Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management

A Modular Instrument for Use in Rural Development Projects with a Focus on Sustainable Land Management

Cordula S. Ott
Acknowledgements

Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management was prepared for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the terms of a mandate to the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE).

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of SDC. In addition, the views expressed in modules prepared by the consultants and by the consulting NGO do not necessarily represent the opinion of the CDE project coordinator, who served as the principal author and editor.

This working instrument was prepared in an iterative process involving interaction between CDE as a centre of competence, and highly experienced field staff working in rural development projects. It benefited greatly from the intellectual advice, guidance and patience provided by Peter Bieler (SDC), Monika Schneider (SLA, Zurich), Willi Graf (SDC Coordination Office in La Paz), Adrian Maitre (ATICA Bolivia), Bijaya Bajracharya and Georg Weber (PSUSSMP Kathmandu), and Freddy Delgado Burgoa (AGRUCO Bolivia). I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of these individuals. Special thanks also go to the members of the Forum SLM and the staff of CDE, especially Markus Giger, Andreas Klaey, Ulla Gämperli Krauer, Stephan Rist, Ted Wachs and Anne Zimmermann for their assistance and encouragement.

Some of the modules were prepared by consultants. These contributions add practical experience and colourful examples that enhance the illustration of a challenging concept. The consultants also offered valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this publication, which helped to shape it into an operational working instrument. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to these consultants, who authored the case studies, and the staffs of the projects involved:

◆ for Nicaragua: Felicitas Bachmann (SDC), Monika Schneider (Swiss Labour Assistance, Zurich) and the staff of the Unións de Cooperativas Agropecurias ‘Héroes y Mártires de Miraflor’ and ‘Augusto César Andino’; the translations from the original German text were done by: Kai Schrader (Spanish), Brigitte Boisanger (French), Anne Zimmermann (English)

◆ for Kenya: Francisca Maina

◆ and for India: Smita Premchander and V. Prameela, and the staff and projects of SAMPARK.

The final editing was done by Ted Wachs and Anne Zimmermann, the layout by Ulla Gämperli Krauer, and the cartoons were created by Karl Herweg (CDE). Thanks!

CDE, Beme, 21 March 2002

Cordula S. Ott
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 5
- What’s gender got to do with it? 5
- Target audience 6
- Objectives 7
- It’s everyone’s concern! 7
- The challenge can be met! 8
- How to use the modules: Practice first, theory next if necessary! 9

MODULE 1: Development Policy Context and Overall Principles 12
- Commitment to gender equality and poverty alleviation 13
- Three working principles for incorporating gender issues in SLM 15
- General recommendations for institutionalising a gender-sensitive approach in sustainable development 19

MODULE 2: Key Issues, Strategic Approaches and Entry Points 21
- KEY ISSUE I: Division of labour and responsibility 22
- KEY ISSUE II: Local stakeholders and decision-making processes 26
- KEY ISSUE III: Access to and control over natural resources 30
- KEY ISSUE IV: Conflicting and common interests in land use 34
- KEY ISSUE V: Knowledge and skills 38

MODULE 3: Conceptual Background 42
- INTRODUCTION: Local context, external influences and support 43
- KEY ISSUE I: Division of labour and responsibility 45
- KEY ISSUE II: Local stakeholders and decision-making processes 47
- KEY ISSUE III: Access to and control over natural resources 49
- KEY ISSUE IV: Conflicting and common interests in land use 51
- KEY ISSUE V: Knowledge and skills 53
# Table of Contents

## MODULE 4: A Case Study from Nicaragua
- Impact of a gender strategy on sustainable development (in English, Spanish, German and French)  
  55

## MODULE 5: Examples from India - An NGO’s Perspectives
- A man using bribes to cut wood in a protected forest  
  68
- A farm family tries to diversify its agricultural activities  
  71
- Small, medium, and large landowners in Koppal  
  75
- A family dedicated to stone cutting  
  80
- Changing attitudes through leadership imaging: a tool  
  83
- Case study of watershed management by SAMUHA  
  86
- Case study of Parivartha’s vermicomposting project  
  90

## MODULE 6: Examples from Kenya - A Consultant’s Perspective
- Participatory poverty assessment studies  
  95
- The Kilifi District Development Programme - An integrated participatory development process  
  98
- The Community Land Trust Project of Voi  
  100
- The Food Assisted Child Survival Programme (FACS) - Ng’arua, Laikipia  
  103
- The Green Towns Project  
  105

## MODULE 7: Contacts and References

### Frequently used abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAD</td>
<td>Gender and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Participatory Learning and Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLM</td>
<td>Sustainable Land Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WID</td>
<td>Women in Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Gender Issues in SLM

WHAT'S GENDER GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Isn't it enough to have small-scale projects for women and women's groups?

Do project activities and technical measures really influence gender gaps?

Why should a gender approach in sustainable land management activities be adopted?

How can a gender approach be integrated in everyday work?

Such questions frequently come up in the arena of rural development. They show how challenging it is to understand the connections between gender issues and environmental issues and deal with them adequately. Both “gender” and “environment” are cross-cutting themes with a high degree of conceptual and methodo-
INTRODUCTION

Logical complexity; this makes it all the more difficult to achieve a clear grasp of the links between them.

Lack of understanding and fear of this complexity are the main reasons why gender aspects of sustainable land management are still either widely neglected or dealt with insufficiently – despite the fact that their significance in local land use systems is now broadly acknowledged. Hence it is a major – but not insurmountable – challenge to develop operational support and working instruments that provide a simple understanding of gender issues in sustainable land management and offer project staff adequate practical approaches. This publication provides tools that can help to meet this challenge.

TARGET AUDIENCE

“Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management” specifically targets development staff at the project and programme levels, with a view to helping them find practical ways of addressing gender issues in rural development activities.

However, as both environment and gender are cross-cutting themes with implications at every organisational level, this working instrument also extends into the sphere of policy dialogue and organisational development.
OBJECTIVES

Tackling Gender Issues in Natural Resource Management is designed to:

- increase awareness of the importance of gender in sustainable land management;
- enhance understanding of gender issues in relation to sustainable development by discussing specific links between men's and women's social roles and their respective uses of natural resources;
- support development cooperation staff in planning, managing and evaluating projects and programmes that aim to integrate an adequate gender approach in strategies for sustainable resource use.

This working instrument aims to support users in their efforts to mainstream gender and environmental issues by making better use of the links and mechanisms that exist between the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels.

IT'S EVERYONE'S CONCERN!

“Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management” helps to:

- understand the links between organisational levels with regard to gender and sustainable land management:
  Local projects and NGOs will find it particularly useful to understand some of the complex interactions that are involved in development work. Initiatives that are taken at one level with no understanding of issues and approaches at other levels can prove detrimental to the overall goal of sustainability.

- recognise that dissemination and mediation of information is a crucial activity and requires special support:
  There is a need to share grassroots-level information on gender and land use issues and to communicate this information to higher levels of decision- and policy-making. Specialists who work at the local level have a key role to play in this respect. They must be aware of their role as mediators of information. At the same time, they must
also be entrusted to play this role, and given the means to enhance their capacities. Moreover, actors at higher levels must be committed to providing opportunities in this respect.

THE CHALLENGE CAN BE MET!

“Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management” also demonstrates that the challenge of integrating a gender perspective in sustainable land management can definitely be met — for example that:

- Practical ways of including gender issues in sustainability approaches can be defined for every development context;
- The widespread yet unsatisfactory approach of isolating gender in a special unit or project activity can be improved;
- A gender equality approach in sustainable land management is not just another addition to the many tasks that already overburden the agenda of development cooperation;
- A specific gender perspective can complete and even facilitate other approaches that pursue the overall objective of making local livelihoods more secure in a more sustainable world.
INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THE MODULES:
Practice first, theory next if necessary!

The modular design of this instrument allows for individual approaches. Depending on their personal experience and needs, readers can start with any of the modules and decide whether the conceptual or practical modules are the most appropriate for them.

The general focus of this working instrument is on sustainable land management issues, as the modules are designed to serve rural development planners. But the wider development relevance of the issues discussed will become obvious throughout.

MODULE 1: Approach and principles

Commitment to gender equality and poverty alleviation

A brief introduction presents the development policy context that informs this instrument. The focus on gender issues in sustainable land management is part of a sustainable livelihood approach used by most development agencies today; it contributes to the overall goals of sustainability, gender-balanced development and poverty alleviation.

Three guiding principles

The approach and the recommendations for gender-sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation at the field and programme levels presented follow three principles that have emerged from lessons learned in the course of past activities.

General recommendations

Module 1 ends with a summary of important strategic elements that need to be taken into account at the level of projects, programmes, policy formulation and organisational development.
**MODULE 2: Key issues, strategic approaches and entry points**

**Five key issues**

Module 2 is the central part of the instrument for readers seeking ways of implementing the approach. It is especially designed to emphasise the potential that arises from interactions between gender strategies and sustainable land management. Five key issues concerning gender in sustainable land management are formulated. For every key issue, a strategic approach is articulated, followed by practical suggestions for project activities.

**Connections between the issues**

The key issues are strongly interrelated and reinforce each other; this is also the case for the key entry points and suggestions.

**No checklists!**

The lists of suggestions are not meant to be used as complete checklists for analysing the sustainability of a project; instead, they are designed to encourage reflection, support activities and guide data collection. Only rarely will a project be able to address every key issue; nor will it ever be able to take up all of the suggestions.

**Personal experience is crucial!**

This instrument is designed to enable incorporation of personal views or of a project’s way of dealing with gender issues in rural development, as well as assessment of the work done so far. It also shows how initiatives may extend into other spheres when the need arises and resources become available.

**MODULE 3: Conceptual background**

**Conceptual background of the key issues**

To provide a broader understanding of each key issue, important elements of the gender debate within the context of sustainable land management are presented. Whereas Module 2 focuses on aspects that might support sustainability, the conceptual background of each key issue presented in Module 3 offers deeper insight into
negative development trends and destructive processes that currently threaten the world’s natural and social resource base.

**Embedding the issues in a more general context**

As it is crucial to conceive of gender issues as part of more general local and global problems, Module 2 begins with an introduction on, the conceptual background of the ‘Local Context, External Influences and Support’.

**MODULES 4, 5, 6: Concrete examples**

**Case studies from Nicaragua, India and Kenya**

These examples illustrate how complex gender and sustainability issues are in the context of field activities, and how they were addressed in the field. Much more could be done to make project field experience a valuable source of learning and a basis for developing and implementing informed strategies.

**MODULE 7: References**

- Module 7 provides information on the authors of Modules 4, 5 and 6, as well as on the projects involved. The bibliographies provided by these projects are excellent sources of further information on gender and sustainable land management.
- Module 7 also lists a selection of further tools for gender mainstreaming and sustainable land management. These tools address issues such as gender in group formation, capacity building, access to resources, communication networks, education and training, development cooperation institutions, etc.