



Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

Biodiversity Challenge Funds: Building and Applying Evidence

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Date: 15 June 2023

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Cover photograph: Cambodia - the Northern Plains is a unique landscape home to flooded forests and large ungulates - © Everland

Executive Summary

This report aims to collect and synthesise evidence and lessons of incorporating Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) across the three Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs): Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus. **Gender Equity and Social Inclusion is the most recent articulation of the need to consider aspects relating to environmental and social structures in relation to development projects.** Since no action is neutral, by not giving due consideration to GESI, projects could unintentionally exacerbate inequalities, reinforce barriers or cause harm to already disadvantaged groups. In addition to identifying and managing drivers of harm, this report also highlights a shift away from viewing GESI issues only from a “risk-based” perspective, towards promoting more proactive, “opportunities-based” approaches to project development to promote more transformational outcomes for people and the environment.

There is a strong and growing evidential basis of the need for a regard for and a prioritisation of gender equality and social inclusion in biodiversity, conservation, and natural resource management. As natural environments diminish (from degradation, competition or exclusion), communities, households and individuals dependent upon these natural resources and ecosystem services face increasing insecurity (of food, water, energy, livelihoods etc). Due to gender and social roles and norms, different identities access, use and interact with natural environments, resources and ecosystems differently, and have differentiated risks and opportunities in addressing challenges and responding to threats to these environments.

Whilst poverty, gender inequality and social exclusion exacerbate the negative effects of environmental degradation, **positive GESI contributions have been shown to leverage improvements in biodiversity and environmental wellbeing, as well as increasing programme effectiveness and equitability.** GESI considerations are crucial to developing stronger projects and programming that provides a better understanding of differentiated, and intersectional relationships with the environment (knowledge, needs, roles and priorities), identifies the different ways in which different identities access, use and control natural resources and services, and supports equal (or equitable) opportunities to benefit from environmental policy and projects for all stakeholders.

For applicants and current projects

BCFs projects must consider both GESI risk and opportunities considerations, specifically how their projects will:

- **avoid, reduce and mitigate adverse GESI-risk** and not intentionally or unintentionally increase, exacerbate or perpetuate inequality; and
- contribute to **reducing inequality**, with activities expected to generate net benefits for marginalised or excluded groups and identities

Achieving this requires projects to **consider the gendered and socially differentiated impacts of their interventions** throughout the project lifecycle, specifically considering key dimensions and entry points for GESI risk and opportunities, described below.

Social roles, norms and beliefs

- Drivers of inequality and exclusion have their basis in discriminatory social roles, norms and beliefs that are deeply embedded, institutionalised and normalised in all aspects and scales of society and decision making, making them highly resistant and resilient to attempts at modification.
- Different priorities and knowledge surrounding land, natural resources and ecosystem services are typically characterised in relation to traditional gender roles and responsibilities, where men are positioned as primary income earners and decision-makers and women are household managers and family caretakers.
- Restrictive norms further limit the sectors, professions and roles that are seen as socially appropriate for women to participate in, further constraining women's control over resources, knowledge, and decision-making authority. Such norms also prescribe expectations upon men, particularly in roles as breadwinners or providers, which can become threatened under conditions of environmental degradation or in the face of resource exclusion or livelihood loss.
- Failing to acknowledge the importance of such norms risks GESI-blind interventions that threaten established norms and practices and can invoke household or social disapproval, backlash and even retribution.

Recognition, visibility and value

- Norms commonly translate into how different groups/identities and, by extension, their needs, interests, experiences and expertise are recognised, visible and valued within different spaces and sectors, additionally driving epistemological perceptions and narratives of superiority and inferiority.
- Particular roles in certain sectors may be overlooked or underestimated, particularly when roles are concentrated in secondary stages (processing, marketing, selling) or informal markets, with this (in)visibility exacerbating existing data-gaps, driving GESI-neutral approaches and perpetuating myths and misconceptions about participation.
- This issue demonstrates how simple representation (in consultations, governance etc) is often insufficient for meaningfully engaging women or other marginalised groups, if they are not recognised as decision-makers, or if their contributions are still prescribed within "appropriate" domains.

Rights and access to land and productive resources

- Customary and social gender norms, limited financial resources or assets, or inadequate legal tenure systems shape differentiated access to ownership and control of land and natural resources, with women and Indigenous People facing particular barriers to access rights and tenure security (even when the law grants equal rights).
- Tenure and access rights are important for indirect outcomes, as they support the ability to enter into contract agreements; access financial resources as collateral; receive project benefits; foster autonomy and independence; and decrease susceptibility to food insecurity, poverty, and GBV as a result of land loss and environmental shocks.

Economic activity and opportunities

- Recognition/visibility and rights compound to produce inequalities in economic activity and opportunities, including barriers to accessing income-generation opportunities, credit and financing, training and information, and technology.
- Despite progress made in recent years, gender pay gaps continue to perpetuate in many industries, either where women are relegated to lower-level, secretarial or administrative roles (rather than highly

skilled or managerial positions), where women are paid less than men for the same job/position, or where their labour is unpaid or underpaid when it is perceived to be an extension of their domestic or household responsibilities.

- Men may be more likely to engage in activities that are practically exclusionary to women, requiring additional physicality (such as in heavy labour), exposing them to danger (security or law enforcement) or in environmental crimes, such as poaching or wildlife trade.

Representation, participation, decision-making and leadership

- Women and marginalised groups often have low or un-influential representation and participation in decision-making and governance processes and structures at all scales, due to social exclusion and other factors like time poverty and GESI-blind meeting planning.
- Misrepresentation neglects entire segments of society/communities, and ignores the scale of marginalised group's interests and needs, as well as their potential and actual contributions to natural resource management.
- Membership or promotion in collective groups like associations, unions and committees may be constrained by gendered barriers, such as roles in supply chains (e.g., excluding them from cooperatives or producer groups), traditional gender norms (e.g., land and cooperative membership being passed down to male family members, or women being relegated to junior governance roles) and limited land tenure or asset ownership. This is an important consideration as membership can facilitate access to land, labour, materials or markets as well as enabling further formal education, and mutual learning, knowledge-exchange, and information sharing.

Gender-based violence, SEAH, safety and security

- Violence and harassment can be systematically used as a means to control who can and can't engage in environmental activities, and biodiversity loss and environmental degradation can contribute to drivers of and exposure to GBV (household financial stress, distance of travel for resource collection).
- Threats to safety and security may arise in livelihoods and workplaces, due to SEAH or having safety compromised through poor working conditions, or exposure to risk through human-wildlife conflict (while collecting resources etc).
- Projects should also consider these dimensions in their safeguarding, to avoid producing circumstances that may increase GBV/SEAH risk (remote working locations, requiring training/meeting participants to travel after dark, etc).
- Efforts to strengthen law enforcement or ecosystem monitoring generally may reduce risks, as certain groups may disproportionately rely on such services for safety, security and accountability. However, marginalised and vulnerable groups (e.g. women, adolescents and ethnic minorities) can often be subjected to criminalisation and victimisation by law enforcement institutions themselves.

The report outlines several **recommendations that contribute to the body of knowledge for mainstreaming GESI considerations in biodiversity funding and programming**. When considering these recommendations, projects should reflect on their context-specific needs remembering that GESI mainstreaming is a cross-cutting and iterative process, and cannot be implemented in isolation of the broader social context.

Recommendations include cross-cutting project tools/approaches and entry points including:

- GESI analysis to provide a thorough understanding and examination of the context-specific gender and inclusion issues and conditions for a project's location, focus and background, in order to shape

- project design and to ensure that projects avoid, reduce or mitigate GESI risk and contribute to promoting equality between persons of different gender and social backgrounds;
- Stakeholder engagement strategies to tailor project activities to ensure representative and meaningful *participation* (as opposed to passive attendance) throughout the project process;
 - Staffing, resourcing and capacity considerations to mainstream, institutionalise and legitimise GESI across project teams and implementation;
 - Life cycle-specific measures during project design and inception, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, to ensure GESI is adaptively mainstreamed throughout project process and not applied retrospectively, or in silos.

The report also includes links to additional resources, further reading and Annexes covering GESI entry points and sample practice.

For the BCFs

The BCFs are not inexperienced in the challenges of incorporating and aligning biodiversity programming with “social” concepts, having previously incorporated objectives related to poverty reduction and sustainable development. The **BCFs approaches to GESI have similarly progressively evolved over time**, reflecting similar trends in the development and environmental sectors, as gender and social inclusion considerations have become increasingly salient in national and international discourse and practice, particularly amongst the BCFs development and environmental funder and grantmaking peers.

In 2023, the guidance for applicants diverged from previous years to also include Social Inclusion along with Gender Equality. Despite conceptual additions with regard to social inclusion, the rest of the **guidance has only minimally been updated to reflect this broader conceptualisation, and still overwhelmingly focuses on issues of gender, and particularly women and girls**. Application guidance provides indicative GESI (but mostly gender) analysis questions to consider focusing on division of labour, access and control of resources, and ability to participate in decision making, but these are not mandatory, are not differentiated between the funds, and do not address intersectional considerations in detail.

New reporting templates introduced in 2023 for all BCFs included gender indicators for the first time, and **projects are also expected to report indicators disaggregated by gender where possible and to describe how their project has proactively contributed to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes** and how they have engaged participants in a meaningful way.

In 2023, the BCFs introduced Standard Indicators to increase the portfolio’s contribution to the global evidence base for activities that support biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction and capability and capacity. Whilst gender and other intersectional disaggregation (including age, language, community group) are explicitly included for certain indicators and the general guidance specifies to “disaggregate by gender in all relevant indicators”, gaps remain where GESI considerations could be included.

Although the report highlights positive GESI considerations in BCFs projects and that the funds’ commitment to GESI *in theory* is highly commendable, **additional measures could be made to support projects to strengthen their management of GESI risks and their inclusion of GESI opportunities**. As GESI standards continue to advance within the sector and amongst the BCFs’ peers, a proactive and

progressive approach would contribute to distinguishing the BCFs as a forerunner in GESI and future-proofing against further evolutions, whilst contributing to building a more inclusive and impactful project portfolio.

Recommendations include interventions in:

- Knowledge management, to package and distribute GESI (and other social science) learnings for various audiences;
- Alignment of GESI standards and expectations amongst the BCFs;
- Reviewing reporting guidance, to support compliance and capture nuanced fund-level GESI impacts;
- Updating and aligning the application process to support applicants to move beyond a superficial and siloed engagement with GESI, to reflect a holistic and institutionalised approach;
- Building GESI awareness and considerations within the reviewing process;
- Considering additional institutional measures to mainstream GESI within fund administration, at a high level.

List of acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
BCFs	Biodiversity Challenge Funds
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
DPLUS	Darwin Plus
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GESS	Gender, Environmental, and Social Safeguards
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
RISE	Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Environments
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

1. Introduction

*“To shape and inform all biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction actions, it is vital to understand gender and social characteristics in **differentiating biodiversity practices, knowledge acquisition and usage, as well as inequalities in control over resources**”*

- Biodiversity Challenge Funds Guidance Notes for Applicants, 2023 - 2024

The considerations of gender, justice and social inclusion are central to designing and implementing contextually relevant, sensitive and inclusive projects to maximise benefits and promote local ownership, whilst also helping to transform exclusionary or marginalising practices or, at the very least, not to exacerbate them. This report aims to collect and synthesise evidence and lessons of incorporating the concept and practice of Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) from projects and processes across the three Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs): Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus. This includes outlining GESI and its components, as applicable to BCFs projects, defining both GESI risks and opportunities, and demonstrating how GESI considerations can be incorporated into projects through BCFs guidance, applications, reporting and general requirements, with a forward-thinking lens. These recommendations include key replicable approaches and methods which can be used as guidelines and best practices for applicants to follow when designing projects, and for current projects.

1.1 GESI as Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

Gender Equality/Equity and Social Inclusion is the most recent articulation of the need to consider aspects relating to the environmental and social structures in relation to development projects. GESI demonstrates a progressive evolution from Gender, Environmental, and Social Safeguards (GESS) (itself an extension of the term Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)) to include specific reference to issues of gender equality, given that prior social safeguard policies and practices generally did not sufficiently consider issues pertaining to gender equality¹. The use of the word “inclusion” in place of “safeguards” represents a shift away from viewing such issues only from a “risk-based” perspective, towards promoting more proactive, “opportunities-based” approaches to project development that try to increase the chances of delivering better, sometimes transformational, outcomes for people and the environment. A risk management/mitigation perspective implies a safeguarding or harm minimisation approach that, whilst necessary, limits the transformative potential of projects to contribute to gender equality/equity and meaningful social inclusion. The perspective also invokes a mainstreaming approach, wherein GESI is included within all processes and activities – not as a separate or stand-alone issue. With this in mind, this report includes recommendations for promoting GESI opportunities, even if previous BCFs guidance (and project disclosure, as a result) has tended to focus on a risk/safeguarding framing.

¹ For example, the IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability, arguably the most commonly used standard for ESS, do not include specific standards on gender, only briefly mention gender within the other standards and only explicitly direct its inclusion with regards to Indigenous Peoples considerations.

BOX 1: Key Gender Terms and Concepts

Gender: Refers to how societies and cultures assign and prescribe appropriate roles, characteristics, behaviours, activities and attributes to men and women on the basis of their sex. This includes the dynamics between, and amongst, different genders. Although gender responsiveness/mainstreaming tends to centre and prioritise women (to the extent that gender considerations often become conflated with ‘women’s issues’) this can be misleading and exclusionary as women’s gendered roles are inextricable from the roles of men. ‘Women’ is occasionally used as a practical shorthand or heuristic for gender mainstreaming, but this is not entirely accurate and can lead to the exclusion of men from: i) responsibility in contributing to and addressing gender issues; ii) discussions and discourse around gender; iii) their own gender-based vulnerabilities.

Sex: Conventionally describes a biological classification, assigned at birth (usually on the basis of genitals, XY chromosomes etc.), and often prescribed to a binary of ‘female’ and ‘male’. ‘Sex’ does create biological differences, which historically and currently inform gendered differentiation – for example, women necessarily fulfil reproductive roles like childbirth and breastfeeding and are *generally* smaller and have less upper body strength than men, so are less suited to certain activities like ploughing. However, it is important to remember there is more variation within a sex, than between sexes, as well as considerable overlap between these. Despite this, many gender roles are considerably differentiated, with much less overlap between roles – this is a societal construction that has, overtime, reinforced and amplified real or perceived sex differences

Gender diversity: Term used to describe the full spectrum of gender identity and expression, particularly including those that don’t conform to the binary norms of male and female. Many cultures around the world have historically and presently recognised (and occasionally revered) orientations and identities beyond this binary, including two spirit (North America), *fakaleiti* (Tonga), *hijra* (South Asia), *chibados* (Angola), *waria* (Indonesia) and many others. Additionally, these identities may not prescribe or translate to contemporary Euro-American terms for gender diversity, such as transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, androgynous etc (PBS, 2015). Whilst certain cultures revere these identities (particularly in cultural and spiritual roles), depending on the context, these identities and others subverting “accepted” gender roles may face additional dimensions of gender-based discrimination and social backlash. Context- and culturally-specific GESI analysis can consider the broader dimensions of gender diversity, to avoid contributing to this exclusion, or failing to acknowledge these groups and the unique roles they may perform within a society or culture.

Social inclusion also draws attention to the need to consider specific circumstances relating to the intersecting and compounding vulnerabilities of disability, age, indigeneity etc. (See Box 2) Although proportionately, gender is perhaps the most salient identity of consideration, an exclusive focus on gender, or only considering intersectional dimensions of vulnerability with regard to women, can risk neglecting other factors of identity that drive exclusion. Whilst certain universal or generalisable considerations that contribute to (in)equality and ex/inclusion are described here, all GESI considerations should be context-driven and examine the specific GESI challenges and opportunities in a project’s circumstances.

BOX 2: Intersectionality

Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, which includes other identities such as race, ethnicity, caste, age, religion, sexuality, gender diversity, disability status, and income (and many others). These factors interact to create intersecting forms of marginalisation and opportunity, depending on local context and prevalent power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism. 'Intersectionality'² is the term used to describe the dynamics and interactions between different aspects of social and political advantage/disadvantage, including gender. An intersectional approach should aim to use social categorizations of identity (age, gender, Indigeneity, poverty etc.) rather than specific groups (women, 'the poor'), in order to capture the intersectional, overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage that produce marginalisation/vulnerability. The BCFs GESI guidance to applicants briefly addresses this, highlighting that considerations of gender and stakeholders are not homogenous groups, and have additional layers of diversity and social identity that need to be considered within the design and delivery of projects.

In this report, GESI is understood to specifically include a consideration of gender *equity*, the more progressive principle to gender *equality*. Whilst gender equality refers to an equality of *inputs/treatment* (i.e. all genders should receive equal treatment, and should not be discriminated against based on their gender), equity implies an additional justice/fairness component to achieve an *equal outcome* (i.e. specific resources and opportunities are provided through affirmative action or positive discrimination to *compensate* for imbalances or gaps).

Since no action is neutral, by not giving due consideration to GESI, projects could unintentionally exacerbate inequalities, reinforce barriers or cause harm to already disadvantaged groups. Often, a spectrum is used to describe the extent of GESI considerations, ranging from GESI-harmful (harmful conditions are exacerbated or perpetuated) or GESI-blind (gaps and inequalities not considered at all) through GESI-sensitive (considers, but does not challenge inequalities) and GESI-responsive (targets and addresses inequalities) to GESI-transformative (efforts actively seeking to shift or change power dynamics, norms and prejudices contributing to inequality). Some examples of GESI spectrums used in previous³ BCFs analyses are provided in Tables 1 and 2 below.

² Kimberlé Crenshaw was the first to highlight the concept and method of intersectionality in the pioneering essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of AntiDiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,

³ these spectrums were used for retrospective analyses of existing BCFs projects, and are not explicitly currently used by BCFs reviewers for prospective projects

Table 1: GESI spectrum developed by Ecorys for the GCFs Scheme Evaluation

GESI blind	GESI aware	GESI sensitive	GESI mainstreamed	GESI transformative
Project does not demonstrate awareness of GESI and it is not mentioned in any project documents. GESI does not feature in design, implementation, M&E or decision-making	Project recognises some issues related to GESI and there is occasional mention of GESI in project documents, but it is not consistently applied in design, implementation, M&E or decision-making	Project adopts some GESI sensitive methodologies, data collection and analysis, but the gender focus is only apparent in a limited number of project activities.	Project ensures that GESI perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to most, if not all, activities. GESI relevant components in most, if not all, activities	Project goes beyond GESI mainstreaming and facilitates a 'critical examination' of GESI norms, roles, and relationships; strengthens or creates systems that support equality and inclusion.

(Ecorys, 2020)

Table 2: Project Gender Inclusivity Scores developed by LTS International (now NIRAS) for the Darwin Initiative Gender Analysis

Score	Description	Level of expected (or actual) gender inclusion and probable (or actual) gender equality benefit
0	Failure to mention key words in application and report	None
1	Projects encourage female participation	Women indirectly benefit from project impact
2	Aim for 50/50 female participation and disaggregate data by gender	Gender disaggregation of data and mention of women in logframe activities
3	50/50 female participation, separate training and workshops	Target total for women included in logframe activities and indicators
4	Project directly benefits women, workshops held at times suitable for females	Logframe activities and indicators focused solely on women
5	Project focuses on female training, separate workshops, inclusion of other vulnerable groups	Activities benefit women of all ages and other vulnerable groups
Unscored	Latest report unavailable	Latest report unavailable

(LTS International, 2019)

2. Background

This work forms part of the BCFs programme’s “Workstream 5 – Building and Applying Evidence” which aims to collect and synthesise evidence and lessons from projects and processes across the three Biodiversity Challenge Funds. The overarching objective of this workstream is to understand what works at the project-level and across the BCFs, and provide evidence-based recommendations to improve processes, strengthen projects and applications, increase knowledge sharing and maximise the positive impact of the funds in biodiversity conservation, improved livelihoods and poverty reduction.

2.1 Summary of previous assessments

Several previous assessments and studies examining GESI considerations in the BCFs have been conducted in recent years, and are briefly highlighted below.

2.1.1 Ecorys study

In 2020, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), commissioned Ecorys to undertake an evaluation of all three funds. The evaluation aimed to: assess the impact of the scheme; identify gaps in logic and draw out key lessons to understand how the scheme can be improved; facilitate clearer communication of the scheme’s key achievements; and make suggestions for establishing effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems.

The Ecorys report(s) summarised best practice in assessing gender, equality and social inclusion in programs and considered a tiered project review process to determine a) How effectively has gender (and intersectional issues such as age, poverty status and ethnic group), power considerations, and safeguarding been mainstreamed into projects?’ and b) To what extent have the schemes benefited marginalised groups such as women and girls and indigenous communities? To quantify these impacts, Ecorys developed a GESI framework (Table 1 above) that was considered against the planning/design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation project stages. Although not the focus of the overall study, GESI analysis and findings were included under the “Equity” theme, as summarised:

After the introduction of the Gender Act 2014, we observe a notable increase in the degree to which projects mainstreamed GESI considerations into their design and implementation, yet in many cases this improvement has been limited to gender. Stakeholders acknowledged that although gender has been thought about deeply over recent years, the other issues of social inclusion are complex and still not well understood by projects, or indeed some members of the expert committee and advisory groups, partly due to their cultural and social complexity.

A common feature of projects was that although they demonstrated GESI thinking or principles in their applications these were not later incorporated into project design. Similarly, projects were effective at identifying key stakeholders, but less effective at meaningfully engaging with them. Projects demonstrate good use of standard ethical protocols but do not often tailor these products to the local context. A good proportion of projects have gender balanced teams, but it is rare for project partners to have GESI specific expertise, or for projects to train partners or team members in GESI issues. The majority of projects made their work accessible to their target audiences including through using non-literary formats, tailoring outputs to different dialects, or getting approval on cultural sensitivity from relevant national agencies.

Overall projects were aware of GESI issues and included indicators, but this was generally limited to data disaggregated by gender and not other key GESI characteristics, and Darwin Initiative projects were more likely to report GESI indicators than IWTCF projects. In our sample about half of the projects were deemed to have some benefit for marginalised groups such as women, girls, ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, or recent immigrants. The majority of projects did not consider salient trade-offs during project design and/or implementation and this was true of both Darwin Initiative and IWTCF projects. (Ecorys, 2022)

2.1.2 Darwin Initiative Gender Analysis

In 2019, an independent analysis was undertaken of the inclusion of gender in Darwin Initiative Main projects between Round 21 and 24. This study used the key search terms “gender”, “female” and “women”, and briefly considered implications/considerations for other vulnerable groups. Projects were scored against a gender inclusivity framework (see Table 2 above). The analysis found that, even within the short period of analysis, that more recent projects have become more gender inclusive, likely reflecting both changes to the award’s standards and expectations, and evolving trends in the sector. Extracted findings from the review included that:

“Generally, projects in earlier Rounds did not directly address gender inequality and stated that they would encourage the participation from both genders but would not go on to explain how this would be achieved. This appeared to be the case for projects working in male-dominated contexts in particular (e.g. for projects seeking to engage with a predominantly male beneficiary subset)”

...

“The three top scoring projects all had a livelihoods focus and included other vulnerable groups (ethnic minorities and youth), gender training for communities and Government officials and aimed to reduce the barriers of gender inequality through holding literacy workshops and including gender-sensitive roles.”

...

“On average the projects that had a direct focus on community management and incorporating alternative livelihoods tended to score higher than those projects that were solely focused on conservation. Interestingly, the conservation projects that scored consistently lower were those with a fisheries management aspect. Although a number of these projects focused on community-management of fisheries, the fisheries sector in many instances appeared to be male dominated. When these projects did include female community members it was often as part of a community group however the benefits to females were often unclear or indirect – other vulnerable groups were not considered.” (LTS, 2019)

The report also outlined key lessons and recommendations for project planning and implementation, several of which have been incorporated into the recommendations from Section 7.

2.1.3 Thematic Review on Poverty and the SDGs

A 2015 thematic review of the Darwin Initiative's contribution to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals briefly included gender (this was only shortly after the Gender Equality Act, so there was limited prescription for reporting or outlining inclusions), saying only:

"Many Darwin projects are working to contribute to SDG 5 [Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls] whether it be through training women to manage their natural resources, including women in the management committees or providing resources for women to increase their household income through businesses or income

generating activities. However, few of our projects talk explicitly about their approach to dealing with gender equality. Whilst the intended outcomes of many of these projects are related to conservation and natural resource management, many of them have established measures to ensure the participation of women and will therefore generate wider gender benefits from these initiatives. A limited number of projects have intentionally set gender quotas in their goal and outcome, for example by reserving certain project positions for women." (LTS International, 2015)

The Ecorys analysis however highlighted that the Thematic Review showed that there were limitations of the measures established for evidencing impacts on gender equality in some project components and reporting as projects equate 'gender' with 'women'. Furthermore, they suggest that projects believe that merely collecting gender disaggregated data from attendance workshops demonstrates female participation, rather than considering the factors that may limit meaningful participation (Ecorys, 2020).

3. Methodology

This report was compiled in April/May 2023 and reviewed current and past BCFs documentation and policies (where applicable) including applicant guidance, project resources, Information Notes, learning notes, briefing papers and reviews. This was further supplemented by an external literature review to consider conceptual and practical conceptualisations and applications of GESI in biodiversity, the natural environment, illegal wildlife trade, and environmental project applications.

Project/case study identification and selection was determined by using referrals of projects identified in earlier reports, targeted boolean search terms⁴ of the project database, filtering the “broad approaches” and “specific tools” tags within the Advanced Search Filters (noting that these tags are inconsistently applied, with many untagged projects additionally being selected for their gender or inclusion components). Project selection aimed to capture and take advantage of the diversity of projects across all three funds, from all types of grants.

Analysis consisted of content analysis of project documents including applications, Annual and Final Reports and communication products (articles, blogs, newsletters etc) published by the BCFs, project leads and third parties. This included deductive analysis based on pre-identified themes from the literature (see headings under Section 6 GESI key issues), as well as inductive identification of other dimensions of risk and opportunities specific to the BCFs.

The limitations of this analysis includes that the three funds currently engage with GESI considerations to varying degrees and are likely to require different approaches due to the nature of the contexts the projects are working within. Additionally, the range and breadth of BCFs projects offers both a challenge and opportunity for identifying scalable and replicable approaches. Acknowledging that the GESI requirements of BCFs projects vary between funding rounds (generally becoming increasingly progressive echoing the evolution of GESI awareness in the mainstream), project selection attempted to capture a range of samples from different funding rounds, but acknowledging it may be unfair to hold older projects to the same standards as more recent rounds. More examples are provided from more recent rounds, since the BCFs have only relatively recently required projects to explicitly describe their contributions towards gender equality and social inclusion, but it would be unfair to disregard older projects entirely since “absence of evidence does not equate to evidence of absence”.

⁴ Search terms included: gender, wom?n, m?n, female, male, girl, boy, nclusi*, Indigenous, marginali*, local, diverse, intersectional, vulnerab*, youth, child, elder*, equit*, equal*, just*

4. Gender and inclusion in biodiversity and the natural environment

*“there are conservationists out there trying to ensure increased gender awareness and equity in their work, for the benefit of biological diversity, **including the diversity of the species Homo sapiens**”*

- (Schneider, n.d., Flora and Fauna)

There is a strong and growing evidential basis of the need for a regard for and a prioritisation of gender equality and social inclusion in biodiversity, conservation, and natural resource management. Different identities access, use and interact with natural environments, resources and ecosystems differently, and have differentiated risks and opportunities in addressing challenges and responding to threats to these environments. Women’s and men’s priorities and knowledge surrounding land, natural resources and ecosystem services are typically characterised in relation to traditional gender roles and responsibilities, where men are positioned as primary income earners and decision makers and women are household managers and family caretakers (Khadka and Verma, 2012; Woodhouse et al, 2022). For instance, women often place higher value on regulating services while men prioritise provisioning services (Fortnam, et al., 2019). Likewise, women more often use renewable resources (crops, firewood, NTFPs etc, particularly for household food, water, and medicine;) and men consumptive resources (timber etc) that have higher economic value (Agarwal, 1997; Fortnum et al, 2019). In this way, women have a vested interest and have always held critical positions in conservation and sustainable resource management as a part of performing their gendered roles and responsibilities (Khadka and Verma, 2012; Nhem & Lee, 2019). For example, women manage the interface between domestic and wild edible and medicinal plant species and are involved in preserving biodiversity through seed selection, storage and use by identifying varieties based on drought resistance, taste, nutrition and storability (Zeigler, 2021).

Whilst women, girls and other marginalised groups such as Indigenous communities can play a unique role in sustainably protecting the natural environment, they are also disproportionately impacted by threats to it. Other BCFs research and resources have described the multi-directional links between poverty reduction and biodiversity in detail, and considering that women represent a higher proportion of the population living in poverty, they are disproportionately impacted by ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss. As natural environments diminish (from degradation, competition or exclusion), communities, households and individuals dependent upon these natural resources and ecosystem services face increasing insecurity (of food, water, energy, livelihoods etc) (Bechtel, 2010). Boyer and Granat (2021) and Brooker et al (2022) both describe in detail the differential impacts of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation on women and other marginalised groups.

For Indigenous Peoples, in particular, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss threaten already often tenuous rights to territorial integrity and self-determination, and by extension, their wellbeing, livelihoods, and cultural security. These threats are compounded by decision-making regimes that regularly fail to include/consider them or acknowledge their knowledge and expertise, even when Indigenous-managed territories are characterised by better ecosystem health and higher levels of biodiversity (Boyer and Granat, 2021; Alvarez and Lovera, 2016). (See Box 3).

BOX 3: Indigenous People

In many contexts, Indigenous communities can face compounding barriers to inclusion, and amplified threats from environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. Although safeguard frameworks like the IFC performance standards and mechanisms like Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) aim to specifically mitigate risk of harm or negative impact against IPs, the social and structure legacies of colonialism, racism etc continue to perpetuate in many spaces. For Indigenous women, patriarchal power structures compound this baseline exclusion and vulnerability, from sources internal and external to their communities.

Challenges faced by Indigenous People can often include:

- Lack of legal recognition or full citizenship
- Limited or no legal or recognised land tenure, or dispossession of land
- Non-implementation or recognition of IP rights
- Epistemological biases undervaluing or ignoring Traditional Knowledge and IP contributions to biodiversity conservation
- Criminalisation of traditional activities and livelihoods
- Exclusion from decision-making, beyond 'token' representation
- Limited access to information and knowledge due to language barriers

Considerations here should also take into account local, Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge (i.e. knowledge that is acquired from intellectual activity, experience and insight in a specific context). This includes "skills, innovations, practices and learning that form part of traditional knowledge systems, and knowledge that is embodied in the traditional lifestyle of a community or people, or is contained in codified knowledge systems passed between generations. Ecology and conservation is dominated by literature from the Global North, privileging peer-reviewed formats and positivist approaches, and excluding local and Indigenous knowledge, particularly in local languages or oral traditions (Boyer and Granat, 2021).

Whilst poverty, gender inequality and social exclusion exacerbate the negative effects of biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and climate change, these relationships are not unidirectional, as improvements in addressing poverty and inequality have been shown to leverage improvements in biodiversity and environmental wellbeing. In addition to supporting governance, development, social and economic impacts women's participation has been shown to produce positive effects in advancing the restoration, conservation, sustainable and equitable use of natural resources (Torre et al, 2019; Killian and Hyle, 2020; Gissi, Portman, and Hornidge, 2018; Meinzen-Dick et al, 1997; Nhem and Lee, 2019; Agarwal B, 1997; Leisher et al, 2016; Alvarez and Lovera, 2016; Ali, et al., 2014; Sipahutar, 2020; Global Forest Coalition (GFC), 2021; Njuki et al. 2022; Bajner, 2019; James et al, 2021; Bastakoti et al., 2006; Westerman, 2021; Woodhouse et al, 2022; Boyer and Granat, 2021; Westerman et al, 2005).

GESI has also been shown to increase programme effectiveness and equitability, with evidence showing that inclusive stakeholder engagement is crucial in achieving conservation outcomes, ensuring project sustainability and supporting human well-being (Westermann et al., 2005; Leisher et al., 2016; Kristjanson et al., 2017; Agarwal, 2018 cited in Westerman, 2021). Westerman's (2021) research with conservation practitioners highlighted additional benefits of taking a gender-responsive approach that extended amongst project implementers, stakeholders and broader communities, including: i) increased participation and empowerment of women in conservation activities and decision-making; ii) contribution to potential conservation outcomes; iii) increased staff awareness and changes to operations; iv) gender normative change within project communities; v) strengthened partnerships for national implementation of environmental priorities; and vi) increased ability to access and steward funding with gender requirements. GESI considerations are crucial then to develop better projects and programming that provides a better understanding of women's and men's intersectional relationship with the environment (knowledge, needs, roles and priorities), identifies the different ways in which different identifies accesses, uses and controls natural resources and services, and supports equal (or equitable) opportunities to benefit from environmental policy and projects for all stakeholders.

The entry points and detailed issues of GESI in biodiversity and the natural environment generally, and specifically to the context of BCFs projects is discussed in further detail in Section 6.

4.1 Notable policies, frameworks

The Gender Plan of Action to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) begins by recognising the importance of advancing efforts to achieve gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment to ensure the effective implementation of the global biodiversity framework, and achieving long-term biodiversity goals more broadly.

This commitment is the latest in a suite of similar commitments to gender and social inclusion in biodiversity, conservation and development that should underlie and inform the BCFs GESI approach. This includes coherence with gender inclusions in international and multilateral commitments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) as well as national policy and legislation, such as the International Development Strategy (Gender Equality) Act 2014, and the UK's International Development Strategy.

Many of these policies and framework have adopted the language of gender-responsivity, acknowledging the need to move beyond basic *identification* of gender issues to include progressive efforts that aim to *overcome* gaps and inequalities; differing from gender-sensitivity, which acknowledges gender gaps but does not necessarily include measures to reduce or eliminate them (Westerman, 2021) (see GESI spectrum above in Section 2.1).

5. GESI in the BCFs

The BCFs are not inexperienced in the challenges of incorporating and aligning biodiversity programming with "social" concepts, particularly since 2011 when the then Department for International Development

(DFID)⁵ became a co-funder and introduced a second, dual objective of poverty reduction to DFID-funded (now FCDO-funded) projects. Since then, the BCFs have produced various resources for mainstreaming poverty reduction within projects.

The BCFs approaches to GESI have similarly progressively evolved over time, reflecting similar trends in the development and environmental sectors, as gender and social inclusion considerations have become increasingly salient in national and international discourse and practice. With the introduction of the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014, it is now a requirement of all FCDO-funded Darwin Initiative projects to consider and report their contribution to reducing gender inequality, which has additionally been extended to promoting equality between persons of social characteristics. The Ecorys analysis describes how, prior to the introduction of the Gender Equality Act, gender was much less of a priority to the BCFs with none of the earlier thematic reviews from 2005 to 2010 making any references to impacts on gender, and gender only first appearing in the Thematic Review on Poverty and the SDGs and the Darwin Initiative Gender Analysis (LTS International, 2019; Ecorys, 2020).

In 2023, the guidance for the BCFs was mostly aligned, diverging from previous years to also include Social Inclusion with Gender Equality, including definitions for both. Notably, while still focussing on girls and women in the definition of gender equality, non-binary individuals are also included (although this phrasing fails to capture the nuances of gender diversity, discussed above in Box 1)⁶. Additionally, whilst the definition only describes gender *equality*, the guidance notes that proposals will be assessed on their approaches to “promoting equality between persons of different gender and social backgrounds and ensuring individuals *achieve equitable outcomes*” (emphasis added), highlighting considerations of equity. Social inclusion is defined to comprise the “process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and the process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of people disadvantaged and historically excluded from decision making and spheres of influence on the basis of their identity to take part in society” but does not identify what these marginalised identities or groups would be. Despite these conceptual additions with regard to social inclusion, the rest of the guidance has only minimally been updated to reflect this broader conceptualisation, and still overwhelmingly focuses on issues of gender, and particularly women and girls.

Application guidance provides indicative gender analysis questions to consider focusing on division of labour, access and control of resources, and ability to participate in decision making, but these are not mandatory, and are not differentiated between the funds. The guidance includes (briefly) both risk and opportunities framings. This guidance is further supported by links to resources for applicants to use for their analysis and GESI mainstreaming.

The latest guidance provided to applicants only briefly highlights intersectional inequality, noting that “girls and women are not a homogenous group, with additional layers of diversity including ethnicity,

⁵ In 2020 DFID merged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to become the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which has a broadly similar mandate

⁶ Only one project reviewed, DAR28011 progressively acknowledged “non-cis genders” alongside other intersectional factors that can contribute to prejudice, but does not describe further provisions for how this risk is managed, or further describe such gender diversity in the project context.

caste, age, religion, sexuality, disability status, and income that need to be considered”, although these other identities of social inclusion/exclusion are included in discussions of safeguarding. These identities (particular Indigeneity) are themselves factors of additional risk and marginalisation, rather than only as a subset of gendered risk, and should be highlighted as such. Several minor references are made to Indigenous People, noting their local knowledge and evidence being important for conservation and poverty reduction, but often overlooked; their particular sensitivity to biodiversity loss and degradation; and their underrepresentation (along with other stakeholders) in enhancing public policy.

The definition for safeguarding provided in the glossary includes that it “broadly means preventing harm to people and the environment” but then particularly highlights that safeguarding “efforts often focus on taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) from occurring, and to respond appropriately when it does”. The further safeguarding guidance provided also does not describe any particularly vulnerable identities or areas of concern, although a safeguarding plan is required, which could additionally include such detail. GESI considerations are also not explicitly described in relation to the link between Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Reduction.

Although implying a GESI-*responsive* approach (by requiring projects to consider their *contribution to reducing inequality*) the BCFs do not require projects to situate their proposals or implementation against a GESI-spectrum - instead, projects will often apply their own usage, but not necessarily with a commonly understood definition or verbage, risking ‘GESI-washing’ (akin to ‘greenwashing’, where projects make false or misleading statements about their impact or benefits, for compliance or positive promotion). For the most part, this approach is limited by the lack of institutionalisation of these concepts across BCFs guidance.

New reporting templates introduced in 2023 for all BCFs included gender indicators for the first time, namely the proportion of women on the Project Board and the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women. All projects are also expected to report indicators disaggregated by gender where possible and to describe how their project has proactively contributed to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes and how they have engaged participants in a meaningful way.

In 2023, the BCFs introduced Standard Indicators to increase the portfolio’s contribution to the global evidence base for activities that support biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction and capability and capacity. Whilst the Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus Standard Indicators are almost identical (excepting Darwin Plus not including indicator disaggregation, and removing a reference to them in DPLUS-B06I), the IWT Challenge Fund has its own set of indicators, although there is some alignment between these. Whilst gender and other intersectional disaggregation (including age, language, community group) are explicitly included for disaggregation in certain indicators and the general guidance specifies to “disaggregate by gender in all relevant indicators”, gaps remain where GESI considerations could be included. Generally, disaggregation focuses on stakeholders, particularly highlighting participation, but does not include indicators for GESI actions taken to promote inclusion and address inequality. Some (non-exhaustive) examples of possible GESI considerations include that: whilst DI-A03/DPLUS-A03/IWTCF-D03 “Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of Project” disaggregates by organisation type, this could specify focus, gender-leadership, identity group etc; indicators referring to sustainable enterprises could all disaggregate by gender owner/owners (as well as

age group, Indigeneity etc.), DI-B11/DPLUS-B11 could disaggregate areas as identified as important for biodiversity by gender and other factors; BI-C01//DPLUS-C01 could include language (IWTCF-05 already does) and use of Indigenous/Local Knowledge; other communications and publications indicators could include language, gender of author(s), accessibility (non-literary publication formats etc.), topics; disaggregation by "training typology" includes options of topics for "safeguarding, gender etc" but not measures taken to improved accessibility; and DI-D15/DPLUS-D15 "Net change in incidences of human wildlife conflict" and many others could include gender disaggregation, as this is differentially experienced. There are no explicit GESI references, excepting one DI-E02/DPLUS-E02 that measures "Change in benefits to people (Scorecard to be developed) to be disaggregated against an undefined "GESI typology". Generally, the IWT Challenge Fund indicators and disaggregation are more inclusive for GESI considerations, although gaps do still remain.

5.1 By fund

Although there has largely been an alignment between the funds in recent years, there is also very slight variation of the GESI requirements between the funds, which reflect their slightly differentiated priorities and evolution. These differences are likely amplified in the *de facto* applications of these requirements by reviewers, project proponents etc. For example, the Ecorys evaluation found that Darwin Initiative projects were more likely to report GESI indicators than IWT Challenge Fund projects.

5.1.1 Darwin Initiative

Round 24 in 2017 was the first to include a gender-specific question, and Round 30 in 2023 was the first to include social inclusion with considerations of gender equality.

Gender equality and social inclusion, and safeguarding are considerations when projects are reviewed and scored but aren't their own scoring criteria (rather forming part of both the poverty reduction, and capability and capacity metrics - where previously gender equality had been included in the technical merit metric as well), and reviewers are not provided specific metrics/rubrics and only minimal guidance of what to consider. These dimensions are also last or penultimate, suggesting that they are not a priority of the review process. Considering the GESI expertise of reviewers is also likely variable, this introduces a high degree of subjectivity to review, and makes it possible for proposals to still score highly overall even with a low consideration for gender equality, and similarly for projects with strong GESI components to be overlooked/underestimated. Additionally the challenges of incorporating social concepts within natural science reviewers and practitioners may incur additional barriers, as discussed above.

5.1.2 IWT Challenge Fund

In the latest guidance for the IWT Challenge Fund Round 10 (2023), the guidance provided is also not particularly specific to the differentiated focus of the IWT Challenge Fund, other than an additional resource provided from WWF. Guidance also does not include any mention of Indigenous Peoples. Gender inequality (sic) and social inclusion, as well as stakeholder engagement, are included during proposal review only as considerations under poverty reduction (but not Technical Merit) which is only a qualitative category and not scored, and without further guidance of how to score these elements. Safeguarding is explicitly only included under technical merit, but only at the second stage, and the only scored criteria relevant to GESI in Technical Merit is risk identification and mitigation, evidence of a highly collaborative approach, and demonstrating how [the project] will strengthen the capability and capacity of key stakeholders (but the assessment framework does not elaborate how any of these will be scored).

5.1.3 Darwin Plus

Like the other funds, the most recent guidance (Round 12, 2023) has been updated to include social inclusion with gender equality (almost identically), but lacks any substantive further guidance or direction on how to do so. Guidance does not include any mention of Indigenous Peoples. GESI is also included only as a qualitative consideration under the poverty reduction category, and not included in technical merit or other scored categories, and no particular guidance is included for the specific contexts or application of Darwin Plus projects.

5.2 Compared to other fund(er)s, conservation organisations, global trends

GESI considerations (and equity in particular) represent an emerging trend amongst the BCFs development and environmental funder and grantmaking peers, and is likely to become increasingly progressive in the near future, as GESI approaches are increasingly encouraging GESI-responsive and transformative targets. Westerman (2021) describes how, in the past decade, the five largest international conservation organisations⁷ have shifted in how gender is considered within their work, to varying extents, but all responding to increasing trends and demands to foreground such considerations to greater extents. In environmental and climate financing, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund (AF) all have gender policies and/or action plans that lay out specific requirements related to analyses, indicators and staffing to encourage project implementers towards gender-responsiveness, with gender being tracked at a portfolio level. Public funding entities, such as the World Bank and bi-lateral country donors are also increasingly featuring gender and other social inclusion criteria (Westerman, 2021). Occasionally, these approaches (for pragmatic or other reasons) may emphasise risk-based approaches, either at an institutional or one-off way. For example, in 2023 IUCN (which has historically been a forerunner in progressive GESI approaches) has recently highlighted the Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Environments (RISE) grants challenge, which explicitly supports projects addressing gender-based violence (GBV) related to climate change and environmental degradation. Other organisations and instruments highlighting progressive GESI approaches that are comparable to the BCFs contexts include the CBD Gender Action Plan⁸, Women4Biodiversity⁹, Flora and Fauna International¹⁰, and the MacArthur Foundation¹¹.

⁷ Conservation International, WWF, The Nature Conservancy, IUCN and the Wildlife Conservation Society

⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/f64f/e1b9/e8da56802bc2c458a56fcefa/cop-15-l-24-en.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.women4biodiversity.org/>

¹⁰ https://www.fauna-flora.org/app/uploads/2019/06/FFI_2019_Position-on-gender-in-conservation.pdf
<https://www.fauna-flora.org/approaches/livelihoods-governance/gender/>

¹¹ https://www.macfound.org/media/files/csd_gender_white_paper.pdf

6. GESI key issues

BCFs projects must consider both risk and opportunities considerations, specifically how their projects will:

- avoid, reduce and mitigate adverse GESI-risk and not intentionally or unintentionally increase, exacerbate or perpetuate inequality (GESI-risk); and
- contribute to reducing inequality, with activities expected to generate net benefits for marginalised or excluded groups and identities (GESI-opportunities).

What follows is a discussion of where GESI considerations are relevant to BCFs projects, and the extent to which past and current projects (in their diversity, within and across the Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund) are already considering GESI opportunities and risks. The BCF GE(SI) guidance specifically mentions gender- and socially-differentiated biodiversity practices, knowledge acquisition and usage, and inequalities in control over resources, as well as differences in the division of labour, access and control of resources, and ability to participate in decision making, with oblique reference to access rights and tenure. The analysis is arranged according to these themes, as well as other issues drawn from the literature, and verified deductively against the BCFs portfolio of projects. These issues consider both dimensions of risk, as well as opportunity (as these aspects are occasionally counterparts of one another).

6.1 Social roles, norms and beliefs

Most drivers of inequality and exclusion have their basis in discriminatory social roles, norms and beliefs that are deeply embedded, institutionalised and normalised in all aspects and scales of society and decision making, making them highly resistant and resilient to attempts at modification. Restrictive norms limit the sectors, professions and roles that are seen as socially “acceptable” for different identities to participate in, further impacting their control over resources, knowledge, and decision-making authority. As described in Section 4, in natural environments and resource sectors, different priorities and knowledge surrounding land, natural resources and ecosystem services are typically characterised in relation to their traditional gender roles and responsibilities, where men are positioned as primary income earners and decision-makers and women are household managers and family caretakers. These factors both contribute to, or exacerbate the other issues below, by determining and prescribing different roles, behaviour and value to different genders, groups and identities. Unpaid care, reproductive and household work (including water, food and fuel security and collection) are often considered “women’s work” and require significant time and labour investment every day to complete (Ayuttacorn, 2019; Badstue et al., 2020; Dasig, 2020; Njuki et al., 2022). For example, despite being able to attend project activities, IWT034¹² described how women’s duties occasionally distracted them from fully participating as they were preoccupied with other duties (e.g. water collecting) that they would still need to attend to after the exercise.

Such norms also prescribe expectations upon men, particularly in roles as breadwinners or providers, which can become threatened under conditions of environmental degradation or in the face of resource exclusion or livelihood loss. Inability to meet socially defined expectations to provide for families due to

¹² Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

socio-ecological changes can lead to self-destructive behaviours, negative coping mechanisms, and forms of GBV (Castañeda Camey, et al., 2020; Massé, et al., 2021). Whilst environmental crimes, such as poaching or wildlife trade, offer potentially lucrative livelihoods for those feeling pressure to provide for families, they also expose men to the risk of being imprisoned, harmed or murdered (Castañeda Camey, et al., 2020), leaving behind wives and families with increased vulnerability to poverty and livelihood loss.

Notably, these social norms and practices will often persist even with, and often in spite of, equality and inclusion being enshrined in legislation or policy. They can also be internalised, with women and other marginalisation groups becoming complicit in their own exclusion. For example, DARNV010¹³ is promoting representation quotas to improve participation, but highlighted the challenges of women being unable or unwilling to speak openly in front of men, nor willing to take on leadership roles in governance. The resilience of these norms (often being linked to seemingly immutable institutions like religion, tradition and culture), means that interventions to combat social misconceptions and stereotypes can be difficult to implement and measure. Questions and indicators on gender norms are challenging to determine and analyse across a range of sectors and collecting data on discriminatory or illegal behaviour and attitudes (e.g., child marriage, sending girl children to schools, prevalence of GBV) can lead to desirability biases and underreporting if people are pressured to give what is perceived as the “correct” response (Marcus & Harper, 2015). However, culture and society is dynamic, and many innovative interventions demonstrate the potential to challenge harmful norms and shift practices, beliefs and behaviour. For example, overcoming gender biases in ranging, guiding, conservation and tourism, IWT037¹⁴ supported women’s capacity strengthening, but was forced to adapt their project strategy when family commitments prevented women from attending recurring trainings, instead repeating content in one-off training offerings.

Whilst directly challenging or undermining such norms is perhaps beyond the scope of the gender-responsive approach of the BCFs, failing to acknowledge the importance of such norms risks gender-blind interventions that threaten established norms and practices and can invoke household or social disapproval, backlash and even retribution. IWT036¹⁵ reflected that challenging highly entrenched cultural norms around gender roles in wildlife scouting within a four-year project lifespan was unrealistic, so rather worked targeted women for complementary opportunities in microenterprise, leveraging business training that provides knowledge and skills applicable to other income generating activities.

6.2 Recognition, visibility and value

*“Try changing **who we look up to** on our walls”*

- What Works: Gender Equality by Design, Harvard University¹⁶

¹³ Scaling evidence-based Inclusive Conservation Finance models in Uganda and Tanzania
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DARNV010/>

¹⁴ Conservation and community resilience: IWT Alternatives in snow leopard range
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT037/>

¹⁵ Implementing park action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT036/>

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niH9wfKsUlc>

These social norms and practices commonly translate into how different groups/identities and, by extension, their needs, interests, experiences and expertise are recognised, visible and valued within different spaces and sectors. In addition to certain types of work being “appropriate” or socially sanctioned, women’s roles in certain sectors may be overlooked or underestimated, particularly when their roles are concentrated in secondary stages (processing, marketing, selling) or informal markets. This is particularly apparent in the forestry, fishery and agriculture sectors, despite women often forming large and critical elements of these sectors (across the value chain)(Torre et al., 2019; Dasig, 2020; Killian and Hyle, 2020; Katila et al., 2019; Michalena et al., 2020; Carter, 2019; Ambrosino et al., 2020). For example, fisheries is often considered a male-dominated sector, since data shows women hold only 14% of harvesting roles in capture fisheries and aquaculture. However, when considering the entire value chain of fisheries from catch to processing, to sale and consumption, women’s involvement matches men’s involvement (FAO, 2020). This (in)visibility contributes to existing data-gaps, driving gender neutral approaches and perpetuating myths and misconceptions about participation, thereby upholding cultural barriers/gender norms that continue to exclude women (see recommendations on M&E in Section 8.3). To reinforce this, evidence of women’s lower engagement is often interpreted as disinterest, rather than as lack of opportunity or access. Women 4 Biodiversity highlight that there are limited mechanisms in place to systematically map, collect and analyse women’s and girls’ roles and activities regarding biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and access and benefit sharing, including baseline data and indicators, further perpetuating this invisibility and underestimation (Women4Biodiversity, 2021).

Although some safeguards regimes include particular considerations for Indigenous People, in some cases, Indigenous people and Indigenous women in particular do not have the same rights and formal recognition as non-Indigenous citizens (Ayuttacorn, 2019; Barcia, 2017). This contributes to Indigenous People being labelled as anti-development, terrorists, criminals, and “illegal” on their own land, and fosters a culture of impunity for the violence and discrimination they face (Global Witness, 2021). The well documented colonial and post-colonial dispossession and displacement of pastoralist Maasai in the name of fortress conservation is just one notable example of this effect (Goldman, 2011). Rather than only reporting their representation, DAR28011¹⁷ highlighted the *quality* of contribution from particularly Indigenous women “which has continually brought new perspectives to the debate”. This included (re)visibilising and (re)valuing the important role, heritage and history of Indigenous women as important transmitters of knowledge and shapers of current ways of life.

These factors contribute to epistemological perceptions and narratives of women and their interests, knowledge and contributions (Resurreccion and Elmhirst, 2008). Since informal norms and roles often situate women, and their ideas and decision-making authority by extension, within ‘trivial’ domestic spheres, the misperception of inferiority is then extended to women’s contributions in other sectors (especially those historically inaccessible to them, or ‘neutrally’ associated with masculine traits and experience) (Richardson et al., 2011 in James et al., 2021). By including women as leaders, DAR22009¹⁸ helped “promote women’s role[s] in the economy and decision-making”, and contributed to broader social relationships and understanding. In this way, women are able to leverage

¹⁷ ‘We are the forest:’ beiradeiro training and socio-environmental services, Amazonia
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

¹⁸ Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve’s grasslands and wellbeing of local communities
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

representation/recognition across domains, to (re)negotiate and (re)constitute power dynamics and roles in household spaces as well.

Often, women face a double burden of needing to prove themselves, and their concerns as valid of consideration, perpetuating barriers to inclusion and underrepresentation of women and their interests in these spaces (Gissi, Portman, and Hornidge, 2018; Bardekjian et al., 2019; Mashapa, et al. 2020). In IWT036¹⁹, despite forming 40% of conservation staff (the highest female-male ratio within the wildlife authority) the project team observed that women in these roles lack voice and profile, taking second place to law enforcement with their work often being seen as “confusing the issue”, and so the project sought to change the perception of, and attitude to, these staff as a whole and female staff in particular.

This issue demonstrates how simple representation (in consultations, governance etc) is often insufficient for meaningfully engaging women or other marginalised groups, if they are not recognised as decision-makers, or if their contributions are still prescribed within “appropriate” domains (e.g., secretarial or administrative roles in governance; decision-making related to family, children, care, households)(Park, 2019; Kevany and Huisingh, 2013; Bajner M, 2019; Bardekjian et al., 2019). For example, research conducted by Rights and Resources Initiative found that only 23/80 community tenure regimes reviewed explicitly recognize women as members of the community, a concern when gender-neutral language like “villagers” or “local community” can unintentionally exclude women from decision-making, when patriarchal norms and tradition shape governance group membership (Salcedo-La Viña, 2017).

IWT118²⁰ intends to challenge women, girls, and other vulnerable groups exclusion from male-dominated decision-making and natural resource management by empowering women at various entry points across the bushmeat supply chain (bushmeat sellers, female community ecoguards, rangers). This empowerment (through training, diversion to alternative livelihoods, economic upliftment) is hoped to then contribute to their increased recognition and respect from community members (including men) gaining social status in the process, an additional deterrent against backsliding into illegal activities. IWT060²¹ case studies showed that women were key to project success, with women accessing additional leadership and decision making roles after being recognised as influential members of the community, and DAR25024²² used training to build women’s influence on biodiversity outcomes within social networks, and as communicators (leading awareness-raising) and entrepreneurs.

¹⁹ Implementing park action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT036/>

²⁰ Empowering local women to reduce Illegal Wildlife Trade in Liberia

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT118/>

²¹ LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nqStDEleeWPH7tSWHbBbZY4lqPGW9DEDFoBrhX7Z85kY/edit#>

²² Securing marine biodiversity and fishers’ income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

6.3 Rights and access to land and productive resources

“To fulfil gendered productive and reproductive responsibilities and obligations women may have an interest in, depend on, and manage natural resources while neither having the right to nor being entitled to control these same resources”

- Jerneck (2018)

Tenure and access rights are important for indirect outcomes, as they support the ability to enter into contract agreements; access financial resources as collateral; receive project benefits; foster autonomy and independence; and decrease susceptibility to food insecurity, poverty, and GBV as a result of land loss and environmental shocks (Abubakar, 2021; Rights and Resources Initiative, 2019; Salcedo-La Viña, 2020; Jerneck, 2018; Vázquez-García & Ortega-Ortega, 2017; Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1997). Tenure and access security is particularly important for conservation and restoration objectives, for promoting sustainable land and resource management and extraction. For example, women plot managers with more secure tenure were observed being more likely to plant trees and adopt climate-smart agricultural practices, such as conservation agriculture, whilst those without tenure security were less likely to leave land fallow to restore soil fertility (Lehel, 2019). There is also a strong correlation between legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ and community forest rights and their capacity to prevent deforestation, maintain forest health and connectivity, and lower carbon dioxide emissions (Alvarez and Lovera, 2016). Insecure rights and access to land and resources contributes to food, water and energy insecurity, poverty, land grabbing and displacement (Njuki et al., 2022).

However, customary and social gender norms, limited financial resources or assets, or inadequate legal tenure systems shape differentiated access to ownership and control of land and natural resources, with women and Indigenous People facing particular barriers to access rights and tenure security (even when the law grants equal rights). Rights regimes are often self-sustaining, being upheld by customary paths of inheritance or transfer that tend to favour men or male dominated activities, livelihoods and resource needs (Meinzen-Dick et al, 1997). For example, fishing policies can focus on primary production to deny women’s equal tenure rights or they may be excluded from fishing member groups that negotiate tenure and access. These regimes may also fail to accommodate the peripheral species or “in between” spaces where women may collect their resources, or the potentially complementary gendered domains of different resources (collecting leaves vs timber, for example) (Fortnam, et al., 2019, Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1997). Access to other common productive resources and spaces may also be shaped by internal power imbalances in households and communities, or by constraints on women’s movement, access to natural resources, and autonomous income.

Some projects that aimed to address this challenge include DAR22010²³ (one of the highest rated projects in the Gender Analysis, despite facing challenges with achieving gender equality) which acknowledged that ethnic minorities and women typically lack secure access to land and therefore rely on forest resources for raw materials and income, so specifically promoted employment opportunities for these groups and empowered their engagement in decision-making and resource management (through organisation, negotiation and trading skills, and supporting fair trading regimes). This was further

²³ Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam’s wild medicinal products
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22010/>

supported through inclusive regulation to promote legal and sustainable harvesting, as well as policy revisions to enable more equitable co-management and benefit-sharing. Gender assessments and equality considerations were also included in updated community conservation policy during IWT036²⁴, supported with training provided to conservation staff and DAR24001²⁵ discusses how land governance and tenure is nested within existing power and gender roles, targeting activities to include women (who use forest resources for daily household needs) and young men (whose future opportunities rest in being able to convert remaining forest resources into capital, many of whom are landless). DAREX005²⁶ is supporting the improvement of community tenure over natural resources to reduce local threats to biodiversity, particularly targeting Indigenous People and Local Communities (using gender-sensitive participatory approaches including free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) principles throughout the project cycle.

6.4 Economic activity and opportunities

These issues of recognition/visibility and rights compound to produce inequalities in economic activity and opportunities, with women, youth and other marginalised groups, in many places, not having the same access to income-generation opportunities, credit and financing, training and information, and technology, and facing additional barriers to accessing these benefits. IWT034²⁷ highlighted contributions to gender equality through economic and educational opportunities favouring women (including micro-credit schemes), to overcome significant gendered gaps at baseline. DARNV010²⁸ describes how youth are not encouraged to participate in conservation leadership, nor do they experience economic benefits from conservation opportunities, so rather take up poaching and other unsustainable resources practices. Women also usually have greater unpaid 'reproductive' labour burdens, managing households' food, water and energy security, and caring for children and the elderly. This time burden limits the capacity of women to participate in income generating activities (Ayuttacorn, 2019; Badstue et al., 2020; Dasig, 2020; Njuki et al., 2022; Resurrección et al., 2019). Despite progress made in recent years, gender pay gaps continue to perpetuate in many industries, either where women are relegated to lower-level, secretarial or administrative roles (rather than highly skilled or managerial positions) or where women are paid less than men for the same job/position. DPLUS137²⁹ describes how, whilst marine livelihoods are predominantly linked to men (as fishers, charter boat owners, and dive operators), women face differentiated impacts and threats associated with their roles in tourism, and have fewer alternative opportunities when these sectors are affected by hurricanes etc.

²⁴ Implementing park action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT036/>

²⁵ Improving forest governance for Cross River gorillas and Nigerian farmers
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/dar24001/>

²⁶ Ridge to Reef Conservation in West Papua, Indonesia
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX005/>

²⁷ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

²⁸ Scaling evidence-based Inclusive Conservation Finance models in Uganda and Tanzania
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DARNV010/>

²⁹ Transforming Anguilla's Marine Parks: institutionalising sustainable and collaborative management solutions <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS137/>

Women's labour in productive spaces can also be unpaid or underpaid when it is perceived to be an extension of their domestic or household responsibilities (e.g. agriculture for subsistence, or processing in fisheries on behalf of their husband's livelihoods). Recognising that women in the target community were primarily engaged in rearing livestock and fodder collection, DAR22009³⁰ (also highlighted in the DI Gender Analysis) set up women-led dairy and livestock cooperatives that contributed to promoting women's independent income generation. This was further supported by targeted capacity strengthening empowering women in these spaces and increasing women's access to credit. The project also found that the engagement of women in the cooperatives led to better management and utilisation of cooperative funds.

External perceptions of sectors, industries and workplaces being male-dominated, 'boys clubs', or exclusionary to women reinforce barriers to entry. Women's access to economic resources and opportunities can also be constrained by formal and informal gender-based inequalities and discrimination in the workplace, including working conditions and facilities that are not safe or appropriate for women's needs (Davidson and Black, 2001; Bardekjian et al, 2019); limited access to markets and information (Bajner, 2019; Nijbroek and Wangui, 2018); and potential exposure to GBV when carrying out income generating activities (Ambrosino et al., 2020). For example, although not initially indicated as such in their application, CV19RR20³¹ specifically targeted women and women's cooperatives in their initiative to advance equality, acknowledging that men had traditionally had primary access to markets and marketplaces in Morocco. However, men may be more likely to engage in activities that are practically exclusionary to women, requiring additional physicality (such as in heavy labour), exposing them to danger (security or law enforcement) or in environmental crimes, such as poaching or wildlife trade. IWT118³² describes how the danger and risks associated with criminal activities (such as illegal bushmeat) makes these industries unappealing to women, despite their income, and many were eager to change to more sustainable and less risky practices (women's participation in these industries, despite the risk and desirability, suggests a lack of alternative options available to women otherwise). Related, IWT051³³ is promoting gender equality within law enforcement institutions through maintaining progressive and culturally appropriate gender ratios in training opportunities, and promoting workplace behaviour which is respectful of differences.

³⁰ Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

³¹ Online local product commercialization, marketing and promotion sustains biodiversity-friendly livelihoods <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/CV19RR20/>

³² Empowering local women to reduce Illegal Wildlife Trade in Liberia <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT118/>

³³ Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT051/>

BOX 4: Women in anti-poaching

Since fewer than 11% of the global ranger workforce are women, many anti-poaching initiatives have included programmes designed explicitly to provide employment for women in ranging and scouting, with all women anti-poaching units often catching headlines globally - such as the “Black Mambas” (Balule Nature Reserve, South Africa) and the Akashinga programme (Lower Zambezi, Zimbabwe). Others (like the North Luangwa Conservation Programme in Zambia) employ women across a range of positions in enforcement, guiding, scouting and animal handling (see PeopleNotPoaching, for further examples). However, whilst popular (several projects (IWT119³⁴ and IWT118³⁵) proposed all-female ranger/remote agent teams), these approaches are not always contextually appropriate, and can expose women to additional risks, if relevant safeguards systems are not in place. IWT060³⁶ explored the gendered barriers to participation in different anti-IWT strategies (in law enforcement, scouting etc) in different contexts, to determine the most appropriate options in different cases.

Additionally, projects can capitalise upon differentiated roles - for example, DAR25024³⁷ distinguished the fishing zones mainly used by men and women, describing fishing gear used and target species to develop strategies to ensure gender equity in fisheries councils and marine area management, including promoting women-led bivalve aquaculture as a livelihood initiative that addresses their constraints to accessing diversified livelihoods (that otherwise drive them towards illegal, extractive livelihoods like mosquito net fishing). IWT119³⁸ is aiming on leveraging women’s existing expertise and skills in collecting mushrooms, herbs and tubers to apply those methodological and diligent searching qualities to snare removal. The project intends to use female role models, including project team members and staff drawn from ethnic minorities, to promote the recruitment of women into these usually male-dominated roles. DAR28021³⁹ suggests that the women-led and managed community enterprise development will likely be the most significant incentive for conservation and restoration, but does not seem to account for any risks of these enterprises becoming ‘captured’ by other stakeholders, once their lucrativeness is proven.

6.5 Representation, participation, decision-making and leadership

One of the most visible symptoms of the issues above is the low or un-influential representation and participation of women and marginalised groups in decision-making and governance processes and structures at all scales, despite their being (as described above) highly active and vested in land, natural resources and ecosystem services. Women’s involvement in the sector tends to be well below parity at all

³⁴ Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

³⁵ Empowering local women to reduce Illegal Wildlife Trade in Liberia

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT118/>

³⁶ LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nqStDEleeWPH7tSWHbBbZY4IqPGW9DEDFoBrhX7Z85kY/edit#>

³⁷ Securing marine biodiversity and fishers’ income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

³⁸ Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

³⁹ Improving coastal resilience and ecosystem services through biodiversity restoration (Philippines)

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28021/>

levels, or where they do outnumber men, they will not necessarily hold positions of leadership, have significant influence over processes, or even participate in meetings (not engaging, speaking up, or attending) (Daley et al., 2018; Killian and Hyle, 2020; Nhem and Lee, 2019; Women4Biodiversity, 2021; Woodhouse et al., 2022). This under-representation across spheres neglects an entire segment of society/communities, and ignores the scale of women and marginalised group's interests and needs, as well as their potential and actual contributions to natural resource management. To counter this, DAR28021⁴⁰ indicated women, youth, fisherfolk, and farmers as key stakeholders for focus group discussions during project inception, to identify stakeholders, needs and baseline socio-economic status. Similarly, DAREX002⁴¹ uses their events, workshops and trainings targeting women to create spaces for participation and decision-making outside of male-dominated local authorities. These informal norms also likely influence glass ceilings and barriers to sustaining roles in leadership, with female professionals demonstrating higher rates of attrition, stagnation or withdrawal over time, often unfairly blamed on their reproductive duties rather than hostile or inaccessible environments (Bardekjian et al., 2019). IWT060⁴² reflected on the ongoing challenge of ensuring equal participation at learning events and activities, but did not describe any specific adaptive strategies made to address this, nor do they offer any explanations for the finding that "men are more likely than women to be in leadership roles and able to take up opportunities to travel and participate in events".

As in economic opportunities, women's time poverty limits their ability to participate in unpaid decision-making opportunities (including project consultations, community governance etc.), especially when these events are held during times or spaces that are not accessible to women, for various reasons. After finding that, despite their key role in wild-harvesting and processing, women's participation in project activities had been limited DAR22010⁴³ worked with local organisations to encourage women's attendance with an event to specifically acknowledge and empower women collectors, and making accommodations for the cultural context of women being unable to easily access previous workshop locations (as they required overnight travel) and being the primary caregivers of children.

The capacity of different stakeholders to engage and participate may also impact their influence in decision-making. In IWT034⁴⁴, some disaggregated mapping and resource ranking processes demonstrated that that women struggled to engage with certain exercises (due to limited knowledge of village boundaries and resource availability) and highlighting the gendered differences and perceptions of roles and duties, as well as control over, and accessibility to different resources (with men underestimating the challenges or gaps faced by women), with additional intersectional considerations of age becoming apparent. In other contexts where women were underrepresented and did not feel confident completing

⁴⁰ Improving coastal resilience and ecosystem services through biodiversity restoration (Philippines)
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28021/>

⁴¹ Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX002/>

⁴² LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nqStDEleeWPH7tSWhBbZY4lqPGW9DEDFoBrhX7Z85kY/edit#>

⁴³ Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam's wild medicinal products
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22010/>

⁴⁴ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

the exercise alone, analysis was not disaggregated and comparisons could not easily be made. Similarly, EIDPO042⁴⁵ found that, whilst women were able to join project activities, the project team had to have more patience with female attendees as “they are less accustomed than men to participate in training, discussions and mixed work groups, and they initially expected to contribute a lesser degree of input”.

Women’s membership or promotion in certain collective groups like associations, unions and committees may be constrained by other barriers to their participation, such as their roles in supply chains (e.g., excluding them from cooperatives or producer groups), traditional gender norms (e.g., land and cooperative membership being passed down to male family members, or women being relegated to junior governance roles) and women’s limited land tenure or asset ownership (Ubalijoro et al., 2021; Suárez et al., 2018). This is important as membership can facilitate access to land, labour, materials or markets (Aberman et al., 2020 in Njuki et al., 2022; Suárez et al., 2018) as well as enabling further formal education, and mutual learning, knowledge-exchange, and information sharing (Aleke and Egwu, 2015). Groups can provide entry points for programmes and institutions to recognise and consult with stakeholders, select and coordinate beneficiaries and project partners. Organisations/associations are also able to communicate legitimacy and authority to external bodies like State institutions or credit providers, especially where individual members would have low social capital otherwise (Ayuttacorn, 2019). For example, the women-led cooperatives established in DAR22009⁴⁶ provided opportunities for women to convene to discuss a range of issues, including those beyond the project scope, and the mixed-gender management committees established in DAR23012⁴⁷ produced qualitative wellbeing benefits including promoting teamwork, knowledge exchange among community residents, and cooperation between fishers and fish traders (i.e. between men and women). Similarly, the women’s biochar groups constituted in DAR23031⁴⁸ used their supplemented income to support new initiatives in vegetable farming and goat rearing, extending the livelihood benefits of the project, and DAREX002⁴⁹ recognises that women’s cooperatives offer culturally legible access to economic activities and participation in key environmental management practices.

6.6 Gender-based violence, SEAH, safety and security

A notable GESI consideration is the risk of gender-based violence, Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEA), and other threats to women’s safety and security. Violence can be systematically used as a means to control who can and can’t engage in environmental activities, whilst biodiversity loss and environmental degradation can contribute to drivers of and exposure to GBV (household financial stress,

⁴⁵ Implementing community-based landscape and resource monitoring to consolidate voluntary conservation <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/EIDPO042/>

⁴⁶ Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve’s grasslands and wellbeing of local communities <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

⁴⁷ Improving Marine Biodiversity and Livelihood of coastal communities in Principe <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23012/>

⁴⁸ Science-based interventions reversing negative impacts of invasive plants in Nepal <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23031/>

⁴⁹ Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX002/>

distance of travel for resource collection) (Boyer, et al., 2020; IUCN, 2023⁵⁰). In their livelihoods and workplaces, women may also be subjected to SEAH or have their safety compromised through poor working conditions, or exposure to risk through human-wildlife conflict (while collecting resources etc). For example, electric fences erected in communities in IWT034⁵¹ contributed to preventing crop raiding and avoiding human/wildlife conflict, thereby addressing women's food security concerns and reducing their and children's exposure to harm.

Projects should also consider these dimensions in their safeguarding, to avoid producing circumstances that may increase GBV/SEAH risk (remote working locations, requiring training or meeting participants to travel after dark, etc). Through initiatives to support alternative practices around fodder, DAR22009⁵² aimed to reduce women needing to enter the national park to collect fodder, therefore limiting their risk of injury or harm through animal attacks or falling out of trees while collecting fodder.

Efforts to strengthen law enforcement or ecosystem monitoring generally may reduce these risks, as women and other threatened groups may disproportionately rely on such services for safety, security and accountability. Such enforcement may also undermine other criminal industries (such as human trafficking) that operate in complement to IWT. However, this process necessarily requires a critical GESI lens since, these marginalised and vulnerable groups (e.g. women, adolescents and ethnic minorities) can often be subjected to criminalisation and victimisation by law enforcement institutions themselves. Those in positions of power (law enforcement agents) may also contribute to perpetuating GBV or SEAH, particularly if yielded as a threat against individuals caught undertaking illegal or unsanctioned activities (e.g. an agent offering immunity or leniency if a woman found poaching provides sexual services or threatening persecution to those not complying). In IWT051⁵³ The project is partnering with local gender organisations to manage and inform how the consideration of structural and unconscious biases in law enforcement impact GESI considerations in the project, to promote better safety outcomes and mitigate against the risk of perpetuating harmful enforcement practices. Amongst their analysis of drivers of IWT, IWTEV001⁵⁴ is considering nuanced research questions to include GESI considerations such as "is there evidence of coercion, such as sexual or gender shaming, driving poaching, and trading?"; "Is poaching linked with other illegal activities such as sex trafficking?"; "Are there gendered geographies that warrant attention?"; "Would the impacts of stopping poaching be the same for women and men?".

⁵⁰ As discussed above, IUCN are pioneering new funding particularly focussing on this intersection of GBV and environment

⁵¹ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

⁵² Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

⁵³ Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT051/>

⁵⁴ Developing a problem-oriented approach to reduce turtle trafficking in Cambodia

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/IWTEV001/>

Whilst relevant, projects should avoid singularly fixating on issues of GBV, SEAH, safety and security to the neglect of other dimensions of GESI, particularly those that highlight women's opportunities and contributions to projects.

7. GESI recommendations in cross-cutting project tools/approaches

This report intends to contribute to the body of knowledge for mainstreaming GESI considerations in biodiversity funding and programming. Bennett et al (2016) describe the challenges of incorporating 'social' concepts like gender and inclusion with conservation, highlighting ideological, institutional, knowledge, and capacity barriers to meaningful integration. In addition to better collaboration among social scientists, natural scientists, practitioners, and policy makers, they recommend fostering knowledge on the scope and contributions of the social sciences to conservation (as the preceding sections attempted to do) as well as incorporating social science research and insights during all stages of conservation planning and implementation, and building social science capacity at all scales in conservation organisations and agencies (recommendations echoed below).

The recommendations made here aim to provide a guide to projects but intends to remain sensitive to carefully managing the trade-off of overly rigorous or technical application, reporting and implementation standards, with maintaining the accessibility of the Funds, particularly for smaller applicants, potentially without dedicated gender or social inclusion resources or expertise. As recommendations, these items aim to avoid (re)producing compliance hurdles or hoops that are not intrinsically valuable to project proponents or divert resources to meeting administrative burdens rather than meaningful project interventions.

Whilst the recommendations provided present replicable opportunities for incorporating GESI considerations, projects should reflect on their context-specific needs - whilst these recommendations are intended to cover the broad range of environments, interventions and approaches of the BCFs portfolio, not all the recommendations will be applicable in every case. Additionally, GESI mainstreaming is a cross-cutting and iterative process, and cannot be implemented in isolation of the broader social context, or risk exacerbating the discriminatory norms and behaviours that underpin inequality or exclusion.

7.1 GESI analysis

Underlying all further GESI considerations, is a thorough understanding and examination of the context-specific gender and inclusion issues and conditions for a project's location, focus and background. This analysis should be used to shape the project design, to ensure that projects avoid, reduce or mitigate GESI risk and contribute to promoting equality between persons of different gender and social backgrounds, as well as understanding additional risks and entry points for GESI mainstreaming across the project life cycle.

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>Resource a multi-scalar and participatory GESI analysis to understand and examine GESI dimensions of the project and context, in line with the issues described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GESI analysis should ideally take place at the beginning of the project conceptualisation process, but should also be ongoing to remain adaptive and responsive to changes or new information (Ecorys found that when context-specific GESI analysis was conducted during project design, this resulted in better GESI outcomes/sensitivity during implementation) • Integrate GESI analysis into the project design and implementation process (into guiding principles, activities, indicators and expected outcomes), rather than considering findings as an “add-on” or in isolation (see Section 8 and Annex 2). • Use local gender experts, researchers etc to ensure evidence is contextually relevant (see Section 7.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In their pre-project scoping, DAR23012⁵⁵ found that female-headed households were particularly vulnerable to issues faced by fishers and fish traders, due to gender gaps in literacy, access to education, and job opportunities. The project’s inception focus groups and questionnaires were also approximately gender-equal, with disaggregated results, which led to evidence-informed project design. • DAR25024⁵⁶ drew from previous project experience in DAR20023 to identify women as a particularly vulnerable group, working to remove barriers to their participation in project activities and outcomes, whilst gender considerations during governance analysis highlighted the drivers of women’s underrepresentation in fisheries councils. • IWT020⁵⁷ included intersectional analysis, highlighting the differences between gender and age (through focus group discussions with elders, youth, and women)

7.1.1 Resources/ further reading

- Use the gender issues in the previous section to determine entry points for project and context-specific considerations. Annex 1 provides an example list of research questions, for reference
- IUCN Gender Analysis Guide - <https://genderandenvironment.org/iucn-gender-analysis-guide/>

⁵⁵ Improving Marine Biodiversity and Livelihood of coastal communities in Principe <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23012/>

⁵⁶ Securing marine biodiversity and fishers’ income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024>

⁵⁷ Strengthening local community engagement in combating illegal wildlife trade <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT020/>

7.2 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder mapping and analysis should form part of the broader GESI analysis and project inception activities, to identify different stakeholder groups, as well as any barriers or limitations they may face in participating in the project, or accessing benefits. Once stakeholders have been identified, engagement should be tailored to ensure representative and meaningful *participation* (as opposed to passive attendance) throughout the project process, using approaches that are appropriate to local needs and barriers (Ecorys found that projects were effective at identifying key stakeholders, but less effective at meaningfully engaging with them). Examples of strategies to improve stakeholder engagement include:

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>Promote broad participation of stakeholders, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting separate or breakaway activities, to women and marginalised groups to feel empowered to participate, or using neutral (rather than GESI or women-specific) entry points in mixed groups such as fairness, differentiated duties etc. • Explicitly including “men and women” in wording of invitations rather than using gender ‘neutral’ terms like “community members” or targeting specific groups like “farmers” or generic masculine terms like “fishermen”, and emphasising that engagements are inclusive and accessible • Developing, advertising and implementing safeguards to prevent discrimination or harassment • ensuring/allowing the direct participation of stakeholders, without intermediaries (which may include providing for translators) • Publicly and positively recognising, publicising, acknowledging and valuing marginalised groups and their contributions, interests, proposals and concerns in use and management of land, natural resources and ecosystem services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible approaches in IWT034⁵⁸ offered mixed and single-gender sessions, depending on the subject of discussion, to encourage women’s participation and comfort raising their opinions. These, and other factors, are likely to have contributed to women’s greater involvement and confidence over time, having been “very reluctant” to participate at the beginning towards their participation becoming a new norm. • DAR28011⁵⁹ used previously tested tactics to overcome gender norms that pressured women to stay at home taking care of the domestic chores and children, rather than participating in project activities. These tactics included quotas, providing childcare, selecting young couples for the training course, in order to ensure the presence of young women alongside their partners, as a way of avoiding male jealousy or other cultural issues. • DARNV010⁶⁰ is “targeting, scheduling and facilitating single-sex events”.

⁵⁸ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

⁵⁹ ‘We are the forest:’ beiradeiro training and socio-environmental services, Amazonia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

⁶⁰ Scaling evidence-based Inclusive Conservation Finance models in Uganda and Tanzania <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DARNV010/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting and advertising gender or social quotas for representation • Representing men and women (in their diversity) in communications and promotional materials like posters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPLUS066⁶¹ acknowledged that women had low representation in the fisheries supply chain in Anguilla and Montserrat, but were present within government agencies, so used inclusive communications and stakeholder strategies to promote gender sensitivity, as well as including fishers' families (wives, girlfriends and children) in project activities. • DAR28021⁶² specifically acknowledges that "achieving gender balance is not adequate" and that their project is specifically targeting women through prioritising geographic targeting of vulnerable areas, highlighting areas around homes, and promoting women's asset base enhancement and diversification with fruit trees, roots, tubers and bananas (RTB) and small livestock (amidst male-dominated coconut-based farming). • DPLUS119⁶³ makes explicit provision for hosting targeted, follow-up engagements to reach groups who are not well represented in first-contact community events (necessitating disaggregated attendance registers).
<p>Plan and schedule activities at times and locations that are accessible to all stakeholders, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing childcare, • avoiding activities that require overnight/after dark travel for women, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAR23031⁶⁴ timetabled activities to minimise conflicts with "women's commitments to their families" to facilitate the attendance of women.

⁶¹ Climate change adaptation in the fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DPLUS066/>

⁶² Improving coastal resilience and ecosystem services through biodiversity restoration (Philippines) <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

⁶³ Technical assistance programme for effective coastal-marine management in the TCI <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS119/>

⁶⁴ Science-based interventions reversing negative impacts of invasive plants in Nepal <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23031/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing commitments during ‘peak’ periods for women’s domestic responsibilities, • hosting in neutral venues etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAREX005⁶⁵ looks to build on methods used in DAR24007⁶⁶ to improve women’s participation by ensuring timing, location and format are accessible including separate meetings, accessible communication formats, safe venues, childcare, and at times when women and other vulnerable groups are not busy or engaged by other demands. • DPLUS155⁶⁷ used hybrid (in-person and remote) models for training events, and made them available online to enable those who could not attend events at certain times.
<p>Consider and address gaps in language, literacy, knowledge and technology access in determining communication and consultation formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWT024⁶⁸ communicated activities and findings with stakeholders using non-literary formats and tailoring outputs to different dialects. • DAR24001⁶⁹ used oral presentations during community meetings to include members with low literacy and/or no internet access.
<p>Promote and support role models from marginalised groups at all levels to encourage participation (See Box 5), including traditional female authorities (like Queen Mothers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In DAR22010⁷⁰, a member of one of the cooperatives took on a leadership role to encourage other women to participate and engage in the project.

⁶⁵ Ridge to Reef Conservation in West Papua, Indonesia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX005/>

⁶⁶ Ridge-to-reef conservation and sustainable livelihoods in Raj Ampat <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR24007/>

⁶⁷ Securing Montserrat’s threatened endemic species and natural capital through community-action <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS155/>

⁶⁸ Counter-Poaching Training Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT024/>

⁶⁹ Improving forest governance for Cross River gorillas and Nigerian farmers <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/dar24001/>

⁷⁰ Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam’s wild medicinal products <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22010/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A (rare) female fisheries council president was identified as an opportunity during DAR25024⁷¹ to showcase and leverage her role to promote women's participation and challenge cultural barriers. • IWT119⁷² is using female role models, including project team members and staff drawn from ethnic minorities, to promote the recruitment of women into these usually male-dominated roles. • DPLUS107⁷³ suggested that a senior female project staffer would attract more women volunteers as a "beacon of female empowerment".
<p>Include men and boys in discussions and sensitisation of GESI issues, to ensure a collaborative and supportive approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWT037⁷⁴ highlighted the positive impact of male rangers and family member's support to women empowered through the project. • DAREX004⁷⁵ recognises the need to educate local men about the benefits of giving women a great voice in resource management, whilst also empowering women.
<p>Include and encourage the participation of organisations representing women, Indigenous People, youth, persons with disabilities etc. and collectives with positive membership of these groups (saving and loans groups etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The women-led cooperatives established in DAR22009⁷⁶ provided opportunities for women to convene to discuss a range of issues, including those beyond the project scope.

⁷¹ Securing marine biodiversity and fishers' income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

⁷² Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

⁷³ Community supported multispecies invasive vertebrate control on St Helena <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS107/>

⁷⁴ Conservation and community resilience: IWT Alternatives in snow leopard range <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT037/>

⁷⁵ Partnering for a biodiverse, prosperous and resilient Tarangire Ecosystem landscape <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX004/>

⁷⁶ Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s biochar groups constituted in DAR23031⁷⁷ used their supplemented income to support new initiatives in vegetable farming and goat rearing, extending the livelihood benefits of the project . • DAREX002⁷⁸ is collaborating with and supporting women-led cooperatives to support the inclusion and empowerment of rural women, as well as working with national women’s groups to ensure their programs are in-line with gender approaches more broadly.

BOX 5: Role models

Role models and visibility in leadership and decision-making (especially in typically “male” roles, activities, or sectors) can support increased confidence, motivation, and to participate (Torre et al., 2019; Resurrección et al., 2019). Role models and representation erode perceptions of roles, activities and sectors as being male-dominated, contribute to female solidarity, and expand the sphere of conceivable possibilities for women, as well as for other marginalised groups.

7.2.1 Resources/ further reading

- CIFOR Getting it right: A guide to improve inclusion in multi-stakeholder forums https://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/Books/Getting-it-Right.pdf
- IIED’s “Peer learning resources for Community Conservation Wardens in Uganda” includes training modules designed and delivered for Community Conservation Wardens from the Uganda Wildlife Authority during IWT Challenge Fund projects. <https://www.iied.org/peer-learning-resources-for-community-conservation-wardens-uganda>

⁷⁷ Science-based interventions reversing negative impacts of invasive plants in Nepal <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23031/>

⁷⁸ Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX002/>

7.3 Staffing, resourcing and capacity

Project proponents do not need to have a “GESI expert” to integrate GESI into conservation and environmental programming, but including diversity within project teams and committing human and financial resources towards GESI considerations are a key success factor in successful mainstreaming. Westerman (2021) describes staff awareness about the importance of gender and the availability of funds to support gender integration as key. Here, larger NGOs with bigger (and thus more specialised) staff and resource budgets, institutional policies and mainstreaming, and broader implementation experience, have advantages over smaller NGOs (particularly in least developed countries) who may struggle to understand and apply GESI risk and considerations (for example, Ecorys found that large amounts of funding were awarded to larger, UK-based organisations, with five UK-based organisations accounting for almost 10% of projects funded). Whilst many projects had gender balanced teams, Ecorys found it rare for partners to have specific GESI expertise, or for projects to train partners or team members in GESI issues. Although GESI is becoming increasingly salient, many individuals and organisations may still view GESI as a trend, funding “hoop to jump through”, or resource-diverting “add-on”, rather than an intrinsically valuable consideration, which can further undermine efforts to include such measures. This is particularly important, since dedicating human and financial resources (GESI focal points, GESI budgets, etc.) and attitudes to promote mainstreaming can signal women and other marginalised groups’ worthiness, legitimacy and authority in claiming their rights, articulating their concerns, and participating in project processes. Strategies to institutionalising GESI considerations broadly, supported by key expertise, include:

Action	BCFs Project Examples
Develop and adopt institutional policies for mainstreaming GESI considerations, including accountability structures to promote inclusion (regardless of donor requirements), internal and external human resourcing, on-granting criteria, working environments etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not project-specific, but refer to leading conservation organisations (including those well represented amongst the BCFs portfolio, such as Flora and Fauna International) for examples.
Include GESI expert/specialist staff and human resources (ideally local and intersectionality representative) and integrate and empower their	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAR28021⁷⁹ specifies the inclusion of a gender specialist in the project team. • In DAREX004⁸⁰, the project lead’s gender advisor will provide project assistance for technical support, advice and project team capacity strengthening, as well as overseeing gender analysis and action planning.

⁷⁹ Improving coastal resilience and ecosystem services through biodiversity restoration (Philippines)

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

⁸⁰ Partnering for a biodiverse, prosperous and resilient Tarangire Ecosystem landscape <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX004/>

<p>roles within broader project teams team and overarching project design and implementation</p>	
<p>Aim for diverse representation and balance across all project roles, including senior leadership, trainers, enumerators, evaluators etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In one project, 92.6 percent of the women preferred training by female extension agents. • In scaling the impact of the original project (DAR17018⁸¹), EIDPO042⁸² attempted to overcome potential biases arising from a male-dominated community researcher team with more female staff and female field assistant coordinator (a role that was ultimately subsumed by female field biologists) to better mainstream gender perspectives into the community-based work. • In DAR22010⁸³ the project team aimed to achieve gender balance, and had two local female project officers (of 5 total local staff) - their logframe specified that women would be encouraged to apply for positions. • In IWT036⁸⁴, capacity strengthening was designed and delivered by an all-women team. • DAR28011⁸⁵ (includes both male and female project staff to facilitate gender discussions and male and female anthropologists to undertake participant observation. • DPLUS131⁸⁶ project steering committee is women-chaired, with a gender balance target and most of the project staff are women. • IWT119⁸⁷ is using female role models, including project team members and staff drawn from ethnic minorities, to promote the recruitment of women into these usually male-dominated roles.

⁸¹ Management Plan for Indigenous Voluntary Conserved Areas in Oaxaca, Mexico <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR17018/>

⁸² Implementing community-based landscape and resource monitoring to consolidate voluntary conservation <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/EIDPO042/>

⁸³ Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam's wild medicinal products <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22010/>

⁸⁴ Implementing park action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT036/>

⁸⁵ 'We are the forest:' beiradeiro training and socio-environmental services, Amazonia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

⁸⁶ A "B-Line" to Re-wilding: Anguilla's Pollinators Project <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS131/>

⁸⁷ Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In DPLUS029⁸⁸ the majority of project staff were local people working in conservation. • DPLUS107⁸⁹ suggested that a senior female project staffer would attract more women volunteers as a “beacon of female empowerment”.
<p>Partner with, and leverage the enterprise, access and influence of local organisations including women’s groups, gender machinery, Indigenous People’s groups etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project team for IWT051⁹⁰ includes the Mongolian Gender Equality Center (MGEC). • DPLUS131⁹¹ is working with Gender Affairs Anguilla (GAA), part of the state gender machinery in the Government of Anguilla. • DARPP214⁹² includes an Indigenous Peoples group as a project partner, as well as the national authority of the Indigenous government to facilitate interactions with Indigenous authorities, and ensure inclusion of Indigenous communities, and promoting local knowledge. • DAREX002⁹³ collaborates with women community researchers who act as community liaisons, are known within their community, and whose understanding of their community’s gender dynamics informs their work.
<p>Conduct awareness-raising, sensitisation and training of all project team members and partners, at all levels, to promote and advance GESI considerations, since developing broad appreciation for GESI strengthens the capacity and resources for, and likelihood of, integrating GESI considerations throughout the project. This may also take the form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In IWT034⁹⁴, male community members observed and mimicked the encouragement of the project team (who had received gender sensitivity training) for women to participate in workshops and activities.

⁸⁸ Securing St Helena’s rare Cloud Forest trees and associated invertebrates <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS029/>

⁸⁹ Community supported multispecies invasive vertebrate control on St Helena <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS107/>

⁹⁰ Securing Mongolia’s Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT051/>

⁹¹ A “B-Line” to Re-wilding: Anguilla’s Pollinators Project <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS131/>

⁹² Plant genetic resources and socio-economic development in rural Colombia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DARPP214/>

⁹³ Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX002/>

⁹⁴ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

of including GESI expertise as a criteria for recruitment.	
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8. GESI recommendations in the project life cycle

In addition to these cross-cutting tools discussed above (which can be implemented at any stage), there are key moments within the project life cycle to reflect on GESI considerations, noting that GESI can and should be adaptively mainstreamed throughout project process (and definitely should not be retrospective)

8.1 Project design and inception

Action	BCFs Project Examples
Promote project co-design, co-management, and co-production approaches to respond to the disaggregated and differentiated needs and priorities of communities, informed by the findings of the GESI-analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of such approaches are given throughout Section 4 and Annex 2.
Manage GESI risk through risk management and safeguarding, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregating risks (particularly sensitivity and severity) and mitigation strategies, where relevant • Following best practice and using Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) procedures where required/feasible • avoiding only considering SEAH, to also include other dimensions of exclusion and harm such as resettlement, economic displacement, maladjustment etc. • promoting broad-based access to justice and providing inclusive and accessible grievance redress mechanisms that are appropriate to local contexts and take into consideration timing, location, staffing etc, • ensuring safeguarding does not exclusively fixate on issues of SEAH, to the detriment of other categories of risk 	
Ensure GESI actions are appropriately planned and resourced, with tools like:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A GESI action plan, a document outlining the project’s actions, indicators and resources for advancing GESI considerations, and may be useful for accountability • GESI-responsive budgeting to ensure GESI approaches in planning, implementation and monitoring are supported through allocation of funds and resources 	
<p>Develop project elements (activities, indicators, targets, stakeholders, research questions etc) to advance GESI, aligned to the GESI issues identified in Section 4 (see examples in Annex 2)</p>	

8.2 Implementation

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>Monitor continuity between design and implementation and practise adaptive management to respond to shocks or changes in project circumstances, assumptions etc.</p>	<p>Examples of such approaches are given throughout Section 4.</p>
<p>Resource a well-capacitated and GESI sensitised/mainstreamed project team and network for implementation (see Section 7.3).</p>	

8.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>Select qualitative and quantitative project indicators and set ambitious but realistic targets (informed by GESI analysis) for monitoring GESI integration and disaggregating outcomes and impacts of project activities on different groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review indicators and targets as the project progresses Include indicators beyond simple representation (e.g. participation; engagement with stakeholders, organisations and gender machineries; self-reporting of perception, confidence; uptake of technologies etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IWT037⁹⁵ included two logframe measurable indicators (MI) that capture GESI contributions, namely the “the number of sustainable use and nature tourism dependent jobs to train and include women” and “number of predator-proofs corrals maintained by women”. DAR25024⁹⁶ included a governance diagnostic that includes gender equity indicators monitoring the engagement of men, women and vulnerable social groups in marine area management as well as the support being provided to most vulnerable social groups.
<p>Ensure M&E processes are themselves GESI-responsive, including gender balanced evaluation teams; translated M&E materials like surveys; considering gender norms in sampling strategies (e.g. timing, access); ethical processes etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although IWT060⁹⁷ included GESI questions in identifying People not Poaching case studies, these indicators were not necessarily sensitive, as they showed clear desirability bias by including the term “exclude” and may have produced over/underestimation by respondents - “Does your approach target or exclude men/women/both? Does your approach target or exclude the old/young/both? Does your approach target or exclude specific ethnic groups?”.

⁹⁵ Conservation and community resilience: IWT Alternatives in snow leopard range <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT037/>

⁹⁶ Securing marine biodiversity and fishers’ income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

⁹⁷ LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nqStDEleeWPH7tSWHbBbZY4lqPGW9DEDFoBrhX7Z85kY/edit#>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
Include GESI in evaluation tools and methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAR23012⁹⁸ used a full model to consider interactions between gender on wellbeing indicators measured, to determine whether the project impacted women and men differently.
Develop team and community capacity to produce, use and interpret disaggregated project data	No project specific example.
Highlight and promote GESI project outcomes, results and learnings (using inclusive communications tactics etc, see Section 7.2) to promote sensitisation, knowledge exchange and peer learning.	The BCFs, project leads and third parties have published various communications products highlighting GESI impact of projects, albeit predominantly for peer or public audiences and not necessarily targeted at local communities.

⁹⁸ Improving Marine Biodiversity and Livelihood of coastal communities in Principe <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23012/>

9. Fund level recommendations

Although instances of positive GESI considerations are highlighted here, this analysis (and others like Ecorys and LTS International) found that many projects could strengthen their management of GESI risks and their inclusion of GESI opportunities. For example, in contrast to other projects, IWT060⁹⁹ is mostly non-critical about their gender equality contributions (or limits thereof) - attributing underrepresentation to be beyond the projects control, and making minor accommodations for their gender analysis other than acknowledging the “importance of ensuring equal participation of men and women in anti-IWT projects”. This reflects a gender-sensitive approach, wherein differences are acknowledged, but little to nothing done to address these differences. Similarly, despite an emphasis on GESI and safeguarding (somewhat separately) major GESI risks are seldom articulated, even obvious ones - IWT118¹⁰⁰, for example, despite being a gender-forward project, only briefly discusses sexual harassment in the context of female ecoguards (and only amongst other ecoguards, not the risk of GBV from external actors during heightened exposure at work) and only suggests generic safeguarding and a code of conduct, as a risk mitigation strategy.

Whilst the BCFs commitment to GESI *in theory* is highly commendable, the institutionalisation of GESI considerations within projects is inconsistent at best, and underachieving at worst. This report recommends the following fund-level recommendations, to support the mainstreaming of GESI considerations and how they can be applied and included through-out a project’s life-cycle. As GESI standards continue to advance within the sector and amongst the BCFs’ peers, a proactive and progressive approach would contribute to distinguishing the BCFs as a forerunner in GESI (as the GCF has done in the climate finance space) and future-proofing against further evolutions, whilst contributing to building a more inclusive and impacting project portfolio.

⁹⁹ LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nqStDEleeWPH7tSWHbBZY4IqPGW9DEDFoBrhX7Z85kY/edit#>

¹⁰⁰ Empowering local women to reduce Illegal Wildlife Trade in Liberia <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT118/>

Such recommendations include (in no particular order):

Sector	Action
Knowledge Management	<p>Package and distribute learnings of this report for various audiences, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prospective and current project proponents to support higher quality applications and stronger, more impactful projects, and to assist ongoing project planning, implementation and reporting (Guidelines, webinars, sample case studies etc). • expert group members to inform their decision making in the review and selection of new projects and to improve feedback loops on performance of existing projects (briefs, webinars, reporting rubrics etc). • wider conservation sector to share lessons from BCFs projects, to position the funds within the wider global conservation science and development literature. <p>Ensure that the guidance format is appropriate to the target audience, and accessible (for example, Ecory's analysis found that existing guidance might have been underutilised due to a lack of knowledge of its existence or where to find it, and suggested more advertising, regional targeting, and direct communications, including webinars with prospective applicants.</p> <p>Consider reviewing replicable institutional knowledge and previous earnings on mainstreaming poverty reduction, to support better integration of GESI - what strategies and lessons worked?</p>
Alignment	<p>Notwithstanding thematic differences, generally aligning GESI <i>standards</i> (since the requirements are already relatively close aligned) between the BCFs to allow for comparison, peer-learning and portfolio-wide aggregation.</p> <p>Auditing and aligning the fund websites, particularly of the resources available and Project Search functions including searchability by broad approaches, and specific tools and ensuring this tagging is accurate, inclusive and up-to-date (for example, many of the projects highlighted here were not tagged as concerning gender issues, and earlier projects do not appear to be tagged at all).</p>
Reporting	<p>Reiterate in reporting templates/webinars/communications for projects to disclose both quantitative and qualitative</p>

Sector	Action
	<p>contributions to GESI, highlighting good practice (for example IWT034¹⁰¹ is commended for its detailed reporting and analysis of gender considerations, and DAR25024¹⁰² developed upon previous project experience (DAR20023) that had failed to achieve gender equality in gender neutral interventions).</p> <p>Consider additional GESI fund-level indicators, that extend beyond project management to include stakeholders and/or beneficiaries.</p>
Applicants, application process	<p>Comprehensively update and align applicant guidance, templates etc. to move beyond a superficial and siloed engagement with GESI, to reflect a holistic and institutionalised approach, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging evidence-based GESI targeting and assumptions, that is informed by some form of GESI analysis (a recurring theme amongst projects was targets and assumptions not holding valid, once implementation began) • discussing key dimensions of risk and opportunity that should/could be considered by projects, as well as defining specific intersectional considerations thereof (such as Indigenous tenure rights) • including GESI terms in document glossaries, avoiding conflating gender with women, and including discussions of gender <i>equity</i> in addition to <i>equality</i> • including more specific guidance on social inclusion • mainstreaming GESI across the application, including alignment with safeguarding and MEL guidance etc. including broadening the advice on safeguarding to include provisions other than SEAH risk. • including specific guidance, as appropriate to the focuses of the different funds (e.g. discussions of GESI dimensions within anti-poaching interventions for IWT Challenge Fund). • Reviewing Standard Indicators with a critical GESI lens. • considering including a GESI-spectrum as an application question/reflection (with a minimum standard), or asking whether projects consider themselves either GESI-integrated or GESI-specific (with the former describing GESI being incorporated generally across project design and implementation, and the latter where the project's core focus and objectives are intended to advance GESI outcomes (e.g. a project specifically targeting women in conservation roles)).

¹⁰¹ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement
<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

¹⁰² Securing marine biodiversity and fishers' income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

Sector	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering making certain GESI tools (GESI analysis, gender-responsive budgeting, GESI action plans, stakeholder engagement plans etc.) mandatory, particularly for large projects. <p>Explore strategies to broaden and strengthen prospective applicant pools, include organisations with a greater GESI focus (such as local community organisations) and smaller conservation actors. Such strategies could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging larger NGOs to support their project partners to make the applications themselves. • promoting regional networks and clusters to encourage more grassroots project. • advertising within broader professional and development platforms and spaces (for development, Locally-Led Adaptation, climate resilience, Nature Based Solutions etc.).
Reviewing	<p>Institutionalise GESI considerations amongst expert groups and reviewers, through increasing diversity (gender, Indigeneity, social science disciplines etc), broad-based GESI capacity strengthening for all members, and additional reference tools (such as GESI frameworks for scoring etc.).</p> <p>Consider disaggregating technical/poverty reduction scoring to more clearly evaluate GESI considerations, with additional guidance (GESI-spectrums or analysis frameworks) to compare and score projects.</p>
Institutional	<p>Considering additional institutional measures to promote GESI at an institutional level, such as a GESI policy and/or funded action plan, GESI-specific staff or human resources, additional GESI portfolio indicators, GESI research etc.</p> <p>Institutionalise GESI understanding and awareness within BCFs staff (beyond the expert groups) to encourage buy-in and support for solutions and opportunities to incorporate GESI into the BCFs broadly.</p> <p>Consider specific funding calls or grant types for GESI-specific projects or approaches.</p>

10. Further reading, resources

GESI and biodiversity, generally:

- Bechtel, J.D (2010) Gender, Poverty and the Conservation of Biodiversity. MacArthur Foundation. https://www.macfound.org/media/files/csd_gender_white_paper.pdf
- Women4Biodiversity (2021). Advancing Women's Rights, Gender Equality and the Future of Biodiversity in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Women4Biodiversity. https://www.women4biodiversity.org/publication/Advancing_Women-ENGLISH_Report.pdf
- Free Open Online Course on Gender and Environment, developed by the GEF, UNDP, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), and UNITAR/UN CC:Learn, which includes a module on Gender and Biodiversity <https://unccelearn.org/course/view.php?id=39&page=overview>
- IUCN Gender and the environment blog series: Part 1 (Benefits) <https://www.iucn.org/news/gender/201912/benefits-gender-equality-sustainable-ecosystem-management>, Part 2 (Barriers) <https://www.iucn.org/news/gender/202001/gender-and-environment-what-are-barriers-gender-equality-sustainable-ecosystem-management>, Part 3 (Strategies) <https://www.iucn.org/news/gender/202003/strategies-integrating-gender-sustainable-ecosystem-management>

GESI and biodiversity loss and environmental degradation:

- Boyer, E, and Granat, M (2021) Gender inequality, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Gender-inequality-biodiversity-loss-and-environmental-degradation_final-for-publication-1.pdf
- Booker, F., Allison, H., Nash, F., Green, A. (2022). Women, girls and biodiversity loss: an evidence and policy review. DEFRA, London <https://www.iied.org/21061x> <https://randd.defra.gov.uk/ProjectDetails?ProjectID=20951>

Gender-based violence and environment

- Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2020). Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Wen, J. (ed.). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN <https://genderandenvironment.org/gender-based-violence-and-environment-linkages-the-violence-of-inequality/>

Rights to land, assets, resources and opportunities:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) (2020). Realizing Women's Rights to Land and Other Productive Resources: Second Edition. New York and Geneva.

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Realizing-womens-rights-to-land-and-other-productive-resources-2nd-edition-en.pdf>

- FAO Gender and Land Rights Database (GLRD) <https://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/en/>
- ILO, UNEP and IUCN. 2022. Decent Work in Nature-based Solutions 2022. Geneva. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_863035.pdf

Guidelines for integrating GESI into projects and programmes

- Conservation International (2019) Guidelines for Integrating Gender & Social Equity Into Conservation Programming. https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/integrating-gender-and-social-equity-into-conservation-programming-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=6b8e5c33_2
- IUCN (2017). From Guiding Principles to Action: Integrating a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach into SRJS strategies and results: working draft. https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/srjs_and_gender_tool_iucn_ggo_working_document_0.pdf
- UNIDO Guide on Gender Mainstreaming Environmental Projects https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-02/Gender_Environmental_Management_Projects_0.pdf
- Various other reports and guides from Conservation International <https://www.conservation.org/priorities/gender-equality>, IUCN <https://genderandenvironment.org/>, Flora and Fauna https://www.fauna-flora.org/app/uploads/2017/11/FFI_2011_Gender-and-Conservation-Key-Questions.pdf, https://www.fauna-flora.org/app/uploads/2017/11/FFI_2014_Gender.pdf
- Marcus, R. and Harper, C. (2015). *Changing gender norms: Monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects*. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Gender-responsive budgeting

- UNDP Indonesia Gender-responsive climate budgeting handbook <https://www.undp.org/indonesia/publications/gender-responsive-climate-budgeting-handbook>
- WFP Gender-responsive budgeting <https://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-responsive-budgeting/>
- Mercy Corps Gender-transformative toolkit https://www.mercycorpsagriffin.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/210702_CGAP-MCAF-Gender-Transformative-toolkit_v1.pdf

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Annex 1: Sample GESI Analysis Framework

Sector	Research Questions
Overall/high-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can project activities address gender inequality and social exclusion? • What is the potential positive and negative impact of proposed activities on women, men, youth, elderly, Indigenous People etc? What benefits are received from the project, or what costs (e.g. time, labour)? • How are these benefits/costs shared or different between different groups?
Stakeholder mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is likely to be affected by/involved in the project? • Who holds power and influence? Who does not? Why? • Which groups have recognition, visibility and value in different spaces (decision-making, livelihoods etc.)?
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the relevant international, national, local or institutional GESI legislation, policies or priorities? Is the project aligned with these policies?
Social roles, norms and beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What roles are prescribed for different genders, ethnicities etc? How do men and women spend their time? • Who has the power to make decisions at the household/community level? • Whose knowledge and expertise is recognised?
Rights and access to land and productive resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What natural resources (relevant to the project) do different groups have access to? What other resources (e.g. credit or information) are available for different groups, and who uses these resources? • Who can own land or other property? Do formal codes differ from customary codes? • Are there capacity gaps in education, language, knowledge, skills, etc? • Are there gaps in access to credit, assets, training, information, technology etc?
Economic activity and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What work do different identities (women, men, youth) do? What roles and sectors? Is employment secure or insecure? Is it in the informal or formal market? • How are they remunerated? • Are certain roles or sectors dominated by certain groups? Why? What barriers are there to entering these sectors/roles?
Representation and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which groups are represented in decision-making and leadership? How do these groups participate? Do women, youth, Indigenous People tend to voice their opinions during community decision making? Why or why not? • How are decision-making roles (Chairperson etc.) distributed?

Sector	Research Questions
GBV, SEAH, safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is GBV or SEAH prevalent in this community, sector, workplace?• What other safety/security threats are there (human-wildlife conflict etc)?• Is law enforcement accessible, reliable and effective?

Annex 2: GESI project design entry points

Examples and opportunities for project elements and entry points to advance GESI include:

Action	BCFs Project Examples
Social roles, norms and beliefs	
<p>Consider and leverage differentiated social and gender roles and norms when designing project activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAR28011¹⁰³ described pursuing gender equality as a priority, despite strong gender roles and the implication that challenging these roles can be interpreted as interference into the private sphere. • IWT119¹⁰⁴ is aiming on leveraging women’s existing expertise and skills in collecting mushrooms, herbs and tubers to apply those methodological and diligent searching qualities to snare removal. • DAR23031¹⁰⁵ promoted the use of Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) which are more energy efficient (reducing time and labour burdens, and fuelwood consumption) and also produce no smoke (reducing the harm caused by smoke inhalation), mostly benefiting women and children by virtue of their household roles. • Although not always the case, since women mainly manage household finances in their project communities, IWT119¹⁰⁶ is targeting women with financial literacy training. • DPLUS131¹⁰⁷ acknowledges that farming is male-dominated, but backyard gardening is female-dominated, and is targeting activities accordingly.

¹⁰³ ‘We are the forest:’ beiradeiro training and socio-environmental services, Amazonia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

¹⁰⁴ Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

¹⁰⁵ Science-based interventions reversing negative impacts of invasive plants in Nepal <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR23031/>

¹⁰⁶ Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

¹⁰⁷ A “B-Line” to Re-wilding: Anguilla’s Pollinators Project <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS131/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAREX002¹⁰⁸ uses their events, workshops and training targeted towards women to create spaces for participation and decision-making outside of male-dominated local authorities.
<p>Strengthen legal, institutional and sectoral frameworks to challenge discriminatory gender and social norms, improve equal rights to resources and promote inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, secure or strengthen claims on resources within existing rights regimes (inheritance norms and institutions, registration of co-ownership, open-source digital claims registration, allocation of land, user recognition); Promote innovative, flexible instruments and arrangements that reconsider or renegotiate rights regimes, including multi-user or collective tenure arrangements and alternative benefit distribution that does not rely on tenure security or resource ownership; • Identify areas where existing protections and rights are not being upheld and respected and addressing barriers of non-enforcement, capture or non-alignment between 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAREX005¹⁰⁹ is supporting the improvement of community tenure over natural resources to reduce local threats to biodiversity, particularly targeting Indigenous People and Local Communities (using gender-sensitive participatory approaches including free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) principles throughout the project cycle. • DAR22010¹¹⁰ supported inclusive regulation to promote legal and sustainable harvesting, as well as policy revisions to enable more equitable co-management and benefit-sharing.

¹⁰⁸ Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX002/>

¹⁰⁹ Ridge to Reef Conservation in West Papua, Indonesia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAREX005/>

¹¹⁰ Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam's wild medicinal products <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22010/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
international-national-local-customary-private rights regimes.	
Recognition, visibility and value	
Publicly and positively recognise, publicise, acknowledge and value marginalised groups and their contributions, interests, proposals and concerns in use and management of land, natural resources and ecosystem services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IWT060¹¹¹ case studies showed that women were key to project success, with women accessing additional leadership and decision making roles after being recognised as influential members of the community. ● IWT119¹¹² is using female role models, including project team members and staff drawn from ethnic minorities, to promote the recruitment of women into these usually male-dominated roles. ● DAR28011¹¹³ highlighted the quality of contribution from particularly Indigenous women “which has continually brought new perspectives to the debate”. ● DARPP214¹¹⁴ acknowledges the crucial role Indigenous communities perform as custodians of plant genetic resource diversity and emphasises’ Indigenous communities sovereignty and cultural identity as key considerations within project design.
Promote GESI outcomes through research agendas and processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify GESI research questions, and contribute to the body of knowledge and strengthen the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DAR24001¹¹⁵ includes partnerships with local and indigenous people to understand, value, and apply traditional knowledge to addressing biodiversity, governance, and poverty reduction challenges.

¹¹¹ LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nqStDEleeWPH7tSWhBbZY4IqPGW9DEDFoBrhX7Z85kY/edit#>

¹¹² Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT119/>

¹¹³ ‘We are the forest:’ beiradeiro training and socio-environmental services, Amazonia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

¹¹⁴ Plant genetic resources and socio-economic development in rural Colombia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DARPP214/>

¹¹⁵ Improving forest governance for Cross River gorillas and Nigerian farmers <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/dar24001/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>evidence base for understanding the interactions between GESI and the natural environment, biodiversity, conservation etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include marginalised voices in knowledge production, management and publication, as well as non-conventional knowledge sources (particularly Indigenous and Local Knowledge) whilst challenging and interrogating reliance on Western, Global North, positivist and English language sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DARPP214¹¹⁶ promotes Indigenous knowledge exchange between communities, and beyond.
<p>Rights and access to land and productive resources</p>	
<p>Promote equality and inclusion in the governance, use and management of natural environments and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve representation, participation and leadership of marginalised groups in decision-making processes at all levels, as well as in accessing and membership to non-gendered groups and spaces, such as community natural resource management groups, associations and unions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWT118¹¹⁷ intends to challenge women, girls, and other vulnerable groups exclusion from male-dominated decision-making and natural resource management by empowering women at various entry points across the bushmeat supply chain (bushmeat sellers, female community ecoguards, rangers). • To counter exclusion from natural resource management, DAR28021¹¹⁸ indicated women, youth, fisherfolk, and farmers as key stakeholders for focus group discussions during project inception, to identify stakeholders, needs and baseline socio-economic status.

¹¹⁶ Plant genetic resources and socio-economic development in rural Colombia <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DARPP214/>

¹¹⁷ Empowering local women to reduce Illegal Wildlife Trade in Liberia <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT118/>

¹¹⁸ Improving coastal resilience and ecosystem services through biodiversity restoration (Philippines) <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28011/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote progressive resource governance policies and practice, that do not discriminate on the basis of gender, age etc. Take into consideration differentiated resource needs and priorities, with particular attention paid to politically and economically marginalised groups and the barriers they face in access, participation, traditional knowledge-sharing and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAR22010¹¹⁹ acknowledged that ethnic minorities and women typically lack secure access to land and therefore rely on forest resources for raw materials and income, so specifically promoted employment opportunities for these groups and empowered their engagement in decision-making and resource management (through organisation, negotiation and trading skills, and supporting fair trading regimes).
Economic activity and opportunities	
<p>Promote equitable participation in, and access to, sustainable livelihoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve inclusive access to employment, markets, productive assets, especially land, credit and financial services, capacity strengthening opportunities Challenge stereotypes and prejudices that certain jobs, sectors or opportunities are not 'appropriate' for women and other groups, and Promote inclusive recruitment and retention by fostering safe and equitable working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAR22009¹²⁰ set up women-led dairy and livestock cooperatives that contributed to promoting women's independent income generation. IWT051¹²¹ is promoting gender equality within law enforcement institutions through maintaining progressive and culturally appropriate gender ratios in training opportunities, and promoting workplace behaviour which is respectful of differences. CV19RR20¹²² specifically targeted women and women's cooperatives in their initiative to advance equality, acknowledging that men had traditionally had primary access to markets and marketplaces in Morocco.

¹¹⁹ Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam's wild medicinal products <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22010/>

¹²⁰ Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

¹²¹ Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT051/>

¹²² Online local product commercialization, marketing and promotion sustains biodiversity-friendly livelihoods

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/CV19RR20/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>environments (including sanitation facilities, personal protective equipment, training on equipment), providing tools and mechanisms to report harassment and discrimination, and hosting non-discrimination trainings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and leverage existing livelihoods and activities, to promote economic empowerment, such as in nature-based livelihoods and 'Green Jobs', that build upon women's existing roles as natural resource users and custodians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAR25024¹²³ distinguished the fishing zones mainly used by men and women, describing fishing gear used and target species to develop strategies to ensure gender equity in fisheries councils and marine area management, including promoting women-led bivalve aquaculture as a livelihood initiative that addresses their constraints to accessing diversified livelihoods. As a complementary activity to habitat rewilding DPLUS131¹²⁴ is training women in beekeeping and bee product development. DPLUS126¹²⁵ suggests "there are not specific barriers to GESI" within the project (although this is not substantiated by a GESI analysis) and describes engagement and job opportunities as "open to all", but imply GESI-neutral (and possibly thus GESI-blind) approaches that could overlook or deter candidates from certain identities.
Representation, participation, decision-making and leadership	
<p>Use inclusive stakeholder engagement strategies (see Section 7.2) to promote broad based representation and participation</p>	<p>See Section 7.2.</p>
<p>Address knowledge gaps and address barriers to information and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address capacity and knowledge gaps on rights to land, natural resources and ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAR25024¹²⁶ used training to build women's influence on biodiversity outcomes within social networks, and as communicators (leading awareness-raising) and entrepreneurs.

¹²³ Securing marine biodiversity and fishers' income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

¹²⁴ A "B-Line" to Re-wilding: Anguilla's Pollinators Project <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS131/>

¹²⁵ Advancing Falklands and region-scale management of globally important whale populations <https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS126/>

¹²⁶ Securing marine biodiversity and fishers' income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR25024/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>services, biodiversity, conservation and sustainable use, in appropriate and accessible formats, as well as context-specific and appropriate training in education, information access, technical capacity, technology use, financial literacy etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote broad based GESI sensitisation and awareness raising at all levels, including amongst traditional authorities, men and boys, and facilitate discussions on discriminatory norms and stereotypes that contribute to inequality and exclusion • Promote peer and horizontal learning by supporting grassroots organisations, organisations and associations to participate in project activities advance GESI outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWT034¹²⁷ highlighted contributions to gender equality through economic and educational opportunities favouring women (including micro-credit schemes), to overcome significant gendered gaps at baseline. • DAR22009¹²⁸ provided targeted capacity strengthening empowering women in these spaces and increasing women's access to credit. • Both IWT034¹²⁹ and EIDPO042¹³⁰ reflected on the additional challenges faced by women in engaging with project activities, being less accustomed than men to participating.
Gender-based violence, SEAH, safety and security	

¹²⁷ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

¹²⁸ Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

¹²⁹ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

¹³⁰ Implementing community-based landscape and resource monitoring to consolidate voluntary conservation

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/EIDPO042/>

Action	BCFs Project Examples
<p>Consider differentiated risks to safety and security including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant safeguarding mechanisms (see Section 8.1) to manage risks of GBV and SEAH; • social protection and financial support mechanisms/safety nets for those affected by biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, • survivor-centred support services for survivors of GBV/domestic abuse; • reducing human-wildlife conflicts and environmental threats through livelihood and behaviour interventions; • sensitive law enforcement considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric fences erected in communities in IWT034¹³¹ contributed to preventing crop raiding and avoiding human/wildlife conflict, thereby addressing women's food security concerns and reducing their and children's exposure to harm. • DAR22009¹³² aimed to reduce women needing to enter the national park to collect fodder, therefore limiting their risk of injury or harm through animal attacks or falling out of trees while collecting fodder. • IWT051¹³³ is partnering with local gender organisations to manage and inform how the consideration of structural and unconscious biases in law enforcement impact GESI considerations in the project, to promote better safety outcomes and mitigate against the risk of perpetuating harmful enforcement practices. • IWTEV001¹³⁴ is including dimensions of coercion and sex trafficking in their analysis of drivers of IWT.

¹³¹ Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT034/>

¹³² Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22009/>

¹³³ Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/XXIWT051/>

¹³⁴ Developing a problem-oriented approach to reduce turtle trafficking in Cambodia <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/project/IWTEV001/>