



Inclusion and characterization of women and gender equality considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Gender and Biodiversity

EGI Factsheet | December 2016 Edition

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal mechanisms through which governments and their stakeholders implement the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at country level. This Environment and Gender Information (EGI) platform analysis, summarizing select key findings of the full report on this topic,¹ explores how women and gender equality considerations are included and addressed in 254 NBSAPs from 174 countries over 23 years of implementation (1993 through May 2016).²

GENDER IN THE CBD

Formed in 1992, the CBD has three main goals: conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use of the components of biodiversity; and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The preamble of the Convention highlights the vital role of women in biodiversity

conservation and sustainable use, as well as the importance of women's full participation at all levels of policymaking and implementation.

Over the years, Parties to the CBD have made numerous decisions to address and advance gender equality and women's empowerment in biodiversity initiatives. Notably, the CBD became the first multilateral environmental agreement to have a Gender Plan of Action, which was adopted by Parties in 2008 and laid out actions to support the promotion of gender equality in measures to implement the Convention. In 2014, Parties agreed the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, reaffirming previous objectives, proposing actions for Parties and strengthening the Secretariat's framework for supporting actions. A key aspect is enhanced gender mainstreaming in NBSAPs.

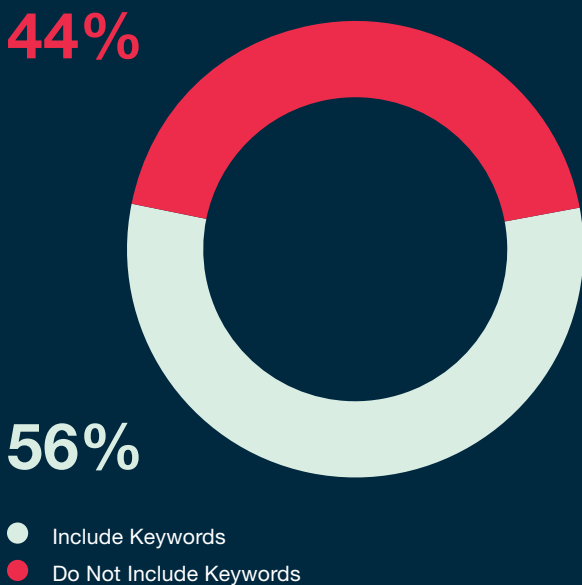
¹ See the full report on this dataset and analysis, *Gender and biodiversity: Analysis of women and gender equality considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)* www.genderandenvironment.org/EGI ; https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/egi_nbsap_report_dec2016.pdf

² See the full report for methodology description. The data in this factsheet include NBSAPs available through May 2016; thus, for the graphics to follow, the value for 2016 is a partial response for the year.

INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND GENDER KEYWORDS

As NBSAPs are key instruments for defining priorities and modalities for effective, efficient and equitable biodiversity management at national level and across key sectors, they provide important opportunities to recognize and integrate women’s empowerment and gender equality considerations—most readily identified by use of keywords. Out of the 254 total NBSAP reports from 174 countries, 143 reports (56% of total documents) from 107 countries (61% of total countries examined) contain at least one *women* and/or *gender* keyword. Since 1993, attention to women and gender considerations in NBSAPs has fluctuated, sometimes aligning with or reflecting key gender equality language included in Parties’ decisions, with Gender Plans of Action or with other global influences, such as the forging of the Millennium Development Goals.³

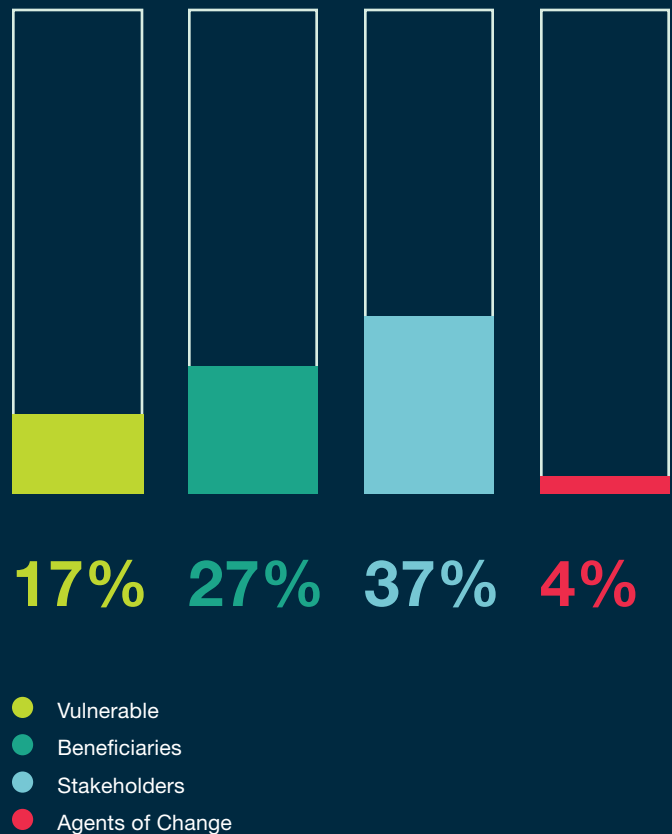
FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF 254 TOTAL NBSAPS THAT INCLUDE GENDER AND/OR WOMEN KEYWORDS (1993 - MAY 2016)



CHARACTERIZATION OF WOMEN

As part of the EGI methodology, keywords in NBSAPs are analyzed for context and categorized into four themes, identifying whether women are characterized as vulnerable; as specific beneficiaries of biodiversity policies or programmes of the NBSAP; as stakeholders of biodiversity management; and/or as agents of change, including by driving conservation outcomes. These categories are not mutually exclusive; a country may characterize women as all four of these, for example, or as none. The percentage of countries that characterize women in each of the four themes in at least one of their NBSAPs is portrayed in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. COUNTRIES’ CHARACTERIZATION OF WOMEN, BY PERCENTAGE OF ALL COUNTRIES



³ See the full report for the analysis and graphics of trends over time, including a subset of data examining post-2010 NBSAPs (i.e., post-Nagoya Protocol).

WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Seven countries (4% of the 174 Parties included in this analysis) identify women as agents of change in at least one version of their NBSAPs. These references indicate Parties’ recognition of and interest in supporting women’s influence on biodiversity outcomes as leaders of social networks; gatekeepers

and communicators; conscientious consumers; and/or as entrepreneurs. The **Dominican Republic** notes that women are leaders of reforestation brigades, for example, while **Gambia** emphasizes that women are an “untapped, or underutilized, asset” in conservation and sustainability.

FROM GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO RESOURCE ALLOCATION, HOW GENDER CONSIDERATIONS ARE INCLUDED IN NBSAPs

For this subset of analysis, only the most recent NBSAPs for each country were examined (i.e., 174 NBSAPs representing 174 countries). The findings include that, while 7% of countries include an objective or goal to advance gender equality, double that number (14%) include gender equality as a guiding principle of the NBSAP, and more than double (18%) include gender equality or women’s empowerment considerations as part of a key objective, target or goal.

FIGURE 3. GENDER CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDED IN NBSAPs, AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COUNTRIES



- 24 of 174 (14%) countries identify gender equality as a guiding principle
- 17 of 174 (10%) countries identify women’s organizations or ministries as involved in the development of NBSAP
- 25 of 174 (14%) countries identify women’s organizations or ministries as implementing partners of NBSAP
- 12 of 174 (7%) countries have gender equality or women’s empowerment as an objective or goal
- 32 of 174 (18%) countries have gender equality or women’s empowerment within a larger objective, target, or goal

In the Action Plan portion of the NBSAPs, countries identify concretely the modalities, partnerships, indicators and (often) resources needed to meet their objectives. Approximately one-quarter of most recent NBSAPs include specific activities geared towards women or otherwise proactively including gender considerations, e.g., to address gender gaps. However, far fewer include monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (11%) or dedicated budget (9%) that might specifically support gender outcomes.

FIGURE 4. WOMEN/GENDER CONSIDERATIONS INTEGRATED IN BIODIVERSITY ACTIVITIES IN 174 MOST RECENT NBSAPs (AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL COUNTRIES)



Have activities geared towards women/gender considerations

ATTENTION TO AICHI TARGET 14

Multiple countries reference the importance of considering Aichi Biodiversity Target 14: “By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities and the poor and vulnerable.”

However, the vast majority of these references echo the Aichi Target text itself without defining why or how it will be implemented. This presents an opportunity to strengthen national stakeholders’ capacity to address Target 14 for enhanced ability to meet the CBD’s goals.

RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S UNIQUE ROLES AND KNOWLEDGE

Critical to effective, efficient and equitable biodiversity use and management, women's roles as keepers of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and as stewards of the environment were recognized in numerous NBSAPs. Twenty-six countries (15%) reference women's unique TEK in relation to their roles as farmers, fishers and elders of indigenous communities in at least one of their NBSAPs. Forty-one countries (24%) reference women as stewards of the environment in at least one NBSAP. Traditional gender roles and gendered division of labor influence men's and women's knowledge, management practices and stewardship over their environments. Among other things, this is key to understanding the value of nature for various communities and the benefits derived from natural resources.

MOVING FORWARD

The recognition of women as key stakeholders in biodiversity conservation at all levels is an important initial step in both creating NBSAPs that support women's empowerment and gender equality commitments across sectors and ensuring that implementation is more effective, efficient and equitable. Parties have demonstrated this recognition over decades of decisions to the CBD at global level. This EGI analysis shows that more awareness raising and capacity building support may be needed to help countries fully reap the benefits of gender mainstreaming; recognize women's and men's equal right to a healthy environment; empower and position women as change agents; and promote women's and men's engagement and leadership in activities to meet cross-cutting sustainable development goals. A comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach⁴ to identify, understand and address gender considerations—from inclusive actions to reduce gender gaps, to gender-responsive budgeting and M&E frameworks—may be key to unlocking NBSAPs' potential impact as countries move into implementation.

⁴ See the process summary, for example, on the IUCN and CBD pilot project, supported by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, to strengthen gender considerations in three countries' draft NBSAPs.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND GENDER INFORMATION (EGI) PLATFORM

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Environment and Gender Information (EGI) platform aims—through data and analysis—to convey the value of gender-responsive environmental conservation and sustainable development. By providing new evidence-based information and knowledge products, the EGI platform guides action toward a more just world. From its inception in 2013, the EGI has evolved into a source for new knowledge creation and dissemination—and for revealing progress and challenges in meeting commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality in environmental spheres.

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DECEMBER 2016