Lessons from a
Gender-focused Portfolio Review of Forest Projects

A recent gender-focused portfolio review of 56 WBG forest projects[1] from FY11-16 identified the gender dimensions in analyses, actions, and M&E indicators at project design and during implementation. The review revealed that while progress was made to include gender throughout the project cycle, disconnects and missed opportunities remain. The review hopes to stimulate more widespread dialogue with task teams on what gender targets, and timeframes for achieving them, the Global Practice should adopt.
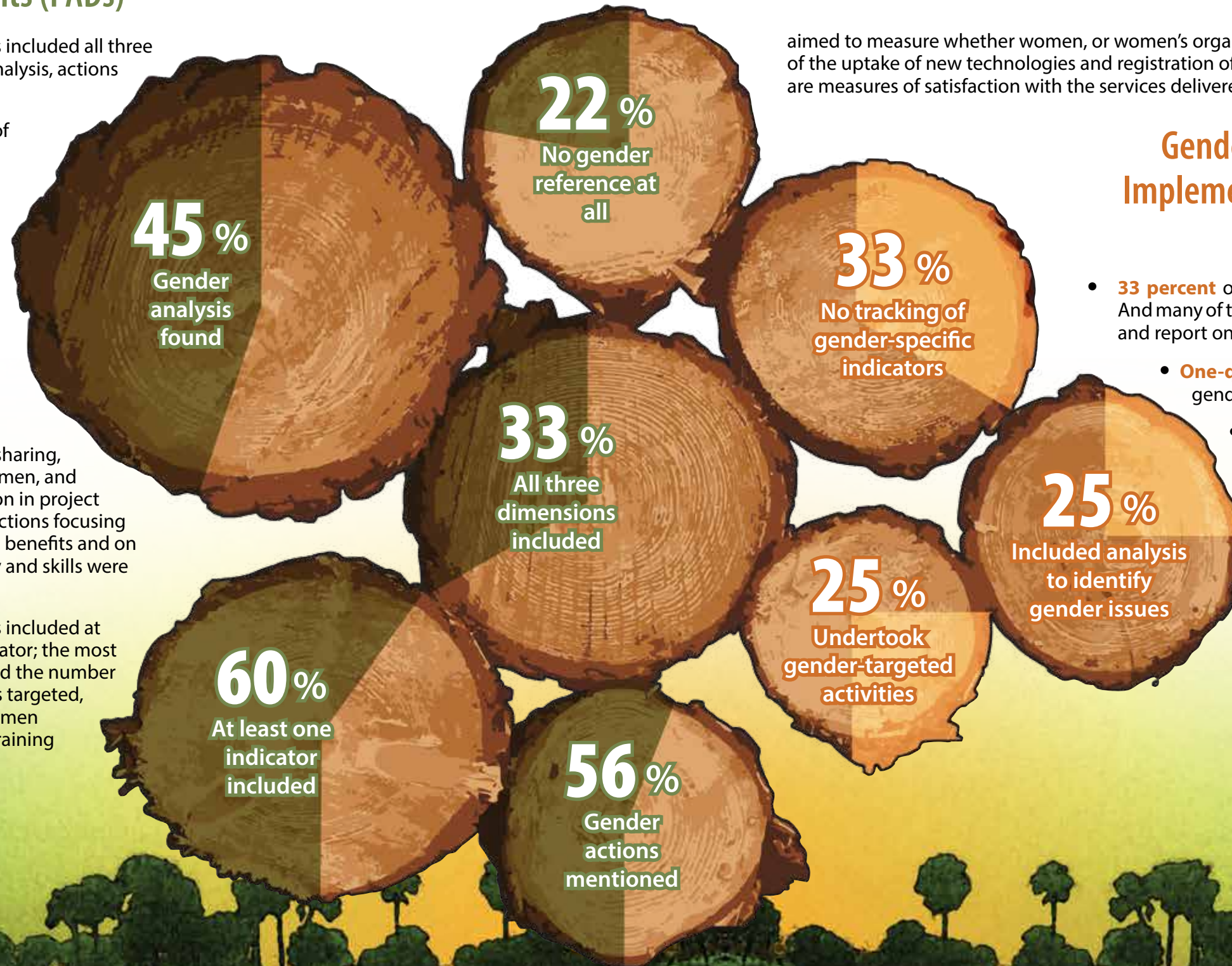
Key messages

- Progress has been made towards including gender throughout project life cycles, but there remain many opportunities for improvements.

- Good intentions for integrating gender in project activities at the design phase do not always translate into interventions in practice. Most projects signaled an intention to "ensure participation of women," but at the design phase, many were unable to say what approach or what strategies or actions they would pursue to do so.

- In practice, indicators of progress towards desired gender outcomes are seldom being tracked. Without designated gender sections in key reporting documents, gender actions that are being undertaken are likely being under-reported.

- The key to addressing gender is to identify relevant gender gaps in the earliest stages of project design, plan actions to address the gaps and monitor progress towards closing them with appropriate indicators in the results framework.

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1   This included projects with at least 50% of their budget designated to forest-related activities.

Results

Gender at design stage based on Project Appraisal Documents (PADs)

- **33 percent** of projects included all three dimensions: gender analysis, actions and M&E indicators

- **Twenty-two** percent of projects included no gender reference at all

- A gender analysis was found in **45 percent** of projects

- Gender actions were mentioned in **56 percent** of projects but with little specificity. The most frequently described actions were gender-inclusive information sharing, consultations with women, and women's representation in project governance bodies. Actions focusing on women's economic benefits and on building their capacity and skills were less frequently found

- **60 percent** of projects included at least one gender indicator; the most common ones included the number of women participants targeted, and the number of women trained (with type of training often unclear). Others

aimed to measure whether women, or women's organizations, benefit directly from the project. Measures of the uptake of new technologies and registration of land by women are also found. Also related to benefits are measures of satisfaction with the services delivered or other benefits received through the initiative.

Gender under implementation: based on Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs) for the same project

- **33 percent** of projects did not track any gender-specific indicators. And many of those that did include gender indicators failed to measure and report on them.

  - **One-quarter** of projects included a gender analysis to identify gender issues not considered in the design phase

  - **One-quarter** of projects undertook gender-targeted activities. Activities included designing grants for women engaged in non-timber forest product activities, ensuring women's representation on forest committees at the local and national level, and in technical forest-related training for women

45 % Gender analysis found

22 % No gender reference at all

33 % No tracking of gender-specific indicators

33 % All three dimensions included

25 % Included analysis to identify gender issues

60 % At least one indicator included

25 % Undertook gender-targeted activities

56 % Gender actions mentioned

Recommendations and next steps

This review highlights the need for task teams that are designing projects and programs to:

- **Identify project-relevant gender gaps**. Seek out gender studies from the client and stakeholders on potential gender gaps in forest landscapes in the earliest stages of project and program design.

- **Be specific and explicit**. Use participatory approaches to identify critical gender gaps and jointly design strategies aimed at tackling them. For example, if women have been largely excluded from forest decision-making bodies in part due to their lack of awareness and skills, actions could include inclusive technical trainings (held at times and in locations convenient for women), establishing rotating leadership or other rules for community forest groups that enhance women's active participation, recruiting women facilitators as project team members, etc.

- **Include actions aimed at ensuring equitable benefits and empowerment**. These include equitable access to information and involvement in developing new forest and agroforest-related technologies, businesses, and value chains; receiving grants; or registering land, for example.

- **Report regularly**. Enforcing reporting of gender-related actions and results at regular intervals is key to measuring whether progress towards gender outcomes is being made and learning lessons on how and what is working.

- **Ensure gender skills, tools, and funding for each project**. Training project staff in gender skills and providing user-friendly tools and sufficient funding are basic for successful integration of gender in projects.

Additional resources

PROFOR. 2017. Gender-focused Porfolio Review of Forest Projects for the Environment and Natural resources Program. Program on Forests (PROFOR), World Bank. Available at: http://www.profor.info/knowledge/catalyzing-gender-forests-actions

Resources (key literature, tools, guide) for addressing forest-related gender gaps at: http://www.profor.info/knowledge/catalyzing-gender-forests-actions

Examples from IUCN of countries with gender and REDD+ roadmap action plans: http://genderandenvironment.org/resource/cameroon-ghana-ugandas-gender-redd-roadmaps-anational-policy-level-initiative/