITMENTS

FFI's current position in relation to livelihoods and governance states that FFI will endeavour to ensure that our conservation activities do not disadvantage or undermine poor, vulnerable or marginalised people who are dependent upon or live adjacent to natural resources, and wherever possible [we] will seek to conserve biodiversity in ways that enhance local well-being and social equity. We are also committed to respecting human rights, promoting their protection and realisation within our conservation programmes, and supporting the governance systems that can secure those rights.

In order to uphold these commitments, and to ensure that women and men have equal access to, participation in and opportunities to benefit from the projects we implement and support, it is necessary to integrate gender into them. Over the past few years FFI has developed an increasing awareness of and focus on gender and conservation. This position represents FFI's current approach and ambition in relation to gender¹.

POSITION STATEMENT

We will endeavour to ensure that all FFI programmes integrate gender, that women have equal access to project resources and information, equal participation, and equal opportunities to benefit from FFI supported activities, and that our work creates or supports systems that promote gender equality.

¹ The focus of this position is FFI's conservation programming but it aligns with FFI's commitment to equality as set out in our Equal Opportunities Policy.



OUR APPROACH

We recognise that:

- Gender is the term used to describe the culturally and socially given attributes, roles, and responsibilities associated with being male or female. It concerns power relations between women and men which generally disadvantage women, and affects both men and women's behaviour and opportunities.
- Neither women nor men are homogenous groups. Gender is just one dimension of social diversity and intersects with other factors of differentiation within a community including age, social status, wealth, ethnicity, and so on.
- As a social construct gender is context specific, but it is also dynamic and changes over time.
- Women and men use, value and have different knowledge of natural resources because of their different roles and responsibilities; in this way the use, knowledge and the values associated with natural resources and biodiversity can be gendered.
- Women's roles are often less visible than men's and decision making structures and processes often reflect the gender and social divisions within a community and tend to be dominated by men of higher wealth and social status. Thus men tend to participate in and benefit more from conservation interventions than women.
- The exclusion or inadequate participation of women can lead to conservation interventions based on un- or under-informed data and assumptions, negatively affecting outcomes.
- The effective participation of women, alongside men, leads to better conservation and wellbeing outcomes.

We will therefore endeavour to ensure that:

- Gender is considered in all stages of the project cycle, including in assessment, planning and design, implementation and monitoring, and review and evaluation.
- All projects develop an understanding of the different rights and responsibilities of men and women in the specific context and differences in their use, knowledge and perceptions of biodiversity and natural resources, and consider how these differences and inequalities may or do affect project implementation and outcomes, and vice versa.
- Project specific strategies and activities are developed and implemented to promote women's meaningful participation in project related activities including decision making fora; at the very least, projects will analyse and take steps to address the barriers that prevent or inhibit the participation of women and other marginalised groups and will proactively engage with these groups to ensure that their needs, knowledge and perspectives are included in project decision making.
- Projects are informed by gender and socially disaggregated data at all stages of the project cycle, monitor women's participation, and assess project outcomes for women and for men, including how the project impacts gender relations.
- We explore and implement a variety of project approaches that seek to address some of the systemic barriers to gender equality - relating to structures, policies, practices and relations at all levels that tend to exclude and marginalise women –



that have the potential to contribute to both conservation outcomes and women's empowerment and gender equality more widely².

- Men are actively involved, as appropriate, in our attempts to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.
- We engage and collaborate with partners, donors and others to promote the integration of gender within our joint and complementary activities.
- We raise awareness and reflect, share and learn – both individually and organisationally - from our own and others experience, to ensure that we are continually learning and developing our approach and contributing to improved practice across the conservation sector more widely.
- We secure adequate funding to enable us to realise these commitments.
- Our organisational policies, systems and practices support the integration of gender, and the monitoring of actions and progress made towards fulfilling the ambitions outlined in this position.

Implementation and monitoring

- This position forms our overall approach and principles of action and is accompanied by a gender strategy which is our plan of action. Both the position and strategy will be formally reviewed after 4 years, although the strategy may be revised annually to reflect progress and developments.
- Annual progress will be tracked and reported on by FFI's gender technical specialist, supported by conservation partnership and programme staff.
- Adhering to this position requires the commitment of all FFI staff as well as the support of and promotion by senior management.

² This could include, for example, a social norms approach, engaging men on women's empowerment and gender issues, promoting women's leadership and influence on decision making, supporting women's collective action, and other approaches that have the potential to contribute to both conservation and gender equality outcomes such as integrated Population, Health and Environment (PHE) projects.