Over the years, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have consistently called for developing country Parties to ensure the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in developing and implementing REDD+ national strategies or action plans. The following text from the 2010 Cancun Agreements (paragraph 72) also highlights other issues that Parties should address and consider, amongst them gender:

*Also requests* developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of annex I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia, indigenous peoples and local communities;

Meaningful stakeholder engagement has been strongly requested by donors, civil society and many Parties since the early days of conceptualizing REDD+\(^1\). The UNFCCC also highlights socially inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement as a crucial element for developing and implementing REDD+ strategies.

Successful implementation of REDD+ depends on buy-in across a wide range of government bodies, ethnic minorities and local communities, society, businesses and institutions. Engagement is not merely a matter of integrating the views of the different actors, men and women alike, who may be affected by REDD+, but also to craft partnerships, consensus and inclusive policies and processes that involve and benefit women and men alike. It is such actions that will make REDD+ transformational, achievable and long lasting. History and voices from the field teach us that active and equitable involvement of relevant stakeholders, including those from more marginalized groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, indigenous people, youth and women), in natural resource management produces positive results, such as lower rates of deforestation and forest degradation and improved livelihoods.

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\(^1\) In fact, not only for REDD+, but also for biodiversity and/or wetlands conservation, sustainable forest management and many other natural resource management initiatives.
Parties to the UNFCCC have recognized, in various decisions, the importance of involving women and men in the development and implementation of national climate policies, as well as ensuring that such policies are gender responsive. They are cognizant that failing to address gender considerations can contribute to the marginalization of men and women. In the context of REDD+, such gender-blind activities could, for example, result in women being excluded from receiving their fair share from benefits from their REDD+ efforts. In the long run, this may then lead to disenchantment and jeopardize REDD+ implementation.

For the UN-REDD Programme and its partners (e.g. the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility) it is clear that socially inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement is indispensable in global, national and sub-national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance enhancements (e.g. through reforestation and/or forest restoration policies and measures).

But how do we engage women and men across various stakeholder groups, constructively, equitably, inclusively and responsively?

In recent years, considerable advice and guidance has been provided for “operationalising” effective, fair and responsible stakeholder engagement\(^2\), in general, and with a specific focus on socially inclusive and gender-responsive engagement, in particular.\(^3\) The UN-REDD Mongolia National Programme has also explored the social inclusion dynamics of men, women, youth and ethnic groups for REDD+, which included several recommendations for follow up\(^4\). Mongolia’s Ministry of Environment and Tourism has also developed an Environmental Sector Gender Strategy (2014-2030).

Yet, in many countries, particularly at sub-national levels, where theory and guidance are now being put into practice, understanding of how to constructively, equitably and meaningfully engage women and men across various stakeholder groups remains a challenge. Guidance is often not location-specific, lacks local context and there continues to be a need for practical national and sub-national level training and how to manuals on the subject. IRIM (2017-2018, p. 12) also concluded that the successful implementation of the Environmental Sector Gender Strategy and other relevant policies requires that local government is adequately trained and capacitated on their role in ensuring gender mainstreaming in the sector.\(^5\)

\(^2\) In collaboration with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, the UN-REDD Programme drafted *Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities* [https://unredd.net/knowledge/redd-plus-technical-issues/stakeholder-engagement.html\&ct=clnk&gl=mn].


This situation is one of the fundamental issues that has been identified during the REDD+ engagement process in Mongolia. It was concluded that promoting a REDD+ National Program or any national policies and programs can only be effective if there are mechanisms established at the national aimag and soum levels, wherein men, women, youth and ethnic groups are equitably involved. In response, the UN-REDD Mongolia National Programme took action to address this need. Building on its analytical work in Mongolia and experience gained in other countries, it has prepared a training manual for Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement for REDD+ in Mongolia (link) and a Handbook for Socially Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement (link).

The Training Manual for Facilitators addresses the above acknowledged shortcomings in Mongolia. Its ultimate goal is to increase the capacity of specialists and officers, particularly at aimag and soum levels, to fully incorporate gender perspectives into their work, to bring about the full, effective and equitable participation of women and men stakeholders. The manual has been structured to turn the facilitator into a tour guide, who will take the participants on a journey across six modules to help them improve their skills and increase their knowledge on how to achieve socially inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement. The facilitator – ideally a team of facilitators with a variety of skills – will guide the learning process and encourage participants to view and review policies and measures (or actions) for implementing REDD+ through a gender and social-inclusion lens and, accordingly, build their capacity to undertake socially inclusive and gender-responsive REDD+ stakeholder engagement efforts.

The user-friendly Handbook has been developed for the field and is a synthesized and shortened version of the above Training Manual. It is meant for specialists and officers of the aimags and soums as well as for forest extension officers. Summarizing the contents of the Training Manual, it contains practical tips on facilitation, mediation and techniques to promote and ensure men and women can equitably and meaningfully take part in consultations, decision making, monitoring and reporting on REDD+. It is visually informative, illustrative, pocket size and simple to use.

For hard copies of the two documents please contact info@unredd.mn.