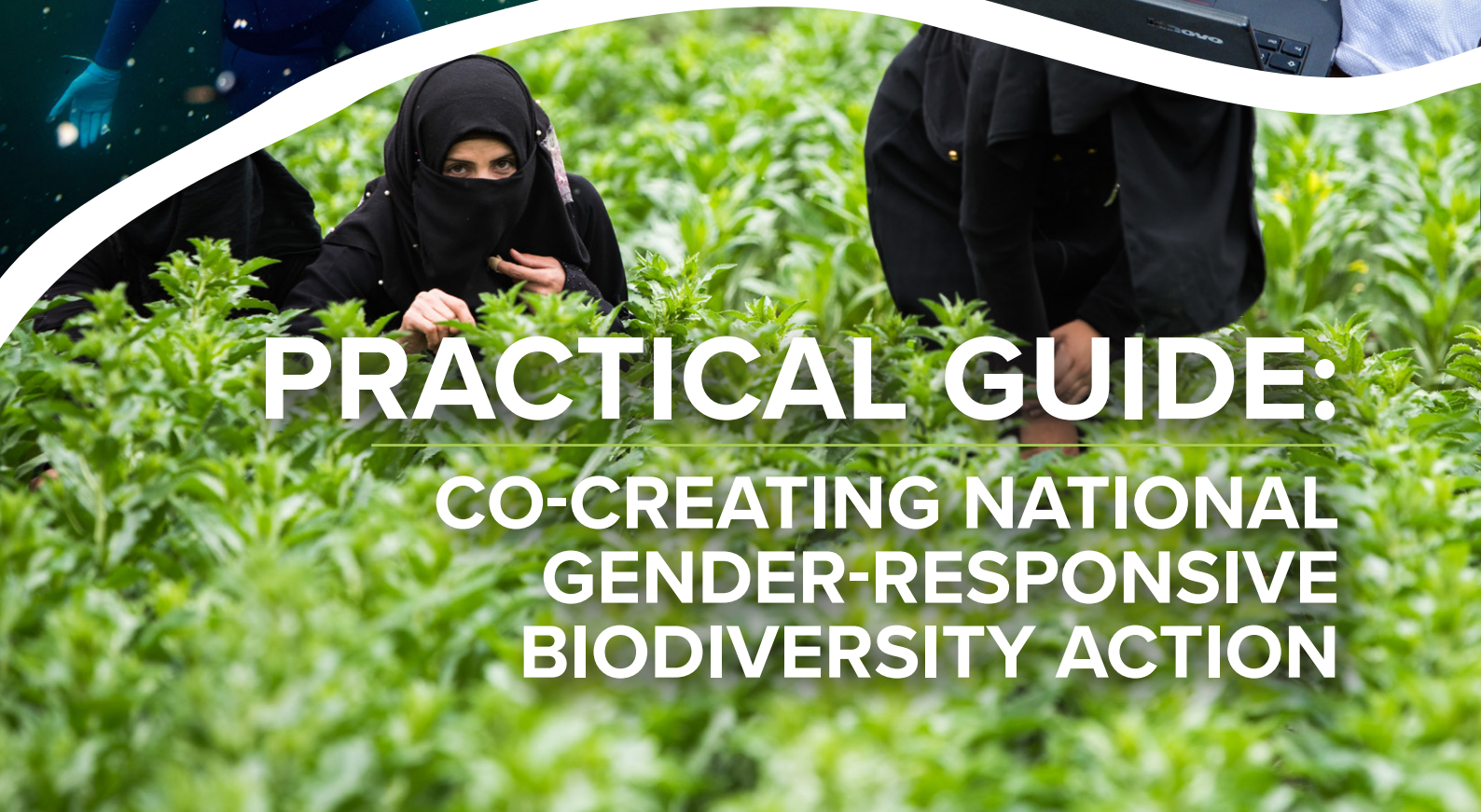








# PRACTICAL GUIDE:

## CO-CREATING NATIONAL GENDER-RESPONSIVE BIODIVERSITY ACTION

## LIMITED EDITION

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Through the project *Accelerating Systemic Change for Gender Equality and Biodiversity Conservation through NBSAPs*, Antigua and Barbuda, Comoros, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Tajikistan, Thailand and Togo led national co-creation processes to strengthen gender-responsive biodiversity planning and implementation. Countries undertook activities that enhanced institutional capacities, deepened understanding of the gender-biodiversity nexus, identified gender and biodiversity priorities, and strengthened the participation and leadership of women in all their diversity.

Practical experiences and lessons learned from the seven countries informed the development of the Gender and Biodiversity Resource Collection, comprising the *Practical Guide: Co-Creating National Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action* and a set of accompanying tools and templates to support countries seeking to strengthen gender-responsive biodiversity action in their own contexts. Together, these resources contribute to global knowledge exchange and support implementation of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, particularly **Targets 22** and **23** as well as the **CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030)**.

The project was funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by the **NBSAP Accelerator Partnership,** in partnership with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, and **Bioversity International (as part of the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT)**, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.

## PROJECT RESOURCES

**https://nbsapaccelerator.org/gender-and-biodiversity/**

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# INTRODUCTION

Advancing gender equality and biodiversity goals together can create powerful, mutually reinforcing outcomes for people and nature. Around the world, women – particularly women from indigenous peoples and local communities (IP&LCs) – play critical roles as stewards, knowledge holders, managers and defenders of biodiversity. Their leadership, knowledge systems and everyday practices sustain ecosystems, strengthen food systems and livelihoods and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

When women in all their diversity are recognized and realize their rights, they are able to exercise agency, access resources, participate meaningfully in decision-making and lead solutions that enhance biodiversity. This strengthens biodiversity outcomes alongside broader social, economic and environmental gains.

At the same time, prevalent inequalities often limit women's abilities to fully contribute to and benefit from biodiversity governance and action. Unequal access to land, natural resources, finance, education, technologies and decision-making spaces constrains opportunities for many women and girls, particularly those facing intersecting forms of marginalization.

**Intersecting forms of marginalization or 'intersectionality',** refers to the recognition that people experience multiple, overlapping and compounding forms of advantage or disadvantage based on characteristics such as gender, age, indigenous status, ethnicity, disability, income or location, which together shape their opportunities, participation and experiences.

**A gender-responsive approach** acknowledges and addresses the different needs, roles and experiences of people of different genders. It aims to identify and address gender inequalities, ensure equitable outcomes by adapting interventions to meet the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys and avoid reinforcing existing inequalities.

Source: UNDP (2025)

Addressing these barriers requires moving beyond isolated actions toward more systemic and holistic approaches that place gender equality and women in all their diversity – including indigenous women, women with disabilities, young women, older women, rural women, and other groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination – at the centre of biodiversity solutions. Such approaches can help foster enabling environments where women's leadership, rights, collective action, knowledge and environmental stewardship are recognized, valued and supported.

Countries are increasingly recognizing that gender-responsive approaches are essential not only for achieving biodiversity objectives, but also for advancing wider national priorities related to sustainable development, climate resilience, food security, health, livelihoods, gender equality, social inclusion and human well-being. Likewise, the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) recognizes that successful implementation of biodiversity commitments depends on achieving gender equality, empowering women and girls and reducing inequalities.

***Gender-responsive biodiversity action co-created with actors and stakeholders through inclusive and equitable processes can generate multiple benefits simultaneously, strengthening ecosystems while supporting more just and resilient societies. Identifying strategic entry points where gender equality and biodiversity objectives intersect and are mutually reinforcing can help countries unlock more impactful, durable and inclusive outcomes across sectors and scales.***



Photo: National Center for Biodiversity and Biosafety (Tajikistan)



Photo: National Center for Biodiversity and Biosafety (Tajikistan)

# ABOUT THIS PRACTICAL GUIDE

This Practical Guide is primarily intended for national decision-makers and the teams responsible for developing and implementing national biodiversity strategies, plans and programmes. This audience may include policymakers, government officers, gender–biodiversity focal points and consultants who have a role in the gender-responsive development and implementation of biodiversity policy and action.

***The guide aims to support countries in leading a participatory process to co-create gender-responsive biodiversity actions and identify national gender and biodiversity priorities. It proposes a five-step process accompanied by practical tools that country teams can use and adapt to their context.***

***The suggested process is not a prescriptive or one-size-fits-all methodology, nor does it create additional obligations or reporting requirements under the Convention. Rather, it provides flexible guidance that countries can adapt and tailor to their national circumstances, capacities and priorities, reflecting the project's own experience of designing, refining and adapting activities in response to country-specific needs and contexts.***

The proposed process contributes to efforts to pursue a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to developing gender-responsive biodiversity actions, priorities and plans. It can help countries strengthen the engagement of women and men in all their diversity, including from IP&LCs, in shaping national gender-responsive biodiversity strategies, plans and programmes at all levels. It promotes a human rights-based approach, recognizing that gender-responsive biodiversity action should respect, protect, promote and fulfill human rights, including the rights of women and girls and of IP&LCs to full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership in decision-making related to biodiversity.

The Practical Guide aligns with national processes related to the implementation of the KM-GBF, including the revision and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), while also offering insights that may be relevant to broader sustainable development agendas and efforts under the other Rio Conventions (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification [UNCCD]).

The guide also draws strongly on the **CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030)**, which was adopted to support and promote the gender responsive implementation of the KM-GBF. The guide complements existing guidance and capacity-strengthening resources that support mainstreaming gender equality in NBSAPs1 by providing countries with practical tools.

A **whole-of-government approach** is a coordinated approach in which government institutions across sectors and levels collaborate to achieve shared biodiversity objectives.

A **whole-of-society approach** is an inclusive approach that engages governments, IP&LCs, women, youth, civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders in biodiversity planning, implementation and monitoring.

**Importantly, this guide is grounded in practice and experience.** It draws on lessons, examples and reflections from seven partner countries that piloted this process in diverse social, ecological and institutional contexts. Over 18 months (2025–2026), **Antigua and Barbuda, Comoros, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Tajikistan, Thailand and Togo** participated in the project *Accelerating Systemic Change for Gender Equality and Biodiversity Conservation through NBSAP*s, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, UNDP, UNEP and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, with the support of the Secretariat of the CBD.

Countries undertook activities that enhanced institutional capacities, deepened understanding of the gender–biodiversity nexus, identified gender and biodiversity priorities and strengthened the participation and leadership of women and men in co-creating gender-responsive biodiversity actions. The tools presented in this guidance were developed at the request of the seven countries for tailored support and have been refined based on these countries' experiences. Users are encouraged to further adapt them as they apply them in their own contexts.

***Across the board, country experiences demonstrate that integrating gender equality and biodiversity objectives is not a parallel or additional agenda, but rather an opportunity to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of ongoing biodiversity action.***




***Figure 1:*** *Map of partner countries whose feedback and experiences informed the Practical Guide and accompanying tools and templates*

1 The Practical Guide complements guidance found in, for example, the UNDP Learning for Nature e-learning course **Mainstreaming Gender Equality into NBSAPs**, drawn from UNDP (2024), as well as other key resources (e.g., UN Women 2018; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2019). Additional gender and biodiversity guidance and resources can be accessed at the Convention on Biological Diversity's **Gender and Biodiversity** main page.

# OVERVIEW OF THE JOURNEY: HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

*By bringing gender equality, women's agency and leadership, and biodiversity action together in mutually reinforcing ways, countries have an opportunity to catalyze transformative change that benefits both people and planet. This Practical Guide seeks to support and inspire that journey.*

**The following five-step process offers a foundation for countries to co-create gender-responsive biodiversity action:**

1. Operationalize a multisectoral working group
2. Identify and engage relevant actors
3. Understand the gender–biodiversity nexus in the national context
4. Co-identify national gender and biodiversity priority actions
5. Develop an implementation plan

The individual steps, or waypoints, along the journey are intended as flexible navigation aids to help countries chart their own path (Figure 2). As the various pathways depict, the process is not necessarily linear, and there is no single, correct path. Rather, each country is encouraged to forge its own journey based on its specific context, needs, and priorities. Some may choose to focus on only a selection of the waypoints, to move between them in a different sequence or to revisit key waypoints as new insights emerge and circumstances evolve.

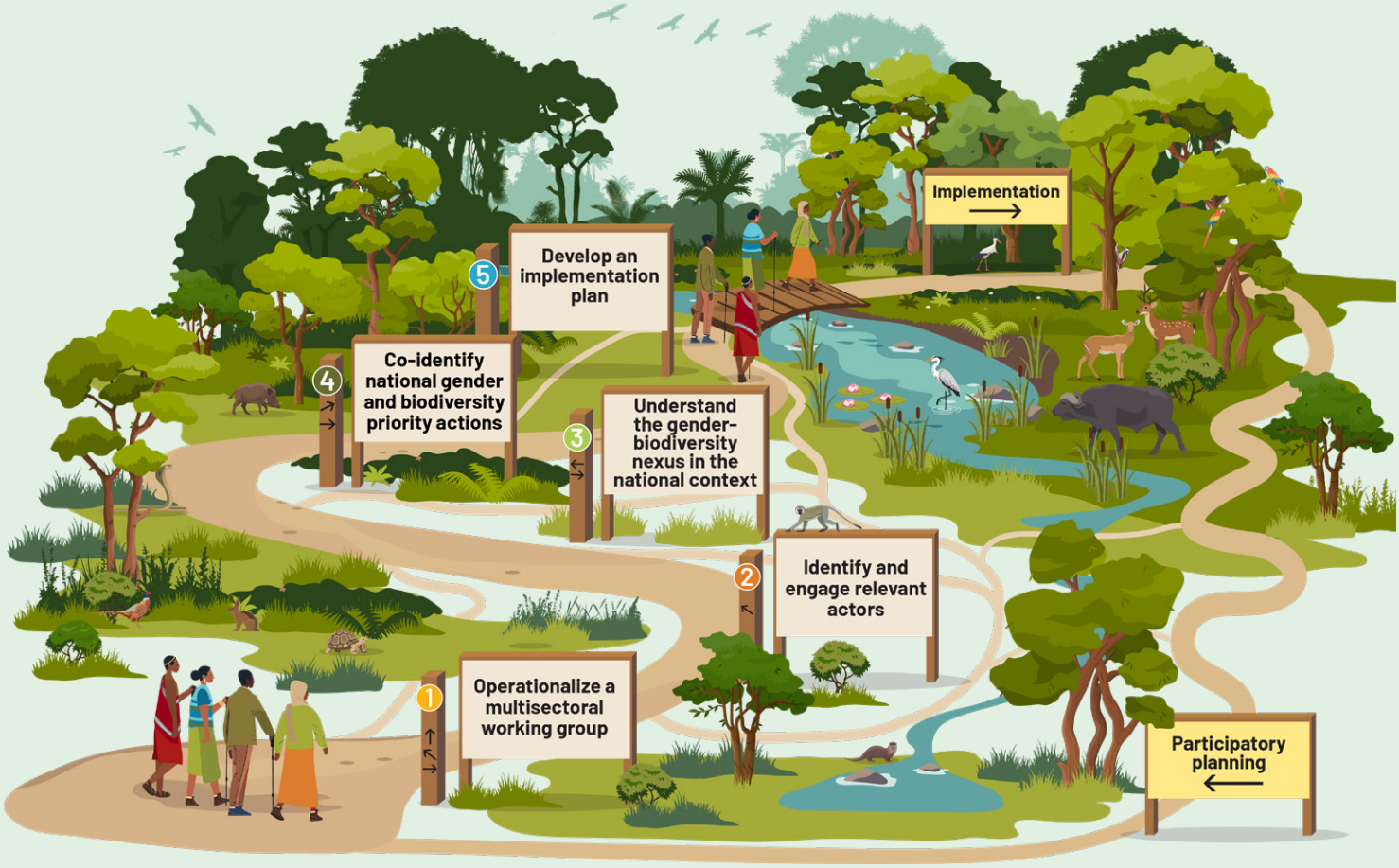



***Figure 2:*** *Proposed journey for co-creating gender-responsive biodiversity action*

**Throughout the guide, two types of resources provide additional practical guidance and examples:**

**COUNTRY REFLECTIONS**

**Country examples** draw directly on the experiences of the seven partner countries that participated in the project, showing how different aspects of the co-creation process were approached in practice. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

The partner countries navigated through the waypoints in different ways, demonstrating the range of possible pathways. **Annexes 1 and 2** provide illustrative examples of the co-creation journeys of two of the partner countries: Eswatini and Tajikistan.

**TOOL SPOTLIGHT**

**Tool spotlights** introduce standalone practical tools that provide more detailed 'how-to' guidance for specific parts of the process. The full Resource Collection can be accessed directly from the guide and used or adapted according to country needs.

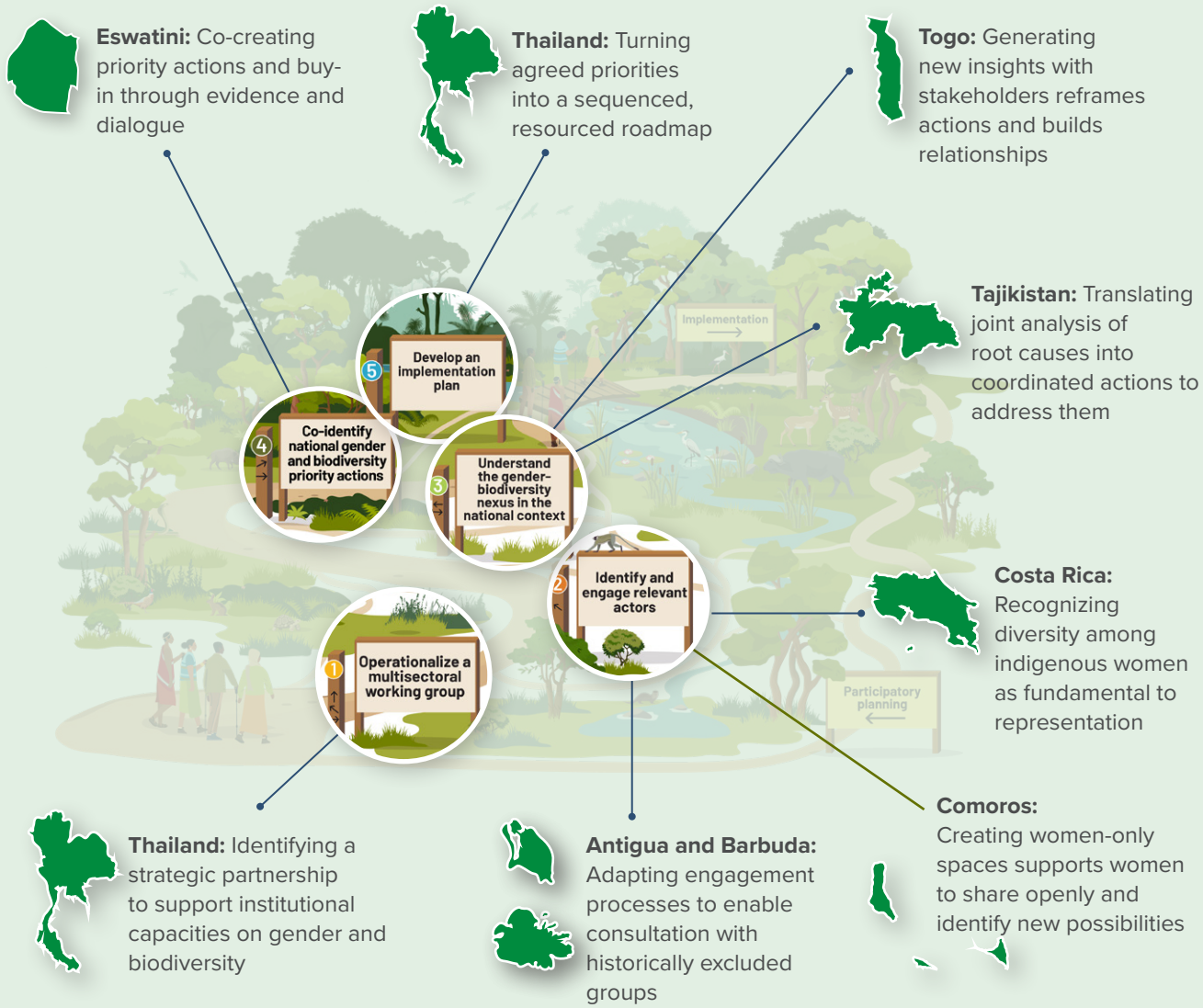



*Figure 3: Partner country experiences illustrating the steps in the journey*

# BACKGROUND: TOWARDS MUTUALLY REINFORCING GENDER EQUALITY–BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES

***Gender equality and biodiversity are closely interconnected. The ways in which people use, manage, conserve and benefit from biodiversity are shaped by social norms, roles, responsibilities, access to resources and decision-making power – all of which are influenced by gender.***

Understanding the gender–biodiversity nexus therefore involves examining how gender relations influence biodiversity outcomes and how changes in biodiversity and ecosystems, in turn, affect women, men and different social groups in distinct ways. It also means recognizing that gender shapes women's and men's environmental roles, knowledge, agency and stewardship and consequently the ways in which they contribute to and influence biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

The six dimensions depicted in Figure 4 and the inequalities they embed are interconnected and together shape women's agency and stewardship of biodiversity. Women are already important stewards and agents of change, contributing knowledge, labour, practices and innovations to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Yet they may possess extensive biodiversity knowledge while lacking rights to the resources they manage; contribute substantial labour without sharing equitably in the benefits; or participate in biodiversity governance without having meaningful influence over decisions. Their ability to exercise agency in biodiversity action therefore depends not only on their participation and contributions, but also on their rights, resources, voice and decision-making power.

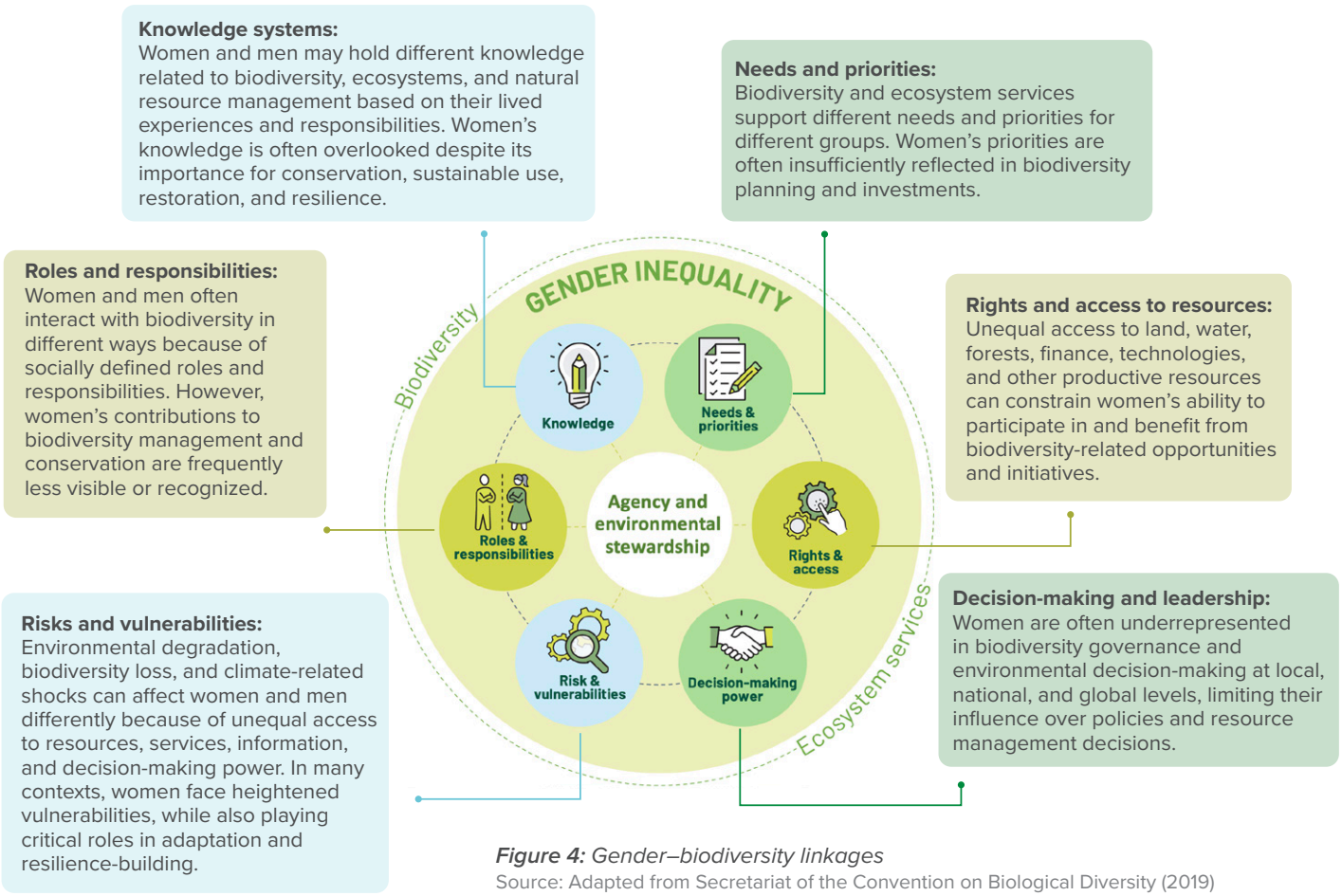



***Figure 4:*** *Gender–biodiversity linkages*
Source: Adapted from Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2019)

Recognizing these interconnected dimensions can help identify opportunities where advancing gender equality and strengthening biodiversity outcomes reinforce one another, while informing biodiversity policies and actions that are more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable.

Throughout this Practical Guide, all references to women and men should be understood through an intersectional lens, meaning that different groups of women and men have differentiated experiences, agency and stewardship and unequal opportunities and constraints when it comes to biodiversity. Unless otherwise indicated, in this guide, references to 'women' and 'men' generally refer to women and men in all their diversity, including IP&LCs.

The KM-GBF, the primary global policy framework guiding national biodiversity planning and action, explicitly recognizes this relationship. The **KM-GBF's Target 23** establishes a first-ever standalone global biodiversity target on gender equality, to "ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity." Complementing this, KM-GBF Target 22 emphasizes the inclusive participation and representation of women and IP&LCs in biodiversity governance.

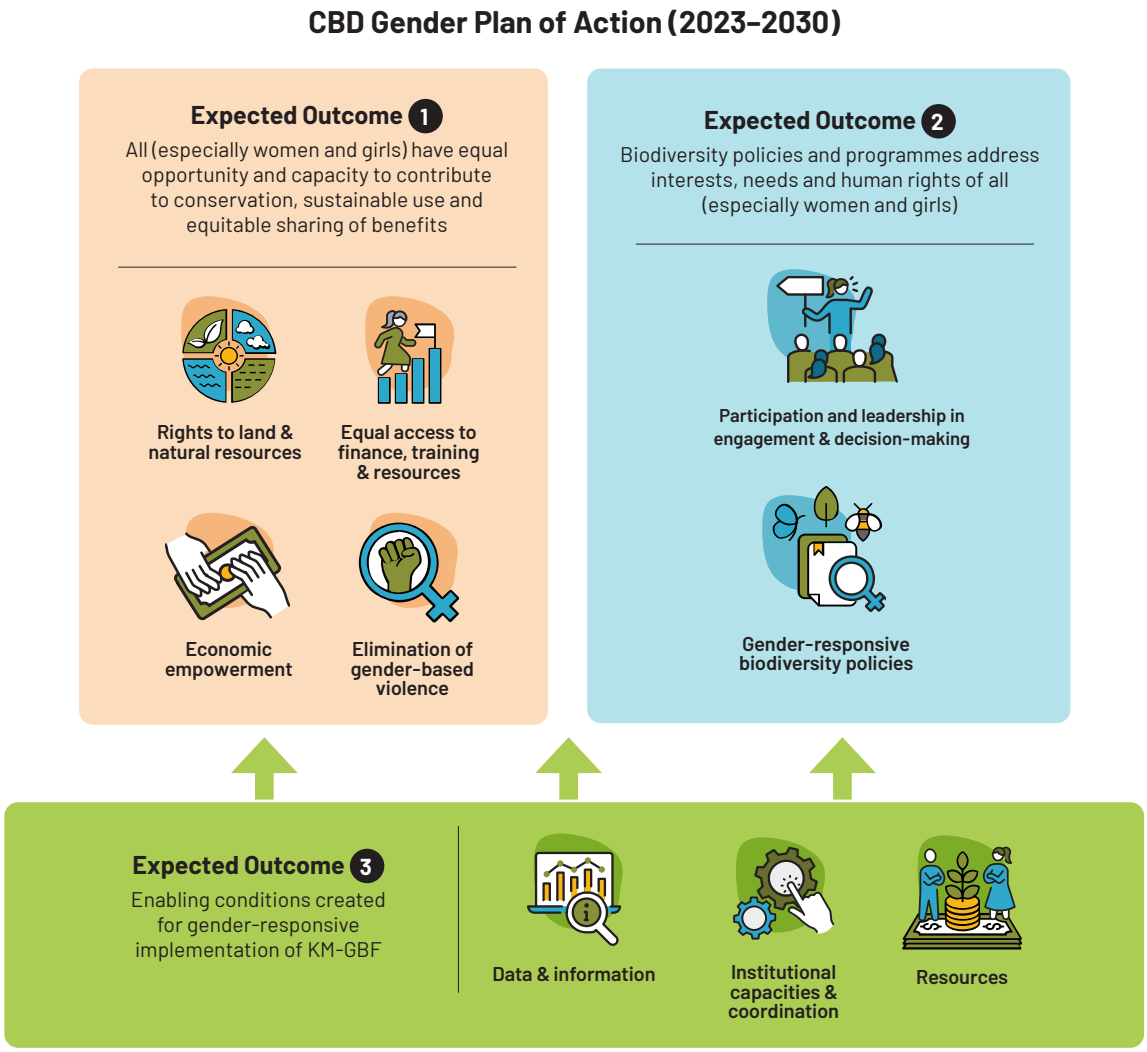



*Figure 5: Simplified interpretation of the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030), with its three Expected Outcomes and main areas covered by the Indicative Actions*

Together, these targets position gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as cross-cutting enablers essential to achieving all goals and targets of the Framework.

**The CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030)** adopted alongside the KM-GBF provides a pathway to support and promote the gender-responsive implementation of the Framework. Developed through broad and inclusive consultations involving governments, IP&LCs, women's organizations, civil society, gender and biodiversity experts, researchers and international organizations, the CBD Gender Plan of Action reflects a shared vision as well as a range of indicative actions to achieve those outcomes. It is expressed through three interrelated Expected Outcomes that span enabling conditions, policies and programmes and women's opportunities and capacities. **Figure 5** summarizes the key indicative action areas mapped to the three Expected Outcomes.

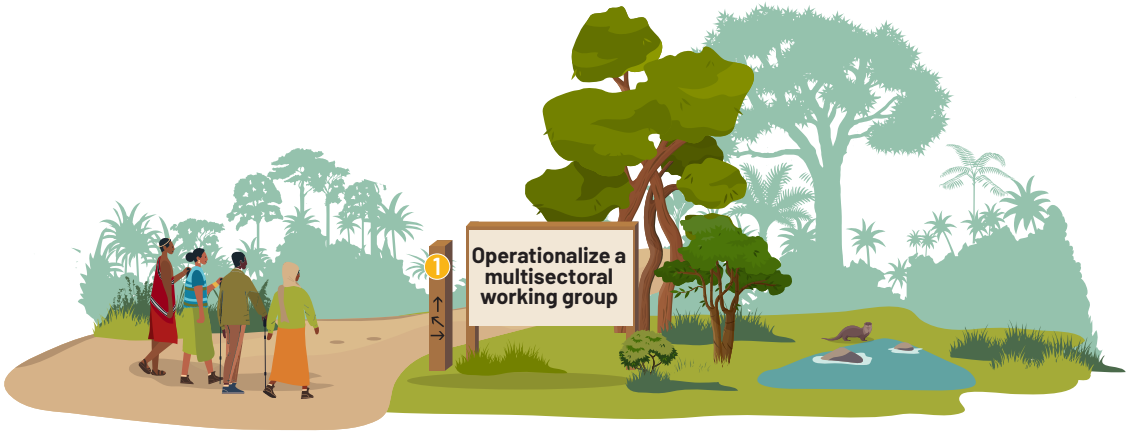
These indicative actions can serve as a valuable, albeit non-exhaustive, guide for countries seeking to strengthen gender equality in and through biodiversity policy, planning, implementation, monitoring and decision-making.

***At the core of advancing positive gender equality and biodiversity outcomes is the recognition that biodiversity action must centre the rights, knowledge, agency and leadership of women in all their diversity, particularly those from IP&LCs and other underrepresented groups. Importantly, this requires sustained engagement and collaborative actions with these key actors to ensure that biodiversity strategies and actions are relevant, legitimate and effective. It also requires seeking the engagement of men and boys, to ensure a collaborative and supportive approach towards achieving gender equality outcomes.***

Moreover, given the broad range of issues at stake, advancing gender equality and biodiversity goals together requires coordinated action across all levels of government and across sectors. As recognized in the KM-GBF, a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach is key to achieving biodiversity objectives while delivering benefits for people and nature. This is the starting point of the journey described in **Step 1**.



*The CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) is the primary CBD framework guiding gender-responsive implementation of the KM-GBF, and provides the foundation for this Practical Guide.*




# 1 STEP 1: OPERATIONALIZE A MULTISECTORAL WORKING GROUP

Building a strong, multisectoral working group provides a critical foundation for co-creating gender-responsive biodiversity action. **An effective working group should include the right combination of relevant institutions** — for example, government ministries, departments or units responsible for the environment and those responsible for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level (i.e., the national 'gender machinery') — along with relevant gender–biodiversity expertise. The group should also have sufficient convening and decision-making power to influence biodiversity action, strategies and plans.

**Establishing a formal cooperation agreement**, such as terms of reference or a memorandum of understanding, may be a necessary starting point. It will also be important to **define clear operating modalities for the working group from the outset** to ensure that it functions effectively, has the necessary relevance and decision-making power and is well integrated with ongoing biodiversity and environmental planning processes. Operational guidelines may be helpful and could include agreements on roles and responsibilities, dedicated resourcing for coordination and meeting expenses, accountability arrangements, meeting frequencies, decision-making procedures and how the group will interface with existing structures (e.g., NBSAP coordination mechanisms) and processes, such as biodiversity-related sectoral planning and programming, NBSAP development and implementation and initiatives under the other Rio Conventions.

A working group needs to represent the range of authority, expertise and practical experience required to guide the process effectively, while being agile and adaptive. Identifying the right mix of members may be an iterative process and the **group's composition can evolve over time** as priorities, partnerships and opportunities emerge.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 1.1




**Model Terms of Reference/ Procurement Notice for a Gender and Biodiversity Expert**

This tool is designed for country working groups that wish to procure a gender and biodiversity expert to deliver a key set of activities that contribute to planning gender-responsive biodiversity action, such as the revision or implementation of NBSAPs.

The tool proposes a scope of work, key activities, deliverables and desirable experience and qualifications.

Depending on the national context, the following key players may form the core group to initiate the process:

- CBD National Focal Point
- National Gender and Biodiversity Focal Point under the CBD
- Representatives from the national gender machinery
- Technical experts on gender and biodiversity
- Representatives from ministries responsible for the environment, biodiversity or natural resources
- Gender focal points from other ministries or conventions, such as the UNFCCC and UNCCD

While the working group itself may remain relatively small to facilitate effective coordination, **one of its primary roles will be to lead an inclusive process of co-creation that engages a broad range of actors and stakeholders** throughout the process. This process should ensure that the knowledge, priorities and perspectives of women in all their diversity, IP&LCs, youth, civil society and other relevant actors inform decision-making and shape gender-responsive biodiversity action.

Under the CBD, countries are encouraged to **appoint a national gender and biodiversity focal point**. This focal point has the potential to play a pivotal role in holding the mandate, assembling the group, elevating marginalized voices, supporting knowledge exchange and ensuring coordinated and coherent action across sectors and actors.

To be effective, **gender and biodiversity focal points require institutional authority, dedicated financial and human resources and the technical capacity to fulfil their mandate** – elements that are often limited in practice.[2] To support peer-to-peer learning among these focal points, the CBD Women's Caucus has established a Gender & Biodiversity Focal Points Network (Box 1). In addition to strengthening the authority, resourcing and technical capacity of these focal points, countries may wish to align or coordinate gender focal point functions across the Rio Conventions to capitalize on synergies and address shared priorities.

**The working group should include technical expertise on gender and biodiversity.** If there are gaps in institutional capacity, the core working group may consider hiring or procuring an expert consultant to lead the co-creation process and ensure there are opportunities to strengthen skills, knowledge and capacities on gender and biodiversity throughout.

### Box 1: **Gender & Biodiversity Focal Points Network**

The CBD Women's Caucus is a civil society network that advocates for gender-responsive biodiversity policy and the meaningful participation and leadership of women in CBD processes.

The Gender & Biodiversity Focal Points Network is a sustained coordination and peer-learning mechanism facilitated by the CBD Women's Caucus. It provides a dedicated space for officially designated CBD gender–biodiversity focal points to exchange information, strengthen capacities, share challenges and experiences and coordinate approaches to advance gender-responsive biodiversity policy and implementation at national and global levels. Focal points are welcome to engage on a voluntary basis.



Photo: CBD Women's Caucus

For more information, visit:
https://cbdwomenscaucus.org/initiatives/gender-and-biodiversity-focal-points-network/

2 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2026); Elias et al (2024).



COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Thailand:** Identifying a strategic partnership to support institutional capacities on gender and biodiversity

In Thailand, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is the principal agency responsible for mobilizing implementation of the NBSAP. This includes supporting better gender integration in NBSAP planning, budgeting and monitoring.

Despite ONEP's commitment to improving gender mainstreaming, there were challenges due to gaps in institutional capacity, expertise and experience on gender as it relates to biodiversity. These capacity constraints resulted in difficulties translating gender concepts into solid analysis and actionable plans, as well as limited gender integration in biodiversity-related project and funding proposals.

To address these gaps, the ONEP team mapped out relevant agencies that could provide the input and expertise required. They identified the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWF) of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security as a strategic partner and requested that DWF join as a core partner agency to support the development of a Gender Action Plan and Roadmap. Throughout the co-creation process, DWF participated in consultations with stakeholders and provided technical inputs to ONEP, which strengthened mutual understanding and cooperation among the agencies in support of future gender and biodiversity initiatives.

To support the ongoing partnership, ONEP is in the process of appointing DWF as a serving member of two subcommittees: the Subcommittee on Biodiversity Negotiation Coordination and International Cooperation and the Subcommittee on Integrated Biodiversity Management under the National Committee on Conservation and Utilization of Biodiversity.

*Thailand's experience illustrates what is possible when institutions with biodiversity and gender equality mandates are brought together as partners with formal standing: expertise flows both ways and the relationship continues well beyond the planning process that first convened them.*



Photo: Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (Thailand)



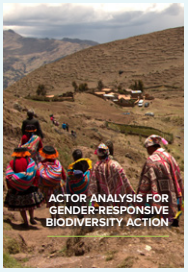

# 2 STEP 2: IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE RELEVANT ACTORS

Meaningful engagement is a core principle that runs throughout the co-creation process, featuring in every subsequent step or waypoint of the journey. But it is also a crucial waypoint itself, a distinct marker to ensure that engagement is considered early in the journey and adequately programmed and resourced.

**Mapping the full range of actors and stakeholder groups at the gender–biodiversity nexus** lays the foundation for inclusive and effective engagement throughout the process. For example, in Togo, initial engagement with local communities for the gender and biodiversity analysis led to the establishment of a database of women's organizations and networks to tap into for future biodiversity target setting and project implementation. Depending on the national context, these key actors may include representatives of gender institutions, gender experts, women's organizations and networks and IP&LCs, among others.

Many of these actors may already be familiar with, and actively engaged in, biodiversity planning and implementation processes. However, it is equally important to **identify actors who have historically been overlooked or excluded** because their work is not conventionally associated with biodiversity, they operate outside established institutional networks or structural barriers have limited their participation.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 2.1




**Actor Analysis for Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action**

This tool helps to identify the actors who can influence, support, benefit from or are otherwise affected by biodiversity and related action.

Countries can use the tool to help strengthen inclusive governance and meaningful participation, especially among underrepresented groups, in biodiversity planning processes.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 2.2




**Inclusive Participatory Approaches: A Facilitator's Guide**

Designed for facilitators, this guide provides practical strategies that can be used before, during and after participatory processes to promote more inclusive, equitable and meaningful participation.

Box 2: **Actors and stakeholders for consideration**

- Government representatives, not only from the ministries in charge of women's affairs, but from any ministry that might be involved in the use of natural resources and therefore in the design and implementation of NBSAPs;
- Representatives from IP&LCs, including those with traditional knowledge and/or religious authorities;
- Social groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities and other persons who may be differentially impacted by the loss of biodiversity or biodiversity programming;
- Local, regional or global non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that might have specific knowledge and can provide a gender-environment perspective;
- Networks of stakeholders working on women's empowerment;
- The scientific and academic community, as well as those working in education on issues of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment;
- Technical experts on various aspects linked to biodiversity and nature; and
- The private sector, businesses and the finance community.

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2024)

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that women in all their diversity, IP&LCs, youth and others whose voices have traditionally been marginalized have meaningful opportunities to contribute. Doing so not only enriches the co-creation process with a broad range of knowledge and perspectives, but also strengthens the legitimacy, inclusiveness and effectiveness of biodiversity action, while contributing to dismantling systemic barriers to engagement.

Effective engagement also requires **identifying the purpose(s) for engaging with each actor**. There are many possible reasons why an actor is engaged, for example, for consultation, co-creation, information sharing, awareness building, relationship building, influencing and/or strengthening capacities. Resource constraints may require planning engagements strategically so they can fulfil multiple purposes at the same time.

The **Actor Analysis for Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action tool can support the development of an initial engagement plan**. It can also help identify the systemic barriers and unequal power dynamics that prevent some actors from participating fully, enabling the design of engagement approaches that address these barriers. These may include adapting meeting formats, locations and timings, using local languages, providing accessible information and, where appropriate, offering support such as transport, childcare or compensation to reduce barriers to participation.

During engagement, organizers and facilitators will also need to **reflect on their facilitation strategies** to ensure that all participants are comfortable and have their voices heard. The tool **Inclusive Participatory Approaches: A Facilitator's Guide** provides strategies that facilitators can use before, during and after deliberation processes to ensure that all actors – particularly those who face multiple forms of exclusion – can meaningfully participate and be heard.

**Engagement should be an ongoing process of dialogue, sharing, learning, collaboration and accountability.** Regular opportunities for actors to share their knowledge, perspectives and priorities, and to receive timely information and feedback, are essential to meaningful co-creation. Sustained engagement helps to build trust and relationships, fosters commitment and ownership and lays the foundation for successful implementation of the actions that emerge from the process.

COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Antigua and Barbuda:** Adapting engagement processes to enable consultation with historically excluded groups

In Antigua and Barbuda, the Rastafari community has strong agricultural traditions and is recognized for practices that reflect a living relationship with the natural cycles of life, many of which support biodiversity conservation. The Rastafari possess valuable traditional knowledge of local ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, medicinal plants, and natural resource management.

However, as a community, they have historically faced discrimination, stigma, and social exclusion, resulting in limited opportunities for economic advancement, education, and full participation in society. This has contributed to their limited involvement in formal biodiversity governance and environmental decision-making, despite their critical knowledge and roles in biodiversity conservation.

When the core country team leading the engagement process mapped out key actors, it was clear that the Rastafari community should be consulted. Yet, engaging this community, and particularly the women within it, first required understanding the community's specific needs and cultural practices. To inform its engagement approach, the country team reached out to a respected woman leader from the community. Based on her recommendations, a separate focus group was organized exclusively for members of the Rastafari community, and funds typically used to buy refreshments were instead provided to the community to allow them to prepare food according to their dietary rules and practices.



Photo: GARD Center (Antigua and Barbuda)



Photo: GARD Center (Antigua and Barbuda)

The dedicated focus group provided the first opportunity for the community to participate in biodiversity-related consultations in a culturally relevant way. Both men and women were invited, and while men were present, women largely led the discussion due to their central role as knowledge holders, decision-makers, and custodians of the community's traditions.

***Antigua and Barbuda's engagement process demonstrates the importance of adapting protocols to include all social groups in consultations. The core country team is keen to build on this initial engagement and support consultation and partnership with the community over the long term, thus ensuring that the policies that are developed are more inclusive, representative, and responsive to local realities.***

COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Comoros:** Creating women-only spaces supports women to share openly and identify new possibilities



In Comoros, consultations with local communities initially brought women and men together in mixed groups. In this setting, facilitators observed that women spoke very little during the discussions. Social norms, including respect for elders and religious and cultural expectations, appeared to limit women's opportunities to speak openly in the presence of men.

In response, the facilitation team adjusted its engagement plan and decided to hold separate discussions with women. In this women-only space, women became much more vocal and openly discussed the challenges they faced, including their limited economic autonomy and the barriers that prevented them from pursuing their own initiatives. Rather than being confined to supporting roles, they expressed a desire to organize themselves, develop individual and collective enterprises, strengthen their skills, access financing and play a greater role in improving their livelihoods while protecting the environment. Facilitators also used a round-table approach to ensure that every participant had an opportunity to speak.

Creating safe and inclusive spaces where women felt comfortable participating enabled them to openly share their experiences, perspectives and priorities. What emerged from these discussions fundamentally shaped the direction and priorities of the project. They highlighted opportunities to support women involved in fish processing and marketing, building on their existing knowledge and central role in managing fisheries products after the catch. The consultations also revealed the potential to move beyond small-scale activities by strengthening women's technical capacities, organization and access to finance, creating new economic opportunities while contributing to the sustainable management of coastal resources.

By recognizing and managing group dynamics, the consultation process became both a means of gathering evidence and an opportunity to begin strengthening women's self-awareness and agency, shaping more gender-responsive biodiversity actions.

***Comoros' experience demonstrates that facilitating meaningful participation requires understanding local social norms and adapting consultation methods accordingly. It also demonstrates that when women are provided with safe and supportive spaces to share their perspectives, the benefits extend beyond improved information and decision-making. Such spaces can foster confidence, strengthen agency and inspire women to pursue new roles in leadership, collective action and economic development.***



COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Costa Rica:** Recognizing diversity among indigenous women as fundamental to representation

In Costa Rica, the update of the National Biodiversity Strategy (Estrategia Nacional de Biodiversidad [ENB], Costa Rica's NBSAP) is being developed in line with the country's commitments under the KM-GBF and CBD to strengthen the integration of human rights-based approaches, participatory governance and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from biodiversity. As part of this process, the National Indigenous Platform of Costa Rica (MNICR) is facilitating a mechanism for indigenous participation aimed at ensuring that indigenous peoples actively contribute to defining the goals, indicators and actions for updating the national strategy.

Within that context, a National Indigenous Women's Dialogue was held as a dedicated space to examine the specific experiences, contributions and challenges of indigenous women in conserving and managing biodiversity. The meeting brought together indigenous women representing diverse peoples and territories from across the country, providing a platform for them to articulate their priorities for biodiversity governance, financing and NBSAP implementation. The discussions also highlighted the importance of creating a permanent dialogue space for indigenous women to engage in biodiversity-related decision-making and policy processes.

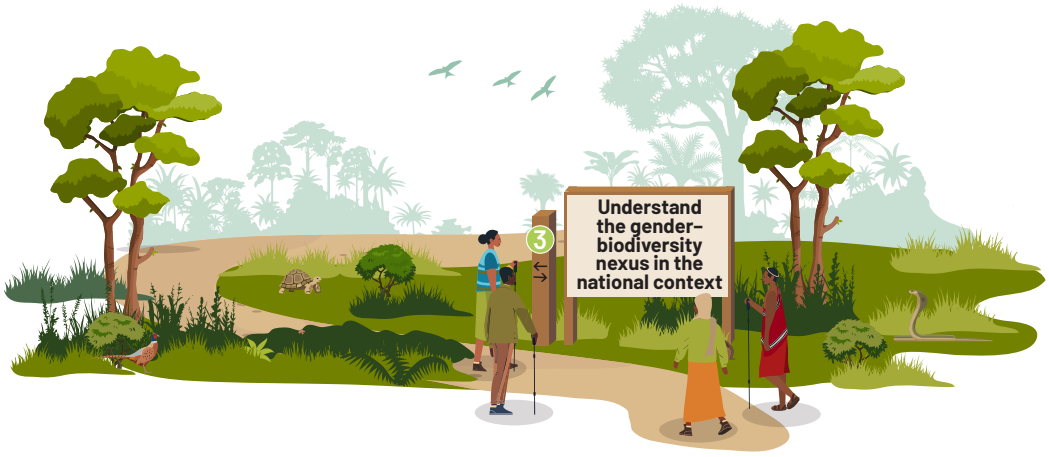
One of the central messages emerging from the meeting was that there is no single understanding of gender and biodiversity among indigenous peoples. Participants emphasized that the interrelationships between women, men, territory and community are diverse and deeply tied to the worldview of each indigenous people. They cautioned that any approach to gender equality within the ENB must respect this cultural diversity and avoid homogeneous models that impose external frameworks. Representation must be carefully considered and inclusive, as distinctions among indigenous women, across peoples and territories, are themselves fundamental to meaningful participation.

To reflect this diversity, five women leaders from the larger group of meeting participants and from different territories and peoples were selected to present an 'indigenous women's chapter', to be developed within a future Indigenous Action Plan for the ENB, at a national integration event. Participants also agreed on concrete recommendations, grounded in their own realities, for how to foster genuine engagement. These included issuing invitations at least a month in advance; holding women-only spaces at the start of broader processes; scheduling activities to end by mid-afternoon so women could travel back to their territories; maintaining permanent channels for communication and follow-up; sustaining the representatives already designated rather than restarting representation each time; and improving timely access to information on funding, alongside technical support to help indigenous women and territorial organizations reach available resources.

***Costa Rica's experience highlights that meaningful participation is not only about who is present, but also about who is empowered to represent diverse interests and voices. Treating indigenous women as a single constituency risks reproducing exclusion. Genuine engagement depends on recognizing diverse voices and enabling participants themselves to define the conditions for meaningful participation.***



Photo: Mauricio Mora (Costa Rica)




# STEP 3: UNDERSTAND THE GENDER–BIODIVERSITY NEXUS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Deepening understanding of the gender–biodiversity nexus supports more evidence-based co-creation processes. This is usually a **multi-layered process**, requiring a combination of:

- collecting and collating existing data and evidence;
- generating new sex-disaggregated data and evidence with key actors to address knowledge gaps;
- validating and making sense of findings; and
- disseminating evidence to encourage use and uptake.

At each of these stages, **engaging with relevant experts and representative groups alike can help to refine and enrich** the findings.

To begin the gender and biodiversity analysis, it is recommended that **a comprehensive review be conducted of the existing literature, policies and datasets on gender and biodiversity**. These may include: relevant institutional frameworks, policies and action plans; national gender statistics and statistics related to gender and women in environment ministries/sectors; and qualitative evidence from academic research, participatory assessments or national reports, among others. Box 3 provides examples of components and areas of focus for the analysis, while Box 4 offers an illustrative outline for such an analysis. The tool **Gender and Biodiversity Analysis: Illustrative Outline** offers additional guidance and examples of information that countries may wish to include.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 3.1




**Gender and Biodiversity Analysis: Illustrative Outline**

This template provides an indicative report outline for a gender and biodiversity analysis, with suggestions on the type of content and evidence that would help working groups to deepen their understanding of the gender–biodiversity nexus in the national context and identify priority challenges and opportunities for action.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 3.2




**Participatory Inquiry Exercises for Co-Creating Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action with Local Communities**

This resource is designed for facilitators seeking to conduct inclusive consultations with women and men from IP&LCs to inform gender-responsive biodiversity action, plans, and strategies. It consists of three participatory inquiry exercises exploring the gender–biodiversity context, their root causes, and opportunities for change and possible actions. The exercises should be used in sequence, as insights and outputs of each exercise inform the next.



### Box 3: **What a gender and biodiversity analysis can reveal**

The six interconnected dimensions discussed earlier **(Figure 4**) provide entry points for examining the gender–biodiversity nexus. By exploring these dimensions and how they interact, the analysis can help reveal:

- Gender differences and inequalities in relation to biodiversity;
- Gender-differentiated roles, knowledge, needs, priorities, impacts, risks, agency and stewardship, including contributions to conservation and sustainable use;
- Differences in access to resources and decision-making, and in the distribution of benefits, costs and responsibilities;
- Opportunities for gender-responsive biodiversity action that can advance gender equality and biodiversity outcomes together; and
- Implications for the NBSAP, including how identified gender issues, priorities and opportunities can be reflected in its objectives, targets, actions, implementation and monitoring.

### Box 4: **Illustrative outline of a gender and biodiversity analysis**

1. **Introduction**
2. **Methodology**
3. **Key findings**
   - 3.1 National policies, strategies and commitments
   - 3.2 Institutional context and capacities
   - 3.3 Inventory of national and local actors with gender and biodiversity expertise
   - 3.4 Gender and biodiversity linkages in the national context
   - 3.5 Existing initiatives and case studies
4. **Priority issues, opportunities and actions**
5. **Key messages and recommendations**

**Identifying and including different types of evidence can provide a fuller picture to support actionable insights.** For example, including quantitative data on the share of women with secure rights over agricultural land is critical, but it only tells part of the story. This information can be complemented by qualitative evidence on women's land rights that helps explain differences in the percentage of women and men among landowners or how dynamics are changing due to different interventions. Sources that **shed light on the deeper, structural barriers and root causes that shape gender inequalities** as they relate to biodiversity (for example, discriminatory attitudes and social and cultural norms) are particularly valuable for gaining insights that can inform future gender-responsive biodiversity actions.

If there are significant evidence gaps following the desk review, **targeted data collection efforts can be considered**, while bearing in mind possible resource and time constraints. One way to begin filling in information gaps is to convene focus group discussions or online consultations with gender and biodiversity experts as well as women's organizations and networks related to biodiversity. These actors are well-placed to provide diverse perspectives, lived experiences, expertise and knowledge to deepen understanding of the gender–biodiversity nexus. **Ensuring that representatives of women in all their diversity, and especially from IP&LCs, are included** can bring to the fore new insights from different knowledge systems, including traditional knowledge systems, that are valuable to the analysis.

The tool **Participatory Inquiry Exercises for Co-Creating Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action with Local Communities** provides three sequential participatory exercises that facilitators can use and adapt when conducting inclusive consultations with women and men from IP&LCs.

The national gender and biodiversity analysis developed from this combination of desk review, targeted data collection and participatory consultations can provide an evidence base on how gender and other identity factors intersect



to produce differentiated experiences with biodiversity. These **findings can provide a baseline for monitoring progress on gender and biodiversity over time**. They are not static and should thus be updated periodically.

**Once completed, the gender and biodiversity analysis should be widely shared and communicated** to ensure that leaders, decision-makers, government officials, technical experts and other relevant actors have a shared, evidence-based understanding of the gender–biodiversity nexus. By highlighting the key barriers, gaps, opportunities, good practices and possible actions for achieving mutually reinforcing biodiversity and gender equality outcomes, the analysis provides a common evidence base to guide dialogue, inform decision-making and support the co-creation of effective actions.

**Countries can go further by establishing mechanisms, such as national repositories, to systematically compile, update and make accessible gender and biodiversity data and evidence over time**, creating a living evidence base for ongoing planning, implementation, monitoring and learning.



COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Tajikistan:** Translating joint analysis of root causes into coordinated actions to address them

In Tajikistan, the working group convened ten stakeholder events to better understand the links between gender equality and biodiversity use, management and conservation. The events provided a platform for knowledge exchange among stakeholders and decision-makers, as well as a mechanism for data collection, joint analysis, problem identification and the development of practical actions to inform future strategies.

Participatory tools surfaced key challenges to women's inclusion in conservation, the root causes preventing women's full and effective participation (including institutional constraints, negative social norms and attitudes and limited access to resources) and the interplay of formal and informal rules needed to create an enabling environment.

***The process helped stakeholders move beyond a superficial reading to a more systemic understanding of the topic and to grasp the root causes that remain hidden when using traditional analytical approaches.***



Photo: National Center for Biodiversity and Biosafety (Tajikistan)



Photo: National Center for Biodiversity and Biosafety (Tajikistan)

Engaging stakeholders in joint analysis was crucial for developing a shared understanding and ownership of the issues that would not have been possible with a top-down assessment of the data alone. Insights from the process directly shaped the country's prioritized gender-responsive biodiversity actions, which together take a more systemic, coordinated approach to the barriers identified.

One example is the development of a new National Digital Platform on Gender and Biodiversity, integrated into the National Biodiversity Portal. The platform shares resources on conservation solutions that improve women's participation in biodiversity conservation and management, stores information on traditional knowledge and valuable genetic resources, strengthens the collection and availability of sex-disaggregated data and tracks progress against the objectives and indicators of the country's new Gender Plan of Action.

***In combining these functions, the platform offers an integrated, coordinated solution to several barriers identified in the participatory analysis at once.***

COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Togo:** Generating new insights with stakeholders reframes actions and builds relationships

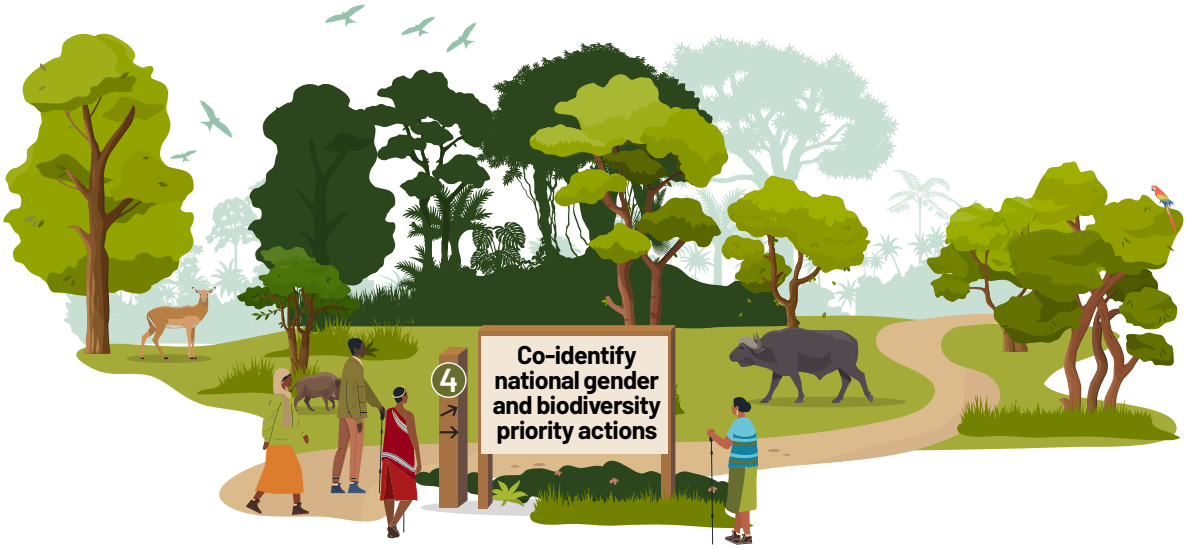
Togo's gender and biodiversity analysis changed the country's understanding of one of its key challenges. Although national legislation already guarantees women equal rights to access and inherit land, consultations with women and other stakeholders revealed that these rights are often not realized in practice. In many rural communities, women's access to land continues to depend on customary practices, family relationships and decisions by male relatives or traditional authorities, leaving their land rights insecure. As a result, many women face constraints that limit their ability to invest in and benefit from sustainable land management, restoration and other long-term biodiversity conservation activities that depend on secure access to land.

This finding helped to shape proposed biodiversity actions, to strengthen implementation of the existing legal framework. The country team responsible for the co-creation process identified awareness-raising, capacity-strengthening and advocacy as priorities to ensure that communities, local authorities and other actors understand women's land rights and are better able to put them into practice. More broadly, the analysis became a strategic planning tool, identifying barriers and opportunities and translating the findings into an action plan organized around four strategic priorities: policy and institutional reform, women's economic empowerment, inclusive leadership and governance, monitoring, evaluation and accountability. The analysis and resulting action plan now provide a reference for designing and implementing future gender-responsive biodiversity action.

Beyond strengthening the evidence base, the process yielded additional benefits. Early in the process, Togo established a multisectoral working group bringing together government ministries, local authorities and civil society organizations, with REFACOF-Togo—a national network representing 23 women's organizations—playing a central role. The analysis helped identify additional actors to engage in biodiversity action. These relationships have created a lasting platform for collaboration, providing trusted partners for community engagement, data collection and monitoring of KM-GBF Targets 22 and 23, as well as for implementing future gender-responsive biodiversity initiatives.


Photo: epm (Togo)

*Togo's experience demonstrates how a gender and biodiversity analysis can help countries move from diagnosis to action: strengthening the evidence base, identifying strategic priorities and building the partnerships and institutional networks needed to support implementation over time.*




# STEP 4: CO-IDENTIFY NATIONAL GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY PRIORITY ACTIONS

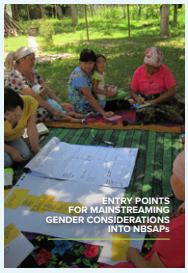
**Each step in the process thus far will have generated important inputs** to the co-creation process, including:

- stronger collaboration, coherence, capacities and expertise among gender and biodiversity institutions and actors;
- wider and more inclusive engagement with a diverse range of actors;
- deeper knowledge and insights on the gender–biodiversity nexus; and
- more refined understanding of the barriers, opportunities and promising actions identified by women, IP&LCs and other stakeholders to achieve mutually reinforcing gender equality–biodiversity outcomes.

This step **brings these inputs together, first to develop a long list of potential gender-responsive actions and then to narrow it to a set of national priorities**.

Once the national gender priorities are identified, it is useful to consider **how they align with national biodiversity priorities, institutional commitments and policy frameworks** and how they could be integrated into the NBSAP.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 4.1




**Entry Points for Mainstreaming Gender Considerations into NBSAPs**

This tool presents a menu of possible entry points for Parties to mainstream gender considerations into NBSAP revision, implementation and/or monitoring. It is intended as a practical reflection tool to help identify priorities and actions, rather than a compliance checklist.

The tool **Entry Points for Mainstreaming Gender Considerations into NBSAPs** can help teams identify opportunities to integrate key gender dimensions, elements and mandates throughout the NBSAP – through biodiversity programmes and initiatives and through the policies, institutions, governance, financing and other enabling conditions needed to support implementation – or, more broadly, to strengthen gender-responsive biodiversity action.

The CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) indicates that countries' expected outcomes should reflect different dimensions of change, including:

- reductions in gender inequalities;
- changes in gender relations; and
- expanded opportunities for women's empowerment, as relevant to the priorities identified.

The indicative actions in the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) can provide additional inspiration and practical examples. For deep and sustained change to occur, it is important to **move beyond isolated, project-specific and ad hoc actions towards measures that strengthen the enabling environment and address structural barriers**. Expected Outcome 3 of the CBD Gender Plan of Action (**Figure 5**), which includes aspects related to data and information, institutional capacities and coordination and resources, is a useful reference at this stage.

Teams may also wish to **identify synergies with national processes under the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and related sustainable development agendas**. Each of the Rio Conventions carries its own gender mandates and they address many shared barriers: women's insecure land and resource tenure; limited access to finance, technology and training; and under-representation in decision-making; among others.

Actions designed to serve national goals and more than one convention can reduce duplication, make more efficient use of limited institutional capacity and strengthen the case for investment.

Where gender focal points for the conventions and national institutions are coordinated, these synergies are easier to identify and pursue, as was mentioned in **Step 1**.

The long list of potential actions may be initially derived by a consultant or the working group, but **engagement and validation with key institutions, experts and representatives of women's organizations and IP&LCs is critical at this stage to refine the list and identify priorities**. A multi-stakeholder setting like a national workshop provides an opportunity for the main actors to co-create a shared vision for gender-responsive conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, foster buy-in and motivation for that vision and enable different perspectives to be expressed and heard by a wider group.

Countries will then need to follow their own governance and decision-making processes to further **assess, prioritize, validate and approve the national gender and biodiversity priorities**. Prioritization should take into account factors such as feasibility, including institutional capacity and resource requirements, cost-effectiveness, coherence and complementarity across the actions, alignment with existing policies and programmes and potential contributions to biodiversity conservation, gender equality and other sustainable development objectives.

Where possible, the **agreed priorities should be integrated into the NBSAP and biodiversity-related policies, plans, strategies and reports**. Throughout this process, actors and stakeholders should be kept informed of key decisions and continue to be engaged, as their **ongoing participation and ownership will be critical to successful implementation**.

COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Eswatini:** Co-creating priority actions and buy-in through evidence and dialogue

In Eswatini, the working group drew on insights derived from the gender and biodiversity analysis and consultations with 15 communities, conservation stakeholders and the country's Women's Parliamentary Caucus, as well as from the CBD Gender Plan of Action, to develop an initial list of gender-responsive biodiversity actions. The co-creation process on gender and biodiversity took place alongside the updating of the country's NBSAP, which provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen gender integration in the revised NBSAP.



Photo: Eswatini National Trust Commission

However, when the proposed national Gender Plan of Action was presented for review at a consultative workshop involving NBSAP stakeholders, it encountered resistance. Participants, including representatives of government ministries, civil society organizations, academia, biodiversity practitioners and local communities, viewed gender as a standalone social issue rather than an integral dimension of biodiversity policy and action. Some were uncertain about how the proposed gender-related actions would contribute to biodiversity outcomes and were therefore hesitant to introduce what they perceived as additional priorities alongside existing sectoral mandates and responsibilities. Participants also recommended broadening the proposed actions to ensure that they considered the needs and opportunities of both girls and boys and did not leave boys behind.

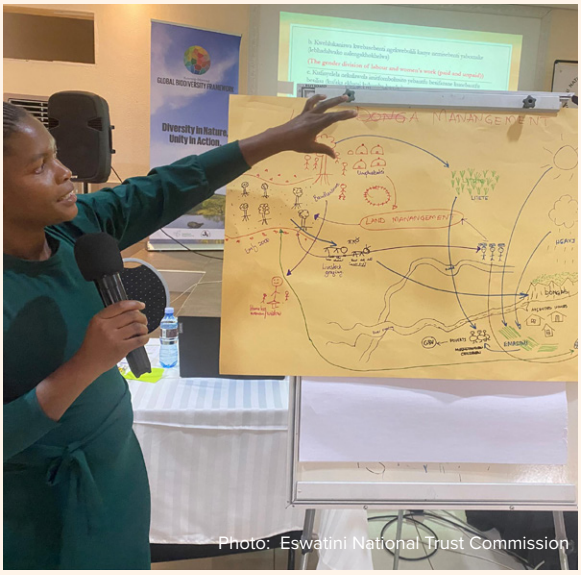
Implementation of the Plan would depend on coordinated action across many institutions, not on the lead ministry alone. Unless the actions were championed by a broad range of actors, beyond the small working group and integrated into institutional policies, plans and programmes, they would not be delivered.



Photo: Eswatini National Trust Commission

Recognizing this, the team intentionally created space during the consultative workshop for open dialogue to enable participants to propose practical improvements to the Plan. Discussions were deliberately grounded in the evidence generated through the gender and biodiversity analysis to support revisions that reflected local realities and sectoral priorities. The team subsequently incorporated the feedback into a revised draft of the Plan. Eswatini's resulting Gender Plan of Action is now positioned to serve as a practical framework for advancing gender-responsive biodiversity action, to be implemented alongside the key gender dimensions integrated in the country's revised NBSAP (Figure 6).

***Eswatini's experience highlights the importance of grounding decisions in evidence and engaging stakeholders throughout the co-creation process to build trust, commitment and relevance.***


Photo: Eswatini National Trust Commission

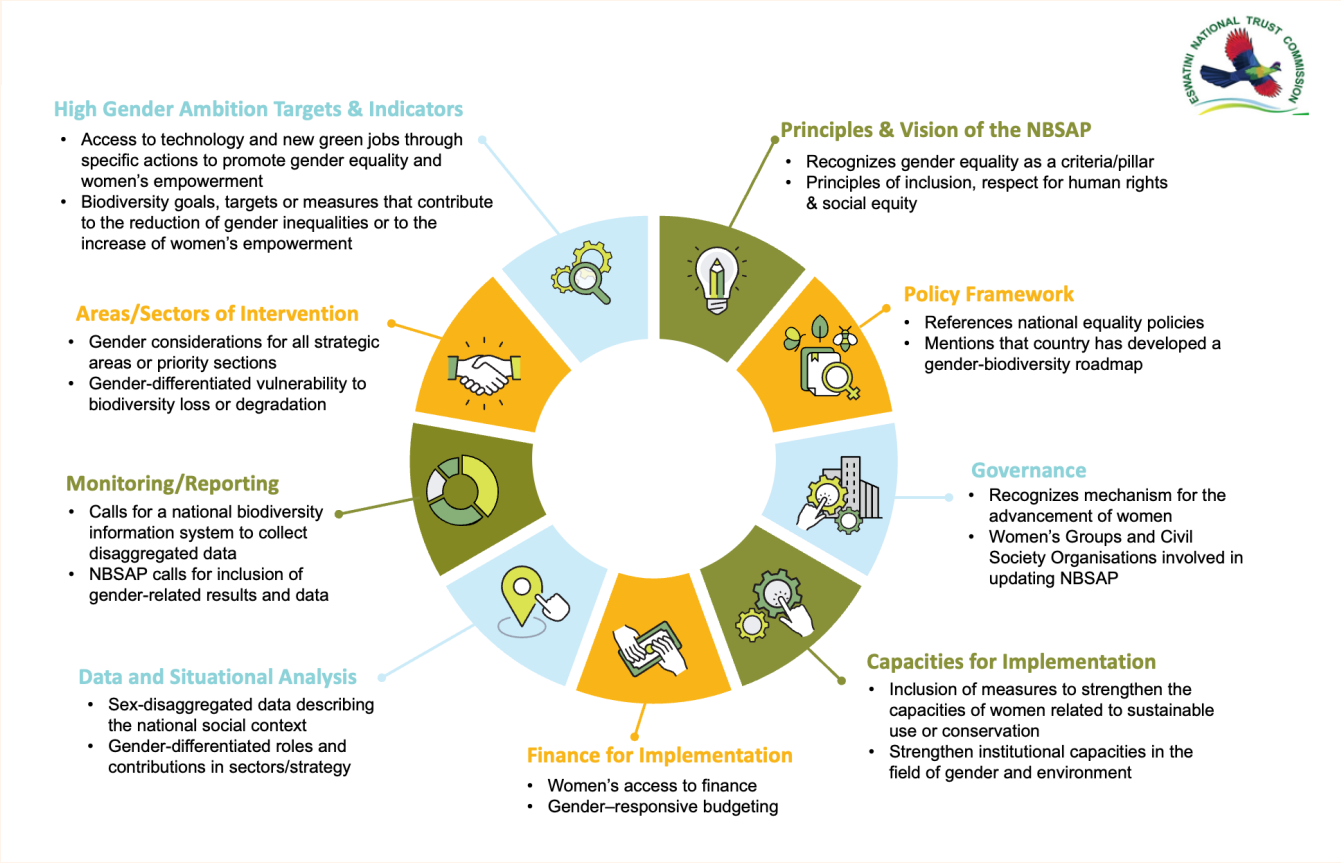



***Figure 6:*** *Key gender dimensions and elements integrated into Eswatini's NBSAP 3.0*

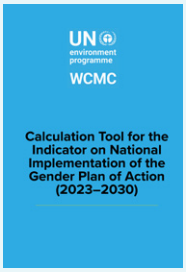



# 5 STEP 5: DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Identifying priority actions with stakeholders is an important waypoint, but that is only the beginning. Step 4 **establishes what a country intends to do; the implementation plan sets out how it will be done.** It is time-bound and unpacks the agreed priorities into specifics: what will be taken forward first, how actions will be sequenced, who is responsible for delivering each one, what resources are required and how they will be secured and how progress will be tracked. **Such a plan helps to define concrete expected results and activities that are realistic given the national and local contexts, institutional mandates and existing capacities, and to implement and monitor gender commitments,** such as those contained in the NBSAP, beyond the life of any single project.

**The plan can take different forms depending on the national context.** It may be a working document, such as a roadmap or blueprint used by the multisectoral working group to guide its own efforts and those of close partners, which is quicker to produce and easier to adjust. It may also be a formally agreed and validated instrument, which takes longer to secure but carries political weight and establishes a clearer mandate for implementation.

TOOL SPOTLIGHT 5.1




**Calculation Tool for the Indicator on National Implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030)**

The tool supports Parties in assessing and tracking progress in implementing the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) at the national level.

The calculation tool consists of 18 questions, which can each be answered on a four-point scale. Responses are used to calculate an index score from 0% to 100%.

Working groups can use the methodology as a planning tool to assess where national efforts stand and identify gaps and priorities for action and as a monitoring and reporting tool to track progress over time and compile supporting evidence.

Additional information on the indicator methodology can be found in Annex 3 and here.

***What matters most is not the format but the content: the plan should comprise concrete activities specific enough to be assigned, costed, scheduled and monitored, thereby supporting both implementation and institutionalization of gender-responsive biodiversity action.***

The three interrelated Expected Outcomes of the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) may provide a useful way to think broadly about how the elements of the plan should be sequenced; for example, how establishing solid enabling conditions early on (in particular, indicative actions under Expected Outcome 3) will support other planned actions (**Figure 5**).

Teams are therefore encouraged to review their plan and keep the following questions in mind:

- Are the enabling conditions established sufficient to deliver the ground-level changes the plan promises?
- Conversely, does the plan commit to ambitious results without the data, capacities, coordination, and financing needed to achieve them?
- What are the relevant social and environmental risks associated with the proposed activities?
- What are the appropriate measures to avoid, minimize or manage these risks?

**This step also provides an opportunity to consolidate the momentum built through the co-creation process and should include concrete activities to do so.**

For example, where the multisectoral working group has functioned well, its mandate can be extended to oversee implementation, with its terms of reference updated for that purpose. This can sustain the relationships, shared understanding and credibility built during co-creation. Anchoring coordination in existing permanent structures, such as national biodiversity committees or NBSAP steering committees, is generally more sustainable than maintaining parallel, project-based mechanisms.

**Scheduling regular engagement with women's organizations, IP&LC organizations and networks** within the biodiversity governance calendar keeps engagement continuous rather than episodic. Writing the gender–biodiversity focal point function into institutional mandates helps it survive staff turnover and formalizing partnerships through memoranda of understanding (MoUs) or the appointment of gender institutions from the national women's machinery to biodiversity governance bodies turns working relationships into institutional ones. **Assessing and building the capacities needed to implement and monitor the plan belongs in the plan itself.**



Photo: National Center for Biodiversity and Biosafety (Tajikistan)

**Financing is essential, and every activity in the plan should be budgeted**, even approximately. Costing exposes what is genuinely feasible and distinguishes actions that can be absorbed within existing mandates and workplans from those requiring new resources.

Securing funds is another matter, however. In many cases, only part of the plan will have resources attached at the point of writing; the rest constitutes a resource mobilization agenda that belongs in the plan as such, with the steps needed to secure funds appearing as dated activities with named owners, like other implementation activities. Treating resource mobilization as part of the work, rather than a precondition for it, allows a plan to be agreed and initiated while financing is still being assembled. Avenues to pursue include:

- establishing dedicated budget lines or targeted funding programmes for gender-responsive implementation, which is among the strongest signals of long-term commitment;
- integrating costed actions into NBSAP financing and national biodiversity finance planning;
- integrating gender outcomes and activities into project and funding proposals at the design stage;
- identifying existing resources earmarked for gender equality that could be leveraged to implement the gender and biodiversity priorities; and
- applying gender-responsive budgeting or budget tagging where national systems allow.

**Attention should also be given to how resources reach women's organizations, IP&LC organizations and community groups,** as they often carry implementation responsibilities without corresponding resources. Simplified access modalities, small grants or direct partnership arrangements can help address this.

**Monitoring arrangements should be built into the plan from the outset** rather than added once implementation is under way. **The gender and biodiversity analysis developed in Step 3** may provide a basis for establishing a baseline. For each expected result, the plan should identify an appropriate baseline and target against which progress can be assessed, quantitatively and/or qualitatively, as well as relevant process, result and/or impact indicators, data sources, frequency of data collection and responsibilities. Means of verification should, wherever possible, align with the NBSAP monitoring and evaluation framework and draw on existing national information and monitoring systems. A small number of indicators that are actually collected and used is more valuable than a comprehensive framework that exceeds available capacity.

Combining quantitative and qualitative evidence can help build a more robust and nuanced understanding of change: participation headcounts and budget allocations show reach, while qualitative evidence shows whether participation has been meaningful, opportunities for advancing gender equality have been generated and underlying barriers are shifting. Aligning national monitoring with the relevant KM-GBF targets and indicators allows the same effort to serve both national learning and international reporting.



COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

## **Thailand:** Turning agreed priorities into a sequenced, resourced roadmap

Thailand undertook a comprehensive study to draft a National Gender and Biodiversity Roadmap as a preparatory operational framework alongside its nationally validated Gender Action Plan (GAP). This process was specifically designed to prepare concrete recommendations for mainstreaming gender equality directly into their upcoming National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Rather than creating a standalone policy, the drafting study translates agreed priorities into structured implementation proposals, outlining potential lead agencies, implementation sequences, provisional resource requirements and monitoring indicators for the next NBSAP cycle.

As part of the preparatory study, a structured pathway and Theory of Change were formulated. Building on its gender and biodiversity analysis and successive consultations with civil society, academia, government agencies, and ethnic minority and local community representatives (in a dedicated session), the team applied five explicit criteria to move from a long list of needs to a workable set of actions:

1. impact on both biodiversity and gender equality;
2. feasibility within existing mandates and capacities;
3. urgency;
4. equity; and
5. whether an action was foundational or a delivery action.

Making the criteria explicit meant the choices could be explained and defended.



Photo: Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (Thailand)

Actions were organized under four sectoral delivery objectives and three cross-cutting enablers covering institutional mechanisms, participatory monitoring and inclusive data and knowledge systems.

The detailed findings of the study were structured into a working Activity Matrix (maintained as a dynamic spreadsheet). This matrix serves as baseline data and a policy recommendation repository, detailing suggested indicators, proposed lead agencies, target timeframes and estimated costs for each proposed action. This ensures that when the upcoming NBSAP is finalized, each proposed gender-responsive action is ready with a defined institutional owner and budget estimate.

The study leveraged existing institutional mechanisms to ensure smooth integration into the upcoming NBSAP. Led by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the draft Roadmap outlines how future monitoring will utilize established NBSAP reporting channels to the National Biodiversity Committee.

The proposed monitoring framework goes beyond tracking basic participation numbers to assess qualitative outcomes—such as influence over decision-making, resource access and governance accountability.

Financing follows the same logic: investment in enabling systems rather than one-off activities, blending national budgets, biodiversity finance and partner support and applying gender-responsive budgeting where feasible. The Roadmap explicitly indicates that costings remain provisional pending agency validation and alignment with government budget cycles. In this way, the plan can be operational while remaining clear about what is not yet definitive.

*Thailand's experience demonstrates that rigorous action planning includes transparent prioritization, sequencing that establishes enabling conditions as foundations for place-based biodiversity actions, clear institutional ownership and a budget for each action and implementation through enduring institutional mechanisms capable of carrying plans forward into practice.*



Photo: Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (Thailand)

# NEXT STEPS: TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

***Completing the journey described in this guide leads to another beginning rather than an end—a concrete plan only has value if it is put into practice.***

At the same time, planning and implementation are not entirely separate phases. The five-step process is itself an inroad into implementation by building relationships, capacities, ownership and commitment and by initiating new ways of working together.

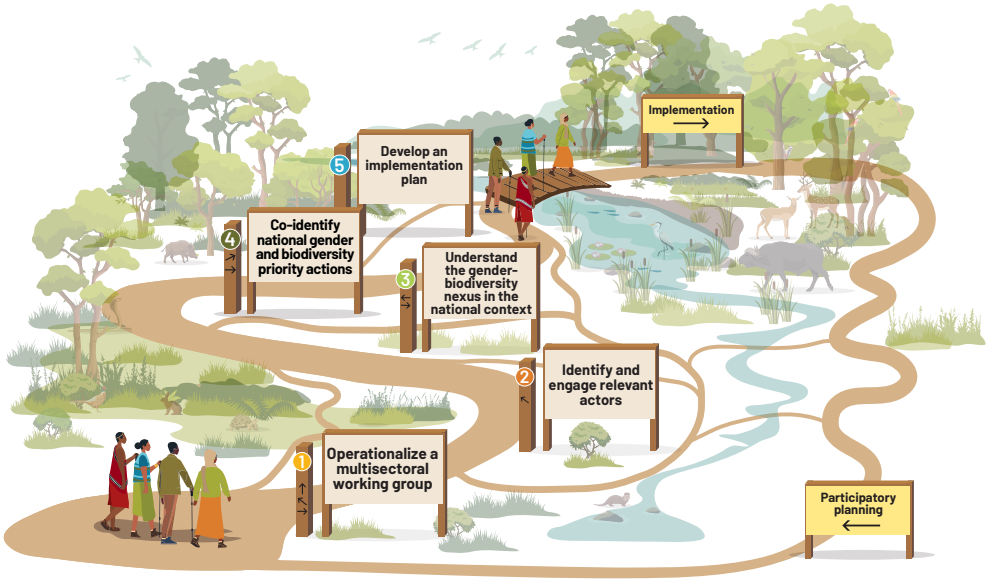



***Figure 7:*** *Multiple pathways available for countries to revisit key waypoints for participatory planning and to adapt actions over time*

In this sense, the co-creation journey is itself a form of gender-responsive biodiversity action. Through the process, coordination mechanisms will have been established, measures to strengthen participation put in place, evidence on gender and biodiversity generated and shared, capacities assessed and strengthened and in some cases, dedicated budget lines secured. Each of these actions speaks to the indicative actions in the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) and feature among the questions in the **Calculation Tool for the Indicator on National Implementation of the Gender Plan of Action**. Countries that have travelled this journey will therefore find that they already have progress towards gender-responsive biodiversity action to report. **Annex 3** sets out examples of the component indicator questions against which this progress can be reported, and consulting them can help teams recognize what they have already achieved.

As **Figure 7** shows, country journeys are not a one-way path. Rather, as experience accumulates and monitoring generates new evidence, activities and resource needs will evolve and the waypoints described in this guide should be revisited.

The actors mapped at the outset may change, the gender and biodiversity analysis will need periodic updating and priorities identified at one moment may warrant reconsideration or shift over time, as gender-responsive actions are implemented. Maintaining engagement with the actors and stakeholders who shaped the plan at meaningful points keeps the biodiversity strategy and plan grounded in current realities and sustains the ownership on which implementation depends.

***As the seven partner countries showed, there is no single correct route through the waypoints and no requirement to pass through all of them or to explore them in the same order. Their experiences also show that gender equality and biodiversity are not parallel agendas, but objectives that are more achievable when pursued together than apart. The guidance, tools and examples in this document are offered in that spirit, as a starting point to adapt as each country pursues its own journey.***

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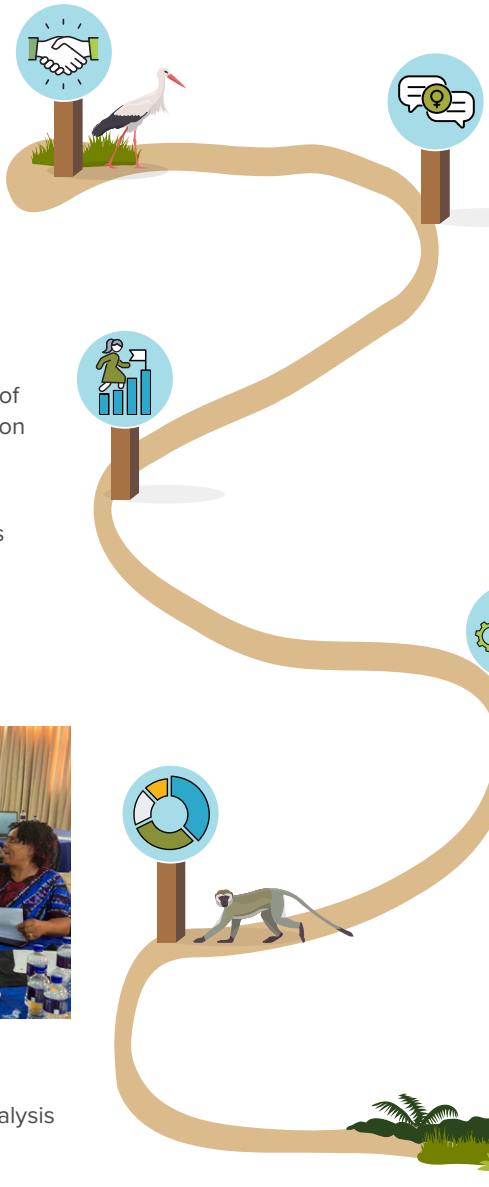
# ANNEX 1: ESWATINI CO-CREATION PATHWAY



### A. PLANNING

- Established a Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Mapped and established key partnerships
- Synchronised workflow with NBSAP development





### B. CONSULTATION

- Adapted participatory tools for consultations with local communities
- Convened a workshop for gender specialists and women's groups
- Facilitated three community workshops across 15 local communities
- Convened a consultation with the Women Parliamentary Caucus

### C. CAPACITY BUILDING

- Strengthened the capacity of conservation stakeholders on gender and family issues
- Delivered capacity building on leadership and women's economic empowerment for 173 women from local communities

### D. CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

- Conducted capacity assessment for readiness to implement the Gender Plan of Action



### E. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

- Carried out a situational analysis informed by consultations, capacity assessment, and capacity building efforts
- Collected additional data on gender representation in traditional governance structures

### F. ACTION PLAN

- Developed a Gender–Biodiversity Action Plan

# ANNEX 2: TAJIKISTAN CO-CREATION PATHWAY

### A. GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY ANALYSIS

- Assessed social and practical mechanisms
- Analyzed political, legal, and financial mechanisms



### B. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

- Defined a shared vision and used participatory approaches to engage groups of scientists, politicians, managers, civil society, and women's groups

### C. FIELD FOCUS GROUPS

- Conducted focus groups with local community members (youth, women farmers, protected area staff)
- Included local governments, protected area administrators, and forestry enterprises

### D. ROADMAP

- Developed a guidance document for the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action
- Identified barriers, priorities, solutions and actions
- Proposed ways to integrate women into natural resource management

### E. NATIONAL DIGITAL PLATFORM ON GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY

- Developed new digital platform, integrated into the National Biodiversity Portal
- Used to strengthen collection and availability of sex-disaggregated data to improve monitoring of gender indicators and for preparing national reports on gender targets
- Stores information on traditional knowledge and shares resources on successful practices



### F. SCALING UP RESULTS, STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION, AND MOBILIZING RESOURCES

- Held first national conference on gender equality and biodiversity
- Prepared knowledge products
- Reached at least 2000+ people with information
- Developed project proposals and mobilized support for national targets

### G. INTEGRATION INTO NBSAP

- Involved in updating the NBSAP
- Developed focal actions and measurable indicators
- Increased gender integration in structure and content

# ANNEX 3: ASSESSING YOUR COUNTRY'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

The Practical Guide suggests a process with steps that align with the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) and the Target 23 component indicator, also known as the 'Indicator on national implementation of the Gender Plan of Action'. The **Calculation Tool for the Indicator on National Implementation of the Gender Plan of Action**, introduced in **Tool spotlight 5.1**, provides a methodology and calculation tool for assessing progress against this indicator.

The CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) includes 30 indicative actions, with leading and contributing actors named for each action. This component indicator for Target 23 is based on the 18 indicative actions for which Parties are named as the lead responsible actor.

These actions emphasize the role of Parties in ensuring that relevant legislation, mechanisms, and enabling conditions are in place to facilitate the gender-responsive implementation of the KM-GBF. This component indicator provides a means to measure Target 23 in line with the implementation of the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) and serves as a tool to support Parties with reporting on their efforts towards ensuring the gender-responsive implementation of the KM-GBF.

Table 1 shows how the steps in this Practical Guide broadly align with selected component indicator questions. These questions can help Parties recognize progress already made through the co-creation process and support monitoring and reporting on Target 23.

***Table 1:*** *Broad alignment of steps in this Practical Guide with selected component indicator questions*

| Steps | Related component indicator questions |
|---|---|
| **1 Operationalize a multisectoral working group** | **Question 3.5**<br>Has your country established coordination mechanisms among women and girls' organizations/networks, ministries or other institutions responsible for gender and those responsible for the environment, relevant focal points and local partners to strengthen coherent programming on gender and biodiversity-related issues? |
| | **Question 2.2**<br>Has your country appointed a national gender–biodiversity focal point to the CBD to support knowledge exchange, sharing experiences and best practices, peer-to-peer learning, mentoring and coaching? |
| **2 Identify and engage relevant actors** | **Question 2.3**<br>Has your country engaged all relevant stakeholders, particularly women's groups, gender institutions and gender experts, indigenous peoples and local communities, in the process of developing and updating NBSAPs and related biodiversity policies, plans and strategies at all levels? |
| | **Question 1.2**<br>Does your country support women's organizations and networks to have equal opportunities to lead or participate in decision-making on policies relating to the three objectives of the Convention, including related to land and waters, land tenure and property reforms through inter alia, consultation of women, in accordance with national law and the provision of financial support? |

| Steps | | Related component indicator questions |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | **Understand the gender–biodiversity nexus in the national context** | **Question 3.3**<br>Has your country undertaken research and analysis and collected and applied information and data, including gender-differentiated traditional knowledge, on the gender-differentiated impacts of the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the role of all women and girls as agents of change? |
| | | **Question 1.3**<br>Has your country conducted participatory assessments with baselines to identify gender gaps and effective measures to enable equal access to resources, services and technologies relevant for the governance, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? |
| | | **Question 3.6**<br>Has your country identified and compiled best practices, lessons learned and gaps in gender-responsive implementation, monitoring and reporting, with the engagement of women's organizations and networks and gender experts? |
| 4 | **Co-identify national gender and biodiversity priority actions** | **Question 2.3**<br>Has your country engaged all relevant stakeholders, particularly women's groups, gender institutions and gender experts, indigenous peoples and local communities, in the process of developing and updating NBSAPs and related biodiversity policies, plans and strategies at all levels? |
| 5 | **Develop an implementation plan** | **Question 3.1**<br>Has your country taken measures to build the knowledge and capacity of national statistical offices to ensure the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated biodiversity-related data and the development and use of relevant gender-specific indicators? |
| | | **Question 3.2**<br>Has your country shared sample indicators, data, best practices and relevant guidance on developing and monitoring data disaggregated by sex and other demographic factors, per sector? |
| | | **Question 3.4**<br>Has your country included information related to capacity-building and development initiatives to enhance the engagement of women and girls' organizations, networks and gender experts in the national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity? |
| | | **Question 3.7**<br>Does your country use gender-specific indicators and data disaggregated by sex in reporting on progress towards implementation of the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and report on progress in the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action? |
| | | **Question 3.8**<br>Does your country integrate reporting on women's and girl's contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and on the mainstreaming of gender considerations into NBSAPs including their implementation, budgeting and reporting, in existing national reporting mechanisms? |
| | | **Question 3.9**<br>Has your country established targeted funding programmes or budget lines to support the gender-responsive implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and of the Gender Plan of Action? |

# ANNEX 4: GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY RESOURCE COLLECTION

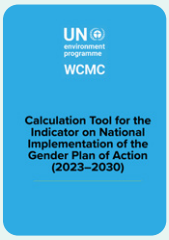
**Entry Points for Mainstreaming Gender Considerations into NBSAPs**

Presents a practical reflection tool to identify where gender considerations are relevant in a country's NBSAP and to highlight gaps and opportunities for improvement.




**Calculation Tool for the Indicator on National Implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030)**

Supports countries to track progress against 18 indicative actions and identify gaps and opportunities for action.




**Gender and Biodiversity Analysis: Illustrative Outline**

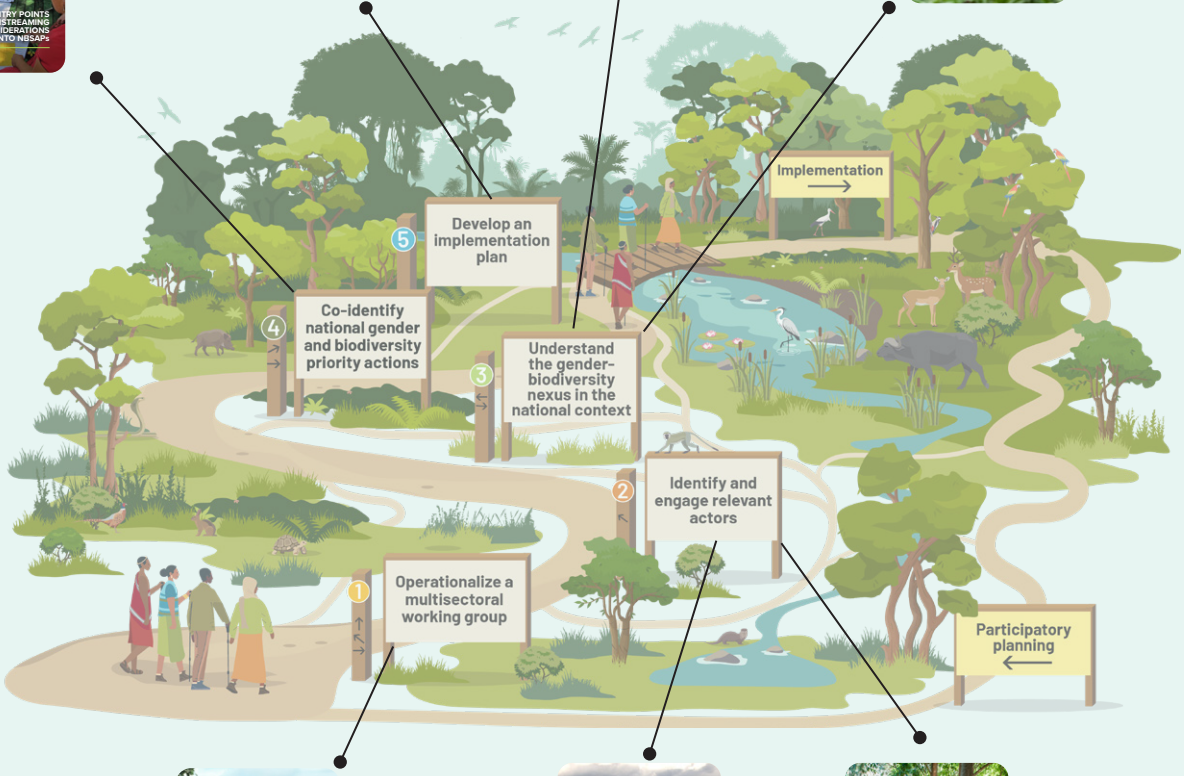
Offers an indicative report outline for a gender and biodiversity analysis, with accompanying guidance on what evidence to collect and analyze.




**Participatory Inquiry Exercises for Co-Creating Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action with Local Communities**

Provides three sequential exercises to explore gender inequality and biodiversity challenges, their root causes, and possible actions with local communities.



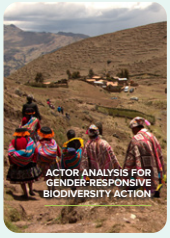




Scan here for Resource Collection:




**Model Terms of Reference/ Procurement Notice for a Gender and Biodiversity Expert**

Provides a ready-to-use, adaptable template for procuring relevant expertise on gender and biodiversity.




**Actor Analysis for Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Action**

Helps identify who to engage, why they matter and barriers to their participation.




**Inclusive Participatory Approaches: A Facilitator's Guide**

Offers practical strategies for supporting full and effective participation before, during and after participatory processes.



Photo: Jeffry Surianto/Pexels