

# Gender Assessment

**FP273: Papua New Guinea REDD-plus RBP for results period 2014-2016**

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GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND



## Annex 4

# Gender Assessment

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*For the GCF-FAO Project: Papua New Guinea's REDD+ RBP funding proposal for the results period (2014-2016)*

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## ACRONYMS

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AROB</b>	Autonomous Region of Bougainville
<b>BSP</b>	Bank South Pacific
<b>BUR</b>	Biennial Update Report
<b>CCDA</b>	Climate Change Development Authority
<b>CCMA</b>	Climate Change Management Act
<b>CEPA</b>	Conservation and Environment Protection Authority
<b>CIMC</b>	Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council
<b>COVID19</b>	Coronavirus pandemic 2019
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DDA</b>	District Development Authorities
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>DJAG</b>	Department of Justice and Attorney General
<b>DLPP</b>	Department of Lands and Physical Planning
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DPLGA</b>	Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs
<b>ESMF</b>	Environmental and Social Management Framework
<b>FA</b>	Forestry Act
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FCA</b>	Forest Clearance Authority
<b>FCPF</b>	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
<b>FMA</b>	Forest Management Agreements
<b>FPIC</b>	Free Prior Informed Consent
<b>FRL</b>	Forest Reference Levels
<b>FSC</b>	Forest Stewardship Council
<b>GA</b>	Gender Assessment
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GDI</b>	GDI Gender Development Index
<b>GESI</b>	National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy
<b>GFPs</b>	Gender Focal Points
<b>GGGI</b>	GGGI Global Gender Gap Index
<b>GII</b>	GII Gender Inequality Index
<b>ILG Act</b>	Land Groups Incorporation Act
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INA</b>	Institute of National Affairs
<b>LFP</b>	Labour Force Participation
<b>LLG</b>	Local Level Government
<b>LO</b>	Landowner
<b>MTDP</b>	Medium Term Development Plan
<b>NADP</b>	National Agriculture Development Plan
<b>NARI</b>	National Agricultural Research Institute
<b>NCW</b>	National Council of Women
<b>NCD</b>	National Capital District
<b>NFB</b>	National Forest Board

<b>NFDG</b>	National Forest Development Guidelines
<b>NFMS</b>	National Forest Monitoring System
<b>NFP</b>	National Forest Plan/Policy
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Government Organizations
<b>NRS</b>	National REDD+ Strategy
<b>NSLUP</b>	National Sustainable Land Use Policy
<b>NZAID</b>	New Zealand Aid & Development Program
<b>ODW</b>	Office for the Development of Women
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OLPLLG</b>	Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments
<b>PA</b>	Protected Areas
<b>PCW</b>	Provincial Council of Women
<b>PFMC</b>	Provincial Forest Management Committee
<b>PLR</b>	Policies, Laws and Regulations
<b>PM&amp;NEC</b>	Prime Minister and National Executive Council
<b>PNG</b>	Papua New Guinea
<b>PNGFA</b>	PNG Forest Authority
<b>PNGFRI</b>	PNG Forest Research Institute
<b>REDD+</b>	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the inclusion of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.
<b>RFIP</b>	REDD+ Finance and Investment Plan
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SES</b>	Social and Environmental Safeguards
<b>SESP</b>	Social and Environmental Screening Process
<b>SIS</b>	Safeguards Information System
<b>SIGI</b>	SIGI Social Institutions and Gender Index
<b>SME</b>	Small to Medium Enterprise
<b>SOEs</b>	State of Emergency
<b>UN-REDD</b>	United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) recognizes the central importance of gender considerations in terms of both impact and access to climate funding. Consistent with the GCF's Terms of Reference for the REDD+ Results Based Payment (RBP) pilot programme, Papua New Guinea's (PNG) RBP is underpinned by both the GCF's Gender Policy (2019) and FAO's Framework for Environmental and Social Management (2022), through its dedicated Environmental and Social Standard 6 (ESS6) *Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence*. ESS6 is geared at ensuring that the design and implementation of FAO programs and projects do not create or exacerbate existing gender inequalities, discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV), in alignment with international frameworks on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH)..

The purpose of this Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan (GAAP) is to provide a comprehensive overview in relation to the role of women in the development and management of forests and forest resources and with this their potential role in the implementation of activities to be supported by this RBP project; to examine women's participation in PNG's stakeholder engagement and consultation efforts over the REDD+ readiness period; and to look at relevant gender specific assessments undertaken in the country and how the recommendations and actions were included in the REDD+ RBP proposal to enable compliance with national and international commitments on gender equality and women's rights.

The REDD+ RBP proposal is in line with PNG's National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) and benefits from gender policy recommendations of the UN-REDD Programme and World Bank's FCPF program implemented as part of the REDD+ Readiness phase in the country. Also, the PNG government has made progress in advancing gender-related legislation and regulations, and in the design of initiatives and programmes with a view to mainstreaming gender, in alignment with the GCF Gender Mainstreaming Guideline for Project Implementers and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This GAAP also seeks to ensure consistency with the gender policy of GCF and FAO, as well as with the environmental and social safeguards.

This GAAP is structured in two parts: 1) a Gender Assessment (GA) covering section two (2) to five (5) of this document, and a Gender Action Plan (GAP), included in the Annex.

- **Gender Assessment (GA):** provides comprehensive background information and key insights into the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities related to gender dynamics within PNG in the forest and climate change sectors and other relevant sectors. It also describes efforts of gender mainstreaming in the context of REDD+ in PNG and provides recommendations for gender actions to be integrated within the proposed REDD+ RBP project. Moreover, it has informed the due diligence Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) Report, prepared as an Annex 2 to the RBP.
- **Gender Action Plan (GAP):** is geared at addressing existing gender barriers and gaps as highlighted by the GA, by proposing high-level and strategic gender-responsive actions and measures to be taken throughout project implementation, and which will be refined during the project's inception phase, consistent with the ESMF for the project.

Overall, as an integrated document, the GAAP was based upon available data from studies conducted by the Government of PNG (GoPNG), key donor agencies and multilateral organizations, civil society and research organizations. These studies include:

- Desktop review to complement and, where necessary, further update and revise information gleaned from previous consultations conducted as part of the UNDP-led GCF proposal development process<sup>1</sup> in 2019 and aligning approaches in this proposal with the national priorities of PNG;
- Review of national aspirations as detailed in the national policies and development plans on gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Reports with lessons learned and assessments on gender equality in PNG from the GoPNG, and other international donor agencies, development organisations, civil society and research organizations;

## 1.2 Brief Overview of the Proposed REDD+ Project

The proposed RBP Project has been developed under the umbrella of PNG's National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) and is thus envisioned to directly contribute to the implementation of selected policies and measures in prioritized provinces. By providing positive incentives for reductions in emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as the sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, the REDD+ project aims to address specific actions targeting low emission development activities that will also provide long term sustainable livelihoods for communities, as well as the establishment of the coordination, monitoring, reporting and management systems required to ensure transparency of results delivered and the effective management of resources received.

The REDD+ RBP Project is structured in the following way:

**COMPONENT 1.** Increased institutional coordination capacities of national and provincial governments in PNG and in the targeted provinces (40%)

- Output 1.1: Establish the National Sustainable Land Use Planning (NSLUP) framework for the national and provincial governments
- Output 1.2: Enhance and strengthen environmental management, protection, and land use regulations for forest authorities and local stakeholders.
- Output 1.3: Improve coordination and reporting on the implementation of the NRS, NDC and GHG for the CCAD.

### **OUTCOME:**

- a) Coordination among government institutions at the national and provincial levels has improved.
- b) The NSLUP framework was established at the national level and implemented in targeted provinces.
- c) Regulations on environmental management, protection, and land use have been enhanced and strengthened.
- d) PNG is able to report timely to the UNFCCC regarding the implementation of the NRS and other climate actions

**COMPONENT 2:** Enhanced economic productivity and inclusive sustainable livelihoods of smallholders and customary landowning groups in the targeted provinces (60%)

- Output 2.1: Strengthen forest landscapes management technical and financial capacities for customary landowners and local communities.
- Output 2.2: Enhance sustainable livelihoods and green economic productivity for customary landowners and local communities

**OUTCOME:**

- a) Customary landowners and local communities from targeted provinces adopts inclusive sustainable livelihoods and increase productivity.
- b) Forest landscapes are sustainably managed by landowners and local communities.
- c) Green economic systems and sustainable livelihoods are implemented in targeted provinces.

# THE GENDER ASSESSMENT (GA)

## 2. EXISTING GENDER DYNAMICS IN PNG

Over the last 20 years, PNG has made some strides in promoting gender equality within the country and has taken actions to promote and integrate gender equality into the broader policy-making agenda with some notable advances in women's education<sup>2</sup>, health<sup>3</sup> and equality before the law.<sup>4</sup> Yet, progress remains relatively slow in the areas of women's economic opportunities<sup>5</sup> which also includes governance and decision making. Due to existing gender dynamics such as the high rates of gender-based violence, cultural restrictions, low rates of education and high rates of poverty, it makes it a more volatile environment and difficult for women to participate equally in the economic development of their own natural resources.

### 2.1 Gender Inequality Indexes

Several indices have been developed to quantify the concept of gender inequality and to allow comparisons over time and across countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) uses the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Gender Development Index (GDI) to achieve this purpose. GII is a compound measure that shows inequality in achievement between women and men in reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market while also measuring achievement in human development in three areas: health, education, and command over economic resources. The GDI considers the gender gaps in human development between men and women. Currently, PNG has a very low GII value of 0.740, ranking it 161 out of 162 countries in the UNDP's 2021 Gender Inequality Index.

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of the World Economic Forum is another tool that examines the gap between men and women in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival; and political empowerment. PNG is ranked 127 out of a ranking of 153 countries.

### 2.2 Education

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has achieved gender parity in elementary school enrolment, but disparities widen as students make progress through higher levels of education. While boys and girls enrol equally in elementary education (grades 1 and 2) and maintain near parity in primary school (grades 3 to 8), a significant gap emerges in secondary school enrolment. Girls are more likely to drop out during key transition points, with only 7 girls enrolled in secondary school for every 10 boys in 2018. Despite some progress at the primary level, PNG lags behind regional peers in achieving gender equality in secondary education<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to National Education Plan (NEP), 2015 – 2019.

<sup>3</sup> PNG's life expectancy at birth increased by 7.8 years in the years between 1990 and 2018 according to surveys and reports by the WHO and GoPNG.

<sup>4</sup> Section 55 of the Constitution refers to Equality of all Citizens and the Policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) as well as the PNG National Policy for Women and Gender Equality are important national policies that are promoted at the National and Subnational levels of government.

<sup>5</sup> PNG's Gender Inequality Index (GII) reveals a significantly low participation of women in the labour market, currently standing at 46.0 percent compared to 47.6 for men.

Girls often leave school early due to safety concerns, financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and domestic responsibilities. Rigid gender norms and societal expectations place significant burdens on girls and women, making it challenging for them to continue their education. Household chores and a lack of family support are major barriers. Parents tend to undervalue the benefits of girls' education compared to that of boys, resulting in lower investments in daughters' schooling<sup>7</sup>. However, the introduction of the Tuition Fee Free Policy in 2012, which led to a notable increase in girls' enrolment, highlights the importance of providing free basic education to ensure universal access.

Poor school environments further contribute to female dropout rates. Many girls report feeling unsafe due to harassment by older male peers and male teachers, which is compounded by inadequate infrastructure, such as a lack of proper sanitary facilities (Edwards, 2015; Department of Education, 2020).

These challenges are even more pronounced in rural areas, where overall school attendance is lower, and gender gaps are wider<sup>8</sup>. Rural girls face additional pressures, including higher rates of early marriage and pregnancy, as well as more pressing domestic expectations. Women's involvement in subsistence agriculture is critical for sustaining families and communities, and their household responsibilities often far exceed those of men<sup>9</sup>.

### **2.3 Political Participation and Decision-Making**

Women's political participation and representation is extremely weak in PNG with none of the 111 parliamentary seats currently held by women. In the 2017 elections, 165 women ran for parliament out of a total of 3,000 candidates, making up only five percent of the total number of candidates, indicating a huge disparity in gender within the political sphere. Although PNG has had 7 female representatives in Parliament since 1977, the most seats held by women at any time were 3 seats out of a total of 111, following the election of 2012, when women accounted for less than 3% of the representatives.<sup>10</sup> The absence of female representation in the 2017 elections indicates that there is an overwhelming bias against women in leadership in general which reflects the general discrimination women face within PNG and especially in the sphere of politics. Furthermore, the few women who were elected in previous governments and appointed to ministerial roles were often given "softer", less technical positions in areas such as community development and religion.

As a result of the high gender inequality observed within this sphere proposals were put forward to increase women's representation in parliament:

- In 2017 the Registrar of Political Parties lobbied the Government to pass proposed changes to the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC). One of the proposals to the draft Organic Law is that at least 20% of the total number of candidates nominated by a political party must be women.
- In 2018, the government directed the PNG Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) to review the Organic Law on National and Local- Level Government Elections. One

of the 12 terms of reference was for “women and special interest representation in Parliament”<sup>11</sup>

- Not related to parliament, but it is also worth noting that Autonomous Region of Bougainville also passed the *Bougainville Women’s Federation Bill* in June 2020.

The gender disparity in politics is also reflected in public service, which is the largest employer in PNG with over 94,000 civil servants employed throughout the country. Data reveals that 38 percent of civil servants are women with 22 percent of those women in executive management roles and only 7 percent as heads of departments. Furthermore, there is minimal government-wide coordination on gender issues and no centralized database on gender and sex disaggregated data within the public service making it difficult to assess the accuracy of the current gender gaps reported.

## 2.4 Participation in Labour Force

The labour force<sup>12</sup> participation (LFP) rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that are economically active, i.e. all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period of time. The LFP rates for females (ages 15+) in PNG was 45.74% as of 2019. Its highest value over the previous 29 years was 71.15% in 1990, while its lowest value was 45.74% in 2019.<sup>13</sup> This is a huge drop when looking at age and educational levels over the course of that period, especially among unskilled young men and women. At the same time skilled people aged 55 to 64 have postponed their retirement resulting in a drop due to shortage of skilled labour and a declining workforce. According to the latest ILO statistics, PNG is ranked 132 out of 180 countries assessed on the participation of women in the labour force, which is reflective of the statistics provided.<sup>14</sup>

Women face significant disadvantages in economic participation. Only 45 percent of working women work for pay, most often in self-employment activities in the informal sector. Women play a large role in agriculture, but female-headed households earn 43 percent less than male-headed households from the sale of food crops<sup>15</sup>. The endemic rates of gender-based violence<sup>16</sup> and discriminatory social norms contribute to girls dropping out of school early, limit women’s access to productive resources and reduce their economic opportunities. 58 percent of women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, which beyond the significant personal impact also takes a heavy toll on families and the economy<sup>17</sup>.

Women’s limited access to economic opportunities arises from interconnected challenges at home, in the workplace, and within their communities. Factors such as gaps in education and skills, domestic responsibilities, insufficient family planning resources, male-dominated cultural norms,

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12 Taken from data within the formal economy which comprises the public sector and private businesses that are registered with the Investment Promotion Authority (IPA) and the Internal Revenue Commission (IRC), pay taxes and whose activities are enumerated as part of PNG’s GDP.

13 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved in September 2019.

14 <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS/rankings>

15 NSO, 2019

16 There are numerous terms used to refer to violence against women, with no universally agreed upon definition. This document uses gender-based violence and violence against women interchangeably to refer to acts leading to physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women. This includes family and sexual violence (FSV) against women, which is the term commonly used to refer to such acts in PNG.

17 World Bank, 2023

and legal or institutional barriers combine to restrict their economic empowerment. These inequalities also hinder women's access to networks and information, affecting their livelihoods and increasing health risks. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these issues, with many female entrepreneurs unaware of available financial assistance and vaccine hesitancy significantly higher among women<sup>18</sup>.

In PNG, significant gender disparities exist in paid employment, within a broader context of low labour market participation for both women and men. According to the 2016-2018 Demographic and Health Survey, only 31% of women (aged 15-49) participate in the labour force (either employed or actively seeking work, formal or informal), compared to 48% of men. PNG's female labour force participation rate is lower than the average for comparable countries, with a wider gender gap. While many women engage in agricultural or subsistence activities not reflected in these statistics, recent data confirms that a substantial proportion of women in PNG remain outside paid employment. From 2016 to 2018, only 45% of employed women and 51% of employed men primarily earned wages for their work.

This variation in remuneration also shows up not only in the differences in gender representation in different sectors, but also in vocational training and entrepreneurship. In PNG, few women have leading roles in big businesses, SMEs or informal enterprises. The data on SME sectors from a survey conducted by Tebbutt<sup>19</sup> reveals that 67% of SMEs are solely male owned and 8% are solely-female owned. In addition, female employment is still concentrated in sectors related to traditionally female roles, such as accommodation and food, education, health, social services, and domestic services. Together, these sectors account for approximately 45% of working females, while about 48% of employed men are engaged in the agricultural, industrial, and construction sectors.

Business training offered to women is often gender-biased, particularly in rural areas, where women often take courses on topics related to their traditional roles, such as cooking and sewing. Female-owned businesses are concentrated in the micro and small end of the spectrum. These businesses grow more slowly, use less labour and physical capital, and are focused in the commerce, services, and manufacturing sectors, which tend to be less profitable overall<sup>20</sup>.

## 2.5 Access to Land and Resources

PNG has both patrilineal and matrilineal systems of traditional governance in the various regions of PNG.<sup>21</sup> Even in the case of a matrilineal community, decisions over the use of the land and resources will still be made by male relatives (either the brothers or sons) of the female landowner.

Generally, under customary practices in PNG, governing over 97% of its population - which largely belong to some ethnic tribe, clan or group indigenous to the islands - assets and decision-making authority are passed from the male patriarch/chief to the eldest male child, whereby the male child also inherits the position of leadership in the clan and all rights of access to land as well as the right to make decisions over family resources. These rights will only pass to the female child as part of

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299596791\\_A\\_scoping\\_study\\_to\\_provide\\_an\\_assessment\\_of\\_SME\\_policy\\_priority\\_areas\\_for\\_Papua\\_New\\_Guinea](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299596791_A_scoping_study_to_provide_an_assessment_of_SME_policy_priority_areas_for_Papua_New_Guinea)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Examples of matrilineal systems are usually found in the New Guinea Islands and Milne Bay Islands in the Southern region of PNG, whilst patrilineal systems are often found in the Highlands and Momase regions of PNG.

her inheritance if there are no male children born into the family. However, even in such circumstances, the male patriarch/chief will usually request another male relative to assist the female child in all processes of decision-making.

As such, there are many gender disparities in access to and control over key agricultural, forestry or natural resources and services, knowledge, opportunities and markets. Rural women are major contributors to the economy, but many have not received recognition of their rights and have not benefitted equally from past economic growth. Many are systematically excluded from access to resources, essential services, and decision-making<sup>22</sup>.

At the household level, men often make the decisions about family income and spending. Women are less likely to seek credit from formal institutions; instead, friends and family are relied upon for financial assistance. There are few community credit schemes available and major commercial bank requirements are not suited to the average rural woman interested in starting and/or expanding her business.

As examined in detail in the Environmental and Social Management Framework, underpinning this GAAP, the majority of land in PNG (97%) is vested in the customary landowners and local communities. For any development project involving use of land, forests or water, apart from those for traditional purposes, legal registration and incorporation of the traditional group is required. This process ensures that rights related to specific extractive, agricultural, fishing, hunting, crafts and animal husbandry activities officially recognize and involve the customary landowners or resource owners. In PNG, this process of acquiring legal recognition over land (known as incorporating Land Groups (ILGs) involves all members of the community, both women and men alike, however, the management of these ILGs is often dominated by men. Attempts to address this issue were initiated through amendments to the ILG Act in 2009 which made it mandatory for at least one-third of the management committee to include women.

With the remaining 3% of State land and land under private freehold, the need for a land title is crucial, particularly with illegal land grabbing on the rise in PNG. Only about 40 percent of women own land compared to 60 percent of men<sup>23</sup>. Among those who do own any land, half of the men own it alone as opposed to jointly, whereas just 33 percent of women do (NSO, 2019).

Joint land titling in PNG, especially involving married couples, does not always help to secure a women's 'ownership' of land in the western sense, but it does contribute to a woman's status and security. There are studies which have shown that in some instances titling jointly has helped to institutionalise the male control over land rather than to enhance the women's rights.<sup>24</sup> This is often the case when the woman has acquired the land either through customary inheritance (in matrilineal societies) or by her own merit as a business owner/professional woman. Her husband will demand for joint titles to be awarded and then end up controlling the land/property through acts of violence/abuse which further institutionalizes the dominance and 'control' her asserts over her.

Additionally, land tenure in the country is difficult to track and follow. There is no central database containing information on land ownership and title and the official land registry system is often outdated, archaic and unreliable. Rather, each land office at both the provincial and national level

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22 FAO Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Rural Sector in PNG. 2019 Report.

<sup>23</sup> World Bank, 2023

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2014/02/OXFAM\\_PapuaNewGuineaLandRights.pdf](https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2014/02/OXFAM_PapuaNewGuineaLandRights.pdf)

has its own paper-based system. This situation makes it equally difficult to track and compile gender data and statistics on land ownership.

In relation to land held under customary tenure, women have little to no control over it since it is held in the name of the clan (wantok) and most of the control is in the hands of the male chief, his male sons and/or immediate male next of kin. While women typically have user rights to cultivate land, gather forest products and fish or collect marine resources, they rarely hold ownership rights or have control over productive resources. Planting annual food crops does not secure long-term user rights over land, unlike the planting of small plantations of recurrent crops such as cocoa, coffee and coconuts. Food gardens (typically managed by women) are generally temporary, whereas plantations of tree crops are semi-permanent markers of property rights and confer status upon the men who control them.

When customary land is leased for plantations, logging or mining, or when access to marine and riverine rights are negotiated, women seldom participate in such negotiations. Furthermore, women are not usually considered to have the right to claim a direct share of leases, royalties or compensation<sup>25</sup>. However, some advancements have taken place in the last 10 years since then which have helped to boost the status of women in land ownership, particularly those in the professional fields who are literate and have sufficient finances to access and thereby own property, including land.<sup>26</sup>

It is not necessary to be a customary land holder to exercise a right over a piece of land or to use it temporarily. A great deal of land is cultivated by non-customary holders, with the permission of, or at the request of, the customary holder. When a person who does not have rights to a piece of land uses it without paying a rent, the use is known as usufruct. For many reasons, including shared labour arrangements or to ensure the maintenance of marriage, exchange and social relationships, the right holders to a piece of land will invite non-customary holders to cultivate it. This is also how people who cannot establish rights to land within a group, such as in-marrying widows or recent migrants, can be given land on which to grow food and build houses during their lifetimes.

However, these usufructuary arrangements are usually only limited to growing annual crops. People invited to use land to which they do not have a customary right of ownership are commonly prevented from planting trees, particularly export cash crop species like coffee or cocoa, but also food-producing trees such as breadfruit, sago and coconut. Tree planting (and the burial of the dead) is usually interpreted as a public affirmation of customary land ownership. Even though much land is cultivated under usufructuary arrangements, it can be difficult for women and unmarried men to gain access to land on which to plant tree crops or to develop cash-earning business enterprises.<sup>27</sup>

The Land Act (1996) includes provisions related to customary land, such as its registration, but does not address other transactions, such as the management of unregistered customary land among or between customary landholders. This gap increases the vulnerability of women's land rights. Women often face challenges in enforcing their rights to land and property or claiming income from cash crops and land leases. More broadly, women's interactions with the state are often

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<sup>25</sup> World Bank Report. 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid at p.5

<sup>27</sup> Ibid at p.5

mediated through family and clan structures, limiting the state's ability to address the various inequities they encounter<sup>28</sup>.

## 2.6 Gender Based Violence and Access to Social Resources

Intimate partner violence (IPV), including physical and/or sexual abuse, is nearly twice the global average in Papua New Guinea (PNG). According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2016-2018 report, 62.9% of women who have ever been in a partnership have experienced emotional abuse (such as threats, insults, or public humiliation), physical violence, and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some point in their lives<sup>29</sup>.

While most violence against women in PNG is committed by intimate partners, the prevalence of non-partner sexual violence (defined as forced sexual acts) is also alarmingly high compared to WHO regional and global estimates. The lack of an institutionalized system for collecting administrative data on gender-based violence (GBV) has resulted in inaccurate and unreliable reporting from police and healthcare providers, further complicating prevention and response efforts. When women are seen as deviating from expected gender roles or norms, this is sometimes used to justify men's use of violence, which women have often been conditioned to accept as normal. In fact, women are more likely than men to believe that physical punishment is justified. This underscores violence as both a consequence of inequitable gender norms and a tool to enforce traditional expectations of women<sup>30</sup>.

Violence and harassment against women are major impediments to the achievement of not only social and health indicators but also economic indicators. Various surveys carried out within the private sector/businesses in PNG have shown that:

- On average, employees experienced a total of 7.8 incidents of GBV in the past 12 months and 2.4 incidents of severe GBV. Women experienced an average of 9.4 incidents in the past year.
- On average, each staff member loses 11.1 days of work per year as a result of the impacts of gender violence: 2.0 days lost to 'presenteeism', 5.0 days to absenteeism and 4.1 days helping other victims of GBV. For one of the firms in this survey, this means an estimated 26,200 staff days lost per year.
- The cost of staff time lost due to GBV is high. For one of the firms covered, it is estimated to total 300,000 kina; for another, almost 3 million kina, representing 2% and 9% respectively of those companies' total salary bills.
- If other direct costs are included, (counselling, recruitment and induction costs, medical costs), then the total cost to one firm increased by 45%.<sup>31</sup>

Different measures have been put in place to attempt to address this issue, including the development of the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence, 2016–2025*<sup>32</sup> which provides a framework that calls for high-level oversight in the form of a parliamentary committee and a national secretariat to oversee, support and lobby for resources to sustain the fight against gender-based violence in the country. At the political level, individual leaders such as

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28 World Bank, 2023

29 NSO, 2019

30 World Bank, 2023

<sup>31</sup> *Gender violence in Papua New Guinea: The Cost to Business*. Darko, E., Smith, W. and Walker, D. ODI. 2015.

<sup>32</sup> <https://femilipng.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Strategy-to-Prevent-and-Respond-to-GBV.pdf>

the National Capital District (NCDC) Governor, have advocated for political action through a coalition of Governors, committing themselves to taking action necessary to reduce gender-based violence and to promote gender equality, respect and partnership<sup>33</sup>.

In addition to these initiatives NCDC established Gender Desks in the city as part of a partnership with the UN Women's *Safe City for Women and Girls Project*. As part of some of its key project objectives the project also carried out training (in mind-set change and development) targeting male perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

### **Social Services**

In terms of access to social services, the Government of PNG through both national, provincial and local level governments have some support programs in place for the provision of basic counselling, psychological, health, and legal support to women in urban areas. For those within the rural and remote areas, however, this access is very limited.

### **Grievance Redress Mechanisms**

Most GBV and domestic violence issues are handled by local or district police and referred to village courts for remediation. These GRM measures are included as part of social services which cover access to justice and are either handled by the formal legal system, e.g., the Police or the village and district court systems at the local level of government or as part of the existing customary/traditional system of conflict resolution. Not all services are fully operational, accessible or reliable and where there are gaps, many civil society organisations such as churches and NGO's also assist.

There are also many international donor agencies as well as international NGO's<sup>34</sup> which seek to help the GoPNG in reaching most people, especially women and vulnerable people. Those services that are run by the GoPNG are rolled out through the Department of Community Development who have branches at the provincial canterers and in some districts (as per a recent Government led initiative).<sup>35</sup>

### **Challenges to Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups**

#### **Elderly**

The elderly are the smallest demographic group in PNG accounting for approximately 3.51% of the population.<sup>36</sup> The most prominent issue concerning this fragile group of people in PNG is the lack of social welfare or health care support by the GoPNG to address their specific needs. This means the burden to care for the elderly is often borne by the immediate family.

Although a minor percentage of this group are pensioners and receive their employment entitlements at their retirement, prolonged delays with processing the payouts or budget/financial constraints within the government prevent them from accessing these much-needed funds. This increases their susceptibility to physical and emotional/mental diseases, sickness and poverty. The

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<sup>33</sup> <https://postcourier.com.pg/governors-coalition-to-fight-gbv/>

<sup>34</sup> Examples are DFAT, UN Agencies - UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNDP - ADB, World Bank, USAID and key international NGO's such as CARE International to name a few.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.dfcd.gov.pg/index.php/contact-us/office-locations/28-latest-news-2019/96-law-and-justice-sector-to-align-programs-with-community-development-at-the-district-level>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/731755/age-structure-in-papua-new-guinea/>

statistics for men are higher than women in many cases due to the fact that most delayed pensions involve those within the armed/disciplinary forces.<sup>37</sup>

For those with no form of education who migrate to the urban cities from the rural areas, the statistics are far worse. Although customary support systems do recognize and encourage the need to care for and esteem the elderly members of a family, tribe or clan, this is observed more within the traditional village setting and not within the urban cities. As a result, the highest rates of poverty and sickness are found within the elderly living in settlements in the cities. Women who are widowed or those who have been abandoned by husbands and the disabled are amongst the most vulnerable.<sup>38</sup> Elderly women become more susceptible to neglect, mistreatment and abuse from the community due to their inability to regularly work or contribute to the family livelihood.

Another serious issue that has risen amongst elderly women in the rural areas is the increasing number who become prey to vigilante killings and human rights abuses because of alleged involvement in sorcery and witchcraft. The most vulnerable persons are widows without male sons. In most cases, the motivation behind these wanton acts of violence were either due to conflict related to personal differences within the community, the desire for revenge or the opportunity to steal land or resources from the alleged offender/accused<sup>39</sup>. The government has enacted the Sorcery and Witchcraft Accusation Related Violence National Action Plan 2015, which seeks to address violence associated with sorcery accusations.

The government repealed controversial anti-sorcery legislation in 2013,<sup>40</sup> which had provided a defense for violent crime if the accused was acting to stop witchcraft. The government established the *Sorcery National Action Plan in 2016*, to be implemented by a national committee. The efforts are currently ongoing.

## The Youth

According to the United Nations, youth are those members of the local population who fall within the ages of 15 and 24.<sup>41</sup> In PNG, this is the largest demographic group occupying almost 60 percent of PNG's population equating to about 7.3 million inhabitants. If current population trends continue, this group will continue to grow rapidly. One in six women in PNG give birth to their first child before the age of 18 and the country's population is projected to reach 13 million by 2032.<sup>42</sup> A multitude of social and economic challenges plague the country's youth and prevent them from flourishing and positively contributing to society. One is the marginalization that arises from the contrasts in leadership between the traditional social perspective compared to the Western ideals. The former placing them at a lower status in decision making than the latter. This leaves the youth often excluded from and denied roles and responsibilities within the community, workplaces and society despite increasing modernization. Young people also face the growing demand to help bring wealth to their communities, yet are unable to participate in activities or community decisions that create an avenue to access and develop this wealth.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.thenational.com.pg/pension-funds-not-paid/> -

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29745/hardship-png.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.thenational.com.pg/sorcery-killings/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22698668>

<sup>41</sup> However, this is for statistical purposes only. The United Nations holds no prejudice to any other definitions made by Member States.

<sup>42</sup> <https://png.unfpa.org/en/topics/young-people-8>

In PNG youth (and children) are also exposed to the highest rate of violence in the East Asia and Pacific Region. Small-scale studies consistently show that violence is a part of everyday life as a large number of children are physically, verbally and sexually abused.<sup>43</sup>

Although, the formal justice system segregates youth offenders from adult offenders as part of the Juvenile Justice system, the response to youth's access to justice is varying with many victims of violence particularly young women/girls being forced to accept cultural forms of payment of compensation in lieu of court action for serious crimes such as rape or assault.<sup>44</sup>

Without investments in the health, education and employability of this large population cohort, the potential of this group to become susceptible to gangs and the proliferation of crime drastically increases, especially amongst the urban poor or within settlements. The same is true for young women, who become more susceptible to prostitution or fall prey to sex trafficking and domestic servitude with employed relatives.<sup>45</sup>

Although a relatively new concept to PNG, Human trafficking is occurring and many of the victims are children and youth. IOM have partnered with the PNG department of justice and US department of state to push various measures in PNG to address this issue such as the development and enactment of human trafficking legislation whereby all perpetrators and victims will be able to face justice. They have also identified targeted provinces for a pilot project, including NCD, Western, AROB, West Sepik, Eastern Highlands, Morobe and Madang. The awareness program started in 2010 with most of the target provinces completing awareness.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.7 Gender and Agriculture

The economic growth of Papua New Guinea is driven by the agricultural sector, which contributes nearly 28 percent of the GDP<sup>47</sup>, providing employment and livelihoods for 87 percent of the population in rural areas. The rural economic sector is predominantly comprised of subsistence and semi-subsistence farming.

In the village agriculture sector the division of labour is strongly defined by gender; women are responsible for food-crop production for family consumption, local marketing of surplus production (thus earning cash income), and rearing of small livestock such as poultry and pigs. Women produce over 80% of the country's food and account for 60-70% of the work related to food crop production<sup>48</sup>. Men, especially in the highland region where larger plantations of cash-crops are common, tend to work on the estates as wage workers, while women take care of crops and livestock at home for provision for the household. Though there are regional differences, women's working hours usually exceed those of men. Despite the importance of women's work towards household/national food security, their work is significantly underappreciated and undervalued.

Rural women play multiple roles simultaneously, including managing triple responsibilities in their workplaces, households and communities. They take on the primary responsibility to ensure that

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.humanium.org/en/papua-new-guinea/>

<sup>44</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MSF\\_PNG\\_Hidden\\_and\\_Neglected\\_2011.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MSF_PNG_Hidden_and_Neglected_2011.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/papua-new-guinea/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://hby-awareness.com/human-trafficking-evident-in-png/>

<sup>47</sup> World Bank Development Indicators, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> JICA Country Gender Report 2010.

the nutritional, childcare and health care needs of their families are fulfilled, in addition to the community, social, and cultural roles they are required to perform. Given these multiple roles and duties, rural women lack the time to participate in other opportunities that could potentially help to enhance their knowledge, skills, and self-esteem. Women disproportionately bear the consequences of alcoholism and addiction of household members as compared to men, as well as face higher rates of domestic violence.<sup>49</sup>

Those living in highly marginal environments suffer from periodic food shortages. As a buffer against such risks, production of staple food crops such as sweet potatoes, potatoes, yams, and bananas, involving traditional systems of shifting cultivation, remains the most important economic activity for rural PNG, especially for rural women. Women engage mostly in growing and selling fresh food crops (as opposed to cash crops for export such as coffee, cocoa, copra and vanilla) and are responsible for most of the planting, weeding, and harvesting of these crops.

The sale of fresh food crops in local or urban markets generates cash for women and their families. Women tend to sell fresh food crops in local or urban markets, while men tend to be more involved in long-distance marketing, such as taking highlands produce to Port Moresby or Lae markets for sale. Such a division of duties has implications for economic equality, as women earn less from their sales at local markets than men earn from selling export cash crops. Women are also likely to be paid less than men in formal settings such as plantations and are discriminated against in other ways<sup>50</sup>. Among the reasons that women are largely limited to production and sale of fresh food crops is a lack of opportunity to engage in production and sale of cash crops. Women are also limited in their ability to travel greater distances, for instance, to urban and regional markets, for various reasons, including security. However, as PNG experiences a gradual shift toward more intensive commercial farming, new opportunities for rural women may open up, for instance in the adoption of improved farming and irrigation methods, if adequately supported.

### **Gender and rural finance**

There are important gender-specific barriers to accessing finance (or extension services), as women tend not to own the land, fixed assets, or other resources that are needed to meet collateral requirements. Understanding the economic performance of women is key to removing the legal, social, financial and educational gender-based barriers that are pervasive. It is therefore necessary to collect, analyse and use sex-disaggregated data to track progress, as well as to tackle the discrimination they face. The East Asia Pacific Gender companion to the World Development Report (WDR) 2018 on Gender Equality and Development states that promoting gender equality in economic opportunities promotes better development outcomes, including higher productivity, increased growth and faster poverty reduction. Because women find it more difficult to access credit than men in PNG, only 30 percent of all customers of financial inclusion services in the country are women.<sup>51</sup>

Access to climate finance is essential for fostering climate-resilient agriculture and ensuring food security. A review of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) financial services conducted by the Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) highlighted significant challenges in obtaining credit and financial products, particularly for women and individuals in vulnerable situations. Inequalities are evident in the lack of transparency around fees, rates, and

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<sup>49</sup> ADB Gender Report, 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Bourke and Harward, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> UNDP, 2016.

conditions, combined with an absence of financial consumer protection. This leaves vulnerable community members exposed to unregulated lending practices. Women have less access to, and control over, the financial resources needed for their economic autonomy. The Bank of PNG (BPNG) estimates that only 14 percent of women are able to secure bank loans, compared to 20 percent of men due to factors such as unequal economic opportunity, lack of education and financial illiteracy. The Government of PNG, supported by donors such as the ADB, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), NZAID and UNDP, has launched multiple policies and projects to enable financial inclusion of underserved communities and women. Women form 46 percent of the informally employed population and the GoPNG is keen to improve women's financial literacy and to reduce perceived risks in providing banking services to women. In line with the Maya Declaration on financial inclusion, the *National Informal Economy Policy* provided bank accounts to 50 000 women in 2015.<sup>52</sup>

## 2.8 Health

In PNG women and children suffer from serious health-related disadvantages. Child mortality rates are high, with one out of every thirteen children dying before reaching the age of five.<sup>53</sup> The risk of maternal death has increased due to a combination of high fertility levels and lack of skilled health personnel, who attend only an estimated 53 percent of births throughout the country<sup>54</sup>. For both women and men, the major causes of morbidity and mortality are communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrheal diseases, and acute respiratory disease<sup>55</sup>. HIV/AIDS is also highly prevalent, affecting nearly 1 percent of the adult population.<sup>56</sup> Studies conducted in 2018 revealed data that show that 2.7% of women attending the antenatal clinics in the National Capital District had HIV infection (compared with 2.8% prevalence nationally).<sup>57</sup>

These dismal statistics, however, there are signs of progress, with declining malaria rates and improvements in the care and treatment of HIV/AIDS, which recently moved from classification as a generalized epidemic to a concentrated epidemic.<sup>58</sup> Maternal mortality rates fell from 120 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 69 in 2013. Some 98% of births are currently attended by skilled personnel in the main cities, such as Port Moresby, compared to 88% in the mid-1990s. Yet, progress in the delivery of better health care in PNG is significantly limited by multiple, interrelated factors, of which the most basic are availability of medical resources such as beds, medical apparatus, tools, machines and medicines, and accessibility of health care.

The accessibility of basic services by many rural communities is constrained by the topography of the country, which affects both the availability of health workers and the delivery of supplies.<sup>59</sup> The percentage of GDP expenditure on health care is low by international comparison<sup>60</sup> and the available funds are vulnerable to systemic corruption in the medical/health care system. Despite

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ca6308en/ca6308en.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> NDoH PNG, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> NDoH, 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> CEDAW Report, 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Gianna Robbers, Joshua P. Vogel, Glen Mola, John Bolgna & Caroline S. E. Homer (2019) *Maternal and newborn health indicators in Papua New Guinea – 2008–2018*, Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters, 27:1, 52-68, DOI: 10.1080/26410397.2019.1686199.

<sup>58</sup> WHO, 2014; WHO, 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Office of Development Effectiveness, 2009.

<sup>60</sup> World Bank, 2016.

high demand, less than 50 percent of the population has access to primary health care.<sup>61</sup> Malnutrition continues to be a significant impediment in the social and economic development of PNG, as highlighted in the National Nutrition Policy 2015–2024. The Papua New Guinea Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009-2010 indicates that malnutrition in the country remains prevalent and severe and varies across the regions<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> Hurney, 2017.

<sup>62</sup> NSO, 2012.

### 3. POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK PROTECTING WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

#### 3.1 Key International Protocols and Frameworks Supporting Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment, and Human Rights

PNG has signed and ratified different international conventions and treaties on human rights, social inclusion and equality, some of which have helped to form the basis for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout the world. Refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of Relevant International Treaties signed or ratified by PNG

International Treaty	Ratification
UN Declaration on Human Rights	Not Available
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	2008
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including its Optional Protocol	1995
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	2008
The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People	Not Available
The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	1982
The International Convention on the Rights of the Child	1993
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2013
ILO, Equal remuneration Convention	2000

#### Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Other global and regional initiatives on gender equality /women’s empowerment such as the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* signed during the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) is considered one of the most progressive plans to promote women's rights. This regional policy platform determined that in order to achieve gender equality globally and regionally, it was necessary to have specific activities aimed at the empowerment of women, and to take into account gender considerations in all cross sectoral policies and programs to consider gender impacts.

As a result of this international platform and plan of action, PNG chose to model the development of a *National Platform for Action* within the years 1995 – 2005 where dozens of specific and strategic actions were prioritized under 10 priority action areas. This platform was also instrumental in helping to design and develop the implementation plan for specific gender policies and action areas within the country including objectives, implementation strategies, performance indicators, key actors and illustrative budgets for those specific policies.

#### Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Implementation & Progress in PNG

As part the implementation of the United Nations gender equality goals in PNG, PNG is following the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022. This outlines the

partnership between the UN and the Government of PNG in support of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>63</sup> PNG adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway) to achieve the country's Vision 2050. The SDGs were also integrated into key national policies such as the Medium-Term Development Plan III (2018-2022) and also carried on into the MTDP IV (2023 – 2027) with other national policies, legislation and budgets.

Progress has been challenging for many of the thematic areas particularly for Gender Equality due to internal/external pressures. However, the first *Voluntary National Review Report (VNR)*<sup>64</sup> provides the most comprehensive overview of progress in implementation to date and highlights the specific actions that relate to Goal 5 on Gender Equality. The most notable are covered below.

PNG has signed up to a number of progressive international conventions and instruments to improve the status of women and attain gender equality. (*Refer to Section 3.1 of the Report*).

Progress has been made in certain areas such as policies and legislation for women's empowerment. Examples include:

- The national *Family Sexual Violence Action Committee*, a sectoral committee under CIMC operating since 2001 playing a pivotal role in coordinating provincial and sectoral data collection for a national response.
- Certain government departments, example, the National Department of Health is rolling out Family Support Centres.
- The police established the first Family and Sexual Violence Unit in 2008 growing to 26 across the country by 2019, staffed by 109 police officers in total.
- The Office of the Public Prosecutor is initiating a Victim Liaison Officer, which in due time will be placed within the Family and Sexual Violence Unit.
- Parliament also has passed the Family Protection Act in 2013.
- Some health indicators have shown improvement. For example, maternal mortality improved from 733 in 2006 to 145 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019. Eighty-seven percent of births to urban mothers were assisted by a skilled provider and 85 percent were delivered in a health facility, as compared with 53 percent and 51 percent, respectively, of births to rural women.
- regarding Education, the gender parity rate for elementary schools was recorded at 1.01, primary schools at 0.9111, and secondary schools at 0.8465. This is an unprecedented development, showing that more girls are entering the education system.
- Positions in formal employment have shown some improvement with the Household and Income Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2009–2010 showing that a similar proportion of women (62 percent) and men (61 percent) are employed among the population aged 15 and older, although less likely to hold a wage job in the formal sector (66 percent of men than 38 percent of women). Women's engagement in SME and financial inclusion has grown significantly. As of June 2018, 1.9 million new bank accounts were opened of which 28 percent were by women, with GoPNG aiming to reach 50 percent under the Maya Declaration signed in 2013.

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<sup>63</sup> <https://papuanewguinea.un.org/en/sdgs>

<sup>64</sup> Refer to the following for a copy of PNG's *Voluntary National Review 2020 - Progress of Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals* – [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26452VNR\\_2020\\_Papua\\_New\\_Guinea\\_Report.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26452VNR_2020_Papua_New_Guinea_Report.pdf)

## 3.2. National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Frameworks, Policies and Laws

### 3.2.1 National Gender Laws and regulations

Human rights and specifically those international instruments that promote gender equality and non-discrimination have been ratified by the Government of PNG and domesticated within the National Constitution of PNG. Section 55 calls for "Equality and participation and encourages the equal participation by women citizens in all ...economic, activities." It also enshrines these basic human rights within its preamble under the National Goals and Directive Principles 2 (3) and (5) and within respective Acts of Parliament such as the *Marriage Act, 1963, Matrimonial Causes Act, 1963, Deserted Wives and Children's Act, 1951, Family Protection Act, 2013* and the *Lukautim Pikinini Act, 2015*.

Apart from addressing the social needs of women who are considered more vulnerable to issues of abandonment and unfair/unequal treatment within the context of marriage or relationships, the last two pieces of legislation apply to the broader concerns of violence against women and girls as a whole. The *Family Protection Law 2013* resulted in various amendments to the Criminal Code of PNG as part of revisions which introduced a range of new offences in addition to the ones introduced under the *Sexual Offences and Crimes Against Children Act, 2002*. The most controversial was the offence of marital rape; a concept unheard of in PNG until its introduction. This was further developed to include grading according to the seriousness of harm, and the manner of sexual violation with increased penalties against offenders involved in acts of sexual violence committed against women and girls.

In addition to these advances in legislation, certain policies and measures to address the specific issues of gender discrimination and gender-based violence were also achieved. Some of the more notable ones initiated both prior to and during the results period are as follows:

- The Office of the Public Prosecutor initiated a Victim Liaison Officer, which in due time will be placed within the Family and Sexual Violence Unit.
- The national *Family Sexual Violence Action Committee*, a sectoral committee under the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC) played a pivotal role in coordinating provincial and sectoral data collection for a national response.
- Certain government departments, example, the National Department of Health began rolling out Family Support Centres in 2009.
- GoPNG aimed to economically empower 50 percent of all women under the Maya Declaration signed in 2013.

### 3.2.2 Gender equality in forest sectoral laws

Gender equality within forest sector legislation has developed slowly in the last 15 - 20 years and particularly within the forestry sector. The forest sector operates predominantly in remote areas, with households earning income through royalties, lease payments, and wages primarily directed to men employed in logging operations. However, women often participate in reforestation activities, such as propagating plants and maintaining nurseries. Women typically lack control over valuable forest resources like timber, which are often managed by men, and they frequently lose assets, such as trees, during tribal conflicts.

Although the *Forestry Act, 1991*, section 10(1)(h) recognizes the rights of women in decision-making over the management of forest resources through women representatives on the National Forest Board, women's lack of representation in decision-making within key subnational level mechanisms continues to be a hindrance to achieving gender equality. There are specific references to equality of women and men in relation to Forestry Training and Education mentioned in the *National Forestry Policy 1990* Part V(b), however, in reality, forestry continues to be one of the more male dominated resource sectors in the country.

Despite these gender gaps, informal initiatives have commenced in recent years to address them through networking groups comprised of women employees of the PNG Forest Authority to address issues affecting PNGFA female employees with extension to women in forest concessions as well. The Women in Forestry Initiative (WIFIN) which commenced in March 2005 has over the years raised awareness in areas of health, lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension, violence and abuse at home and in the workplace and has also focused on financial empowerment for women through training sessions on budgeting and savings through engagement with banks especially with the local banks, Bank South Pacific (BSP) and microfinance institutions.

In 2009 amendments to the *Land Groups Incorporations (Amendment) Act* were initiated, in relation to customary land tenure and the legal mechanisms that recognize, hold and administer customary land, i.e., Incorporated Land Groups, to respect and prioritize gender equality within the process of establishing and managing land owning groups especially in relation to resource development projects. The proposed changes under section 14(b) and Schedule 6 of this Act require that at least two female representatives (out of 6 representatives) must be elected to ILG management committees, as a way of meeting the 30% minimum requirement for women's representation. As a result of these amendments this process is now adhered to in all natural resource development projects where ILGs are required.

In relation to gender and climate change the *Climate Change Management Act 2015* provides for a woman representative on the Board of the Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA) and also promotes a draft Climate Change Development Authority Workplace Guideline for Gender and Climate Change (drafted in 2014) which is presently in the process of being incorporated into a formal workplace policy.

Conflict resolution as it relates to natural resource acquisition and customary land development is also a major priority area for the GoPNG with a legal system in place that extends to all tiers of government and provides avenues for both formal and informal means of redress in PNG as part of the inherent right of access to justice established within the Constitution of PNG.<sup>65</sup> Women's access and use of these mechanisms is a right that is provided by law and extends down to the grassroots level through entities such as the Village Courts which are set up for this purpose and developed to integrate both customary, mediatory and quasi-judicial forms of redress. Although made accessible by women, many of the customs incorporated into the forms of redress provided tend to discriminate against or disadvantage women because of the strong customary and traditional influence.

### **3.2.3 National Gender Policies, Plans and Programs**

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<sup>65</sup> Section 37 of the Constitution.

Many of the key gender policies and plans in the country came into effect within the REDD+ results period including the *Papua New Guinea National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015*. This was the overarching national policy developed to govern gender discrimination issues within the public service and across all sectors of government. This Policy described the government's mission to promote improved equality, participation, and empowerment of women and refers to the establishment of a policy environment that translates government commitments on gender equality into reality.

While gender mainstreaming across government has resulted in some policies and strategies, few of these are budgeted for or implemented to date. Despite there being no update or revision to this national policy, it still remains a key guiding framework for gender interventions in PNG. There are also other sector specific policies which address the issue of gender equality but are limited to the context of that sector.<sup>66</sup>

The National Strategic Plan 2010-2050 (Vision 2050) is the national development strategy that guides PNG's social and economic development. One of the key focus areas of this Policy is 'Human Capital Development, Gender, Youth and People Empowerment' which helps to provide a framework for PNG's broader development policies as well. Other key National Gender Policies in PNG which are of importance for the implementation of specific gender strategies and actions by the Government of PNG is the *National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy* and the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence, 2016-2025*.

As mentioned in the previous section, there were sweeping reforms to PNG's approach towards GBV initiated between 2009 and 2019. One such reform was the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV 2016-2025 and the associated Plan of Implementation. The policy's clear analysis of the problem ensured the issue was brought to the fore in the government's planning processes and encouraged more gender-awareness and gender-sensitive responses to the prevention and service provision. Despite the positive inroads being made within government to address gender inequality and discrimination issues, various factors also work to undermine this progress as well. The biggest factor is customary law, its practices and beliefs in PNG which are recognized under the Constitution.<sup>67</sup> These laws hold the power of enforcement within Village Courts, and many are drawn from traditional cultural practices that tend to discriminate against women in relation to social rights and property. Studies of GBV indicate that such violence appears to be widely accepted and "culturally condoned."<sup>68</sup> This also aligns with the strict zero tolerance policy towards SEAH and GBV, ensuring compliance with both the GCF's Gender Policy and FAO's dedicated Environmental and Social Standard 6 on Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence.

*The National Informal Economy Policy 2011* was another key gender policy introduced with the desire to further the economic empowerment of women and men taking into consideration the existing social and cultural structures in place. It planned to enhance financial inclusion and support the transition of the rural economy from subsistence agriculture to high value market activities utilising household farming models and strategies. The policy acknowledges and intends to utilise PNG's unique cultural context to promote development and more importantly allow women to advance within the supportive network of their families and communities. It sets the vision and the

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<sup>66</sup> Example, the Electoral Commission - Gender Workplace and Social Inclusion Policy 2013-2017, The National Public Service Gender Equity & Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy, Papua New Guinea National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence 2016-2025.

framework to achieving key objectives, it also outlines the key agencies responsible for implementation and requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders to ensure this occurs.

Part of the challenge is in creating the environment necessary for women entrepreneurs in the informal sector to grow their business and be able to expand into the formal economy. The economic empowerment of women has multiplicative impacts on other development issues and therefore, broader implications for PNG. It is positive to note that more is happening in PNG to promote women in business, yet much of this work is driven by development partners and non-government organisations. A sustainable approach requires the government to drive this work and invest in the growth of the informal economy.<sup>69</sup>

### **3.2.4 Gender institutions and participation in decision making**

National Council of Women (NCW) was the first formal entity established by the GoPNG in 1979 to represent the interests of women and children in PNG and to give effect to the rights of women and children established under the National Constitution. Having been in operation in PNG for 40 years it has established 22 offices in various provinces throughout the country. It is designated to be the link between the national level and the subnational level.

Shortly after the establishment of the NCW, a government department was created to further expand its mandate and to address issues concerning women, youth, children and related social issues. This was initially known as the Department of Women and Children and then changed into the Department for Community Development (DFCD) in 2008. In addition to this, the Office for the Development of Women (ODW) was also established and activated in July 2009. The latter being responsible for gender related policy and strategy formulation, gender-related research, coordination with key line agencies and monitoring of achievements in relation to international commitments.

Both entities serve to address the issue of gender equality in PNG; however, issues concerning lack in sufficient budgeting by the government for the implementation of these various gender strategies and plans seriously undermines their progress. The National Council of Women, in partnership with the Department of Community Development and the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission began discussions in 2016 on the establishment of proper administrative structures through the development of NCW regulations and a five-year strategic plan to ensure greater women's empowerment at all levels. This led to the amendment of the NCW Act in 2016.

Apart from the government mandated authorities there are also many CSO's and private sector entities which also partner with these agencies to implement specific gender programs/action plans at the subnational level where the central DFCD and key national agencies are not fully operational.

In relation to gender and climate change the *Climate Change Management Act 2015* provides for a woman representative on the Board of the Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA) and also promotes a draft Climate Change Development Authority workplace Guideline for Gender and Climate Change (drafted in 2014) which is presently in the process of being incorporated into a formal workplace policy.

## 32.4 Gender and Climate Change Policies

PNG's NDC emphasizes the critical role of the LULUCF (Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry) sector in achieving its climate goals, aiming to maintain its high forest cover (78%) and its reduction in emissions from AFOLU and energy sectors. In light of this and the crucial role women play in the management of land and forest resources, it recommends the involvement of local communities, youth, and women in the implementation of sustainable agricultural and agroforestry practices. Potential strategies include:

- Promoting socially inclusive climate-smart agriculture.
- Enhancing women's access to resources, information, and climate-smart technologies.
- Strengthening the role of women and youth in agricultural value chains.
- Promoting inclusive forest rehabilitation and sustainable timber management.

The NDC also highlights the importance of a gender-responsive and inclusive approach, ensuring the participation of men, women, youth, and vulnerable groups in consultations, planning, decision-making, and implementation processes. This approach seeks to promote equitable opportunities for sustainable, low-carbon livelihoods, reinforcing the human rights-based framework in addressing climate change across priority sectors.

Further to this, the *Climate Change Management Act 2015* provides for women representatives on key decision-making platforms such as the Board of the CCDA and its various Technical Working Committees. A draft CCDA workplace Guideline for Gender and Climate Change which was formally drafted in 2014, is presently in the process of being incorporated into a workplace policy.

*The Climate Compatible Development Management Policy* of 2014 also mentions the need for "fair and equal participation in representation of views and to increase participation in all activities so as to ensure ownership of activities." As mentioned above, a CCDA workplace Guideline for Gender and Climate Change (drafted in 2014) is presently in the process of being incorporated into a formal workplace policy.

There was reference already made to the *Forestry Policy 1990* and its promotion of the equality of women and men as part of Forestry Training and Education, although not clearly emphasized as much as within the Agriculture sector. This sector specifically addresses gender equality as seen in the *National Agriculture Development Plan 2007-2016 (NADP)* Priority Area 6 which focuses on gender, social issues and HIV/AIDS.

As with most legal and policy reforms, adequately applying and enforcing the new laws and policies requires more robust attention to funding and resourcing which remains a concern for the GoPNG that has been faced with issues of huge budget deficits in the last few years.<sup>70</sup>

## 3.3 Institutional Arrangements

In 2008, when the Department of Women and Children was reformed into the Department for Community Development (DFCD), the national gender machinery, known as the Office for the Development of Women (ODW), was also established in the DFCD and activated in July 2009. ODW

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<sup>70</sup> Papua New Guinea Economic Update, January 2020: Facing Economic Headwinds  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33288>

addresses issues concerning policy and strategy formulation, gender-related research, coordination with other line agencies, and monitoring of achievements in relation to international commitment.

In addition to these mechanisms are those that are currently in operation and which were established in 1979, known as the National Council of Women. Both offices serve to address the issue of gender equality in PNG; however, there have been serious issues concerning a lack in sufficient budgeting for gender within government for the implementation of these various strategies and plans. The NCW has been in operation in PNG for 40 years having established 22 presidents throughout the country and provincial offices designated to be the link between the national level and the subnational level. The National Council of Women, in partnership with the Department of Community Development and the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission began discussions in 2016 on the establishment of proper administrative structures through the development of NCW regulations and a five-year strategic plan to ensure greater empowerment at all levels. This event also led to the amendment of the NCW Act in 2016.

Apart from the government mandated authorities there are also many CSO's and private sector entities which also partner with these agencies to implement specific gender programs/action plans at the subnational level where the central DFCD and key national agencies are not operational.

In the event of specific legal or policy changes relating to gender considerations, special institutions such as the Law Reform Commission, effect recommendations from the Government on key gender issues such as lack of political representation, participation in customary land management, GBV, polygamy, sorcery accusations, succession and inheritance, and marriage and divorce. Many laws have been amended or passed to accommodate these priority gender issues in PNG; however, more legal reform is required to bring about greater impacts for women.

The justice and law enforcement systems are also insufficient to cater to the demand. Police and legal prosecution authorities continue to struggle to apply and enforce the law governing gender discrimination or GBV. Village courts also use customary principles to govern matters at the district and local level which also further exacerbate gender discrimination against women.

## 4. GENDER ASPECTS OF FORESTS IN PNG AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN REDD+ ACTIONS

### Forests and gender in PNG

The forests of PNG cover approximately 77.8 percent of its total land area (which is about 35,893,241 hectares of land)<sup>71</sup>. Both women and men in forested areas of Papua New Guinea rely on forest resources for their livelihoods, though their usage patterns differ significantly. Women primarily depend on forests for collecting firewood, food, medicinal plants, and materials for crafts, while men focus on activities like hunting and harvesting timber for construction. Despite this mutual reliance, there are significant gender inequalities in access to rights, roles, and responsibilities related to forest resources. Deforestation and forest degradation disproportionately impact poor women, who have fewer income opportunities and rely heavily on forests as a source of fuel, a role often shouldered by women and children, especially girls.

Women and youth play an important role in management and production in forest lands, although they are not landholders. While they have use rights, women rarely have ownership rights over productive resources. When customary land rights are negotiated, women tend not to have the right to claim a direct share of leases, royalties or compensation payments<sup>72</sup>. The primary objectives of women's access to forests are to meet household needs for fuel, fodder, medicinal needs; however, once these needs are met, they become important vehicles through which income-generating opportunities and enterprises can be developed<sup>73</sup>.

The timber industry in PNG contributes approximately (USD) \$558 million per annum according to 2017/18 Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) figures<sup>74</sup> which accounts for approximately 6.3% in total exports of (USD) 8.9 billion making it one of the key sectors for revenue generation in PNG. Currently about 50% of the country is covered with production forests,<sup>75</sup> so there is a huge emphasis on the need for labour; however, the forestry industry marginalizes women and provides them with little to no opportunities to participate in the industry, despite, a small percentage of women graduating with relevant qualifications in forestry.

The forestry sector operates predominantly in remote areas, with households earning income through royalties, lease payments, and wages, primarily directed to men employed in logging operations. However, women often participate in reforestation activities, such as propagating plants and maintaining nurseries<sup>76</sup>. Women typically lack control over valuable forest resources like timber, which are often managed by men, and they frequently lose assets, such as trees, during tribal conflicts.

In some regions, sago palms serve as a staple food resource and involve cooperative efforts between men and women. Sago palms found in swampland forests in riverine areas provide the staple food resource which is often also sold in markets for daily sustenance. The role of cutting down, splitting the palms and constructing makeshift sluices is given to the men. The women

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<sup>71</sup> [https://redd.unfccc.int/files/png\\_frl\\_submission-15.01.2017.pdf](https://redd.unfccc.int/files/png_frl_submission-15.01.2017.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Papua New Guinea Country Gender Assessment. (2012)

<sup>73</sup> Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Papua New Guinea. (2019)

<sup>74</sup> <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/png/>

<sup>75</sup> Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study II Working Paper Series - Working Paper No. APFOSII/WP/2009/19 Papua New Guinea Forestry Outlook Study. PNGFA. FAO. 2009.

extract, wash, store and cook the sago starch<sup>77</sup>. Mangrove forests also play a very crucial cultural and ecological role in the lives of coastal people, who depend heavily on them for food, firewood, shelter and safety. Women rely on them for the harvest of various mollusc and crustacean species which they are able to sell at markets. Mangroves are also crucial breeding grounds for fish.<sup>78</sup>

- The NDC of Papua New Guinea (PNG) recommends that, given the importance of sustainable development of forest landscapes, it is crucial to work with local communities, youth, and women to implement sustainable agricultural and agroforestry practices. Promoting socially inclusive climate-smart agriculture.
- Enhancing women's access to resources, information, and climate-smart technologies.
- Strengthening the role of women and youth in agricultural value chains.
- Promoting inclusive forest rehabilitation and sustainable timber management.

These actions aim to ensure an integrated and equitable approach to achieving sustainable development goals in the agricultural and forestry sectors.

PNG signed the Forest and land Use declaration in 2021, committing to "halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation".

## **4.1 Efforts to mainstream gender in REDD+**

### **4.1.1 Gender in the National REDD+ Strategy**

In 2017 PNG's National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) was approved by the Government<sup>79</sup> following an 18-month development process which also took place in conjunction with the development and submission of its forest reference level (FRL) the same year<sup>80</sup>. These efforts resulted in the notable progress towards PNG's early REDD+ implementation and the scaling up of actions to reduce emissions as per the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ and more recently, the Paris Agreement of 2015.

The NRS is the guiding document for REDD+ in PNG and it is structured in two key components which are further developed into five (5) policy and action areas. Through these, the NRS promotes low emission development activities providing long term sustainable livelihoods for communities, as well as establishment of the coordination, monitoring, reporting and management systems required to ensure transparency of results in ERs delivered and the effective management of funding received.

The NRS is aligned with relevant PLRs such as the National Constitution which recognizes the right of women to participate in economic activities and national development plans and policies that promote and protect gender equality and the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). Given this harmonization with PLRs, gender equality is addressed and promoted by the NRS's implementation. Furthermore, the NRS within each of its action areas, establishes the need to

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<sup>79</sup> NEC Decision (Decision 126/2017).

<sup>80</sup> The FRL report submitted in 2017 and published by the UNFCCC in 2018 is available at the following link - <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/tar/png.pdf>

ensure the effective participation of relevant stakeholders with consideration to vulnerable groups (including women) in REDD+ implementation.

Conceived under the umbrella of PNG's National REDD+ Strategy, the proposed RBP project integrates a gender-responsive approach to foster the inclusion of women in key aspects of implementation such as capacity building, and data collection and sharing, as well as effective participation in decision-making and planning. Strengthened capacity and effective inclusion, will empower women with the knowledge and skills needed to actively contribute to and benefit from REDD+ activities. Moreover, a strict zero tolerance policy towards SEAH and GBV consistent with the GCF's Gender Policy and FAO's dedicated Environmental and Social Standard 6 on Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence will be followed, as established in the ESMF underpinning this GAAP. Measures proposed are further detailed in the Gender Action Plan annexed to this Gender Assessment.

### **Transparency International PNG REDD+ Risk Assessment (2014)**

Between 2012 and 2013, Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) conducted initial research into the potential risks associated with REDD+ projects, particularly regarding the potential risks posed by REDD+ funding and finance. This was especially relevant given the challenges related to weak governance systems and mechanisms, and corruption issues within the country.

As part of its main findings, it identified key weaknesses in policy and practice and highlighted priority areas for reform. Among the critical risks noted in the report were concerns related to the design and implementation of environmental and social safeguards, as well as the failure of the existing REDD+ framework to ensure adequate levels of transparency and consultation, including the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes at the local community level.

The assessment strongly emphasized that neglecting appropriate FPIC processes could have serious negative impacts on vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, who are most at risk in such contexts. These gender-specific concerns were further underscored in subsequent public consultations, which helped initiate discussions on the need for REDD+-specific safeguards and mechanisms to protect the interests of these vulnerable groups, with particular attention to women and children in forest-dependent communities.

### **Situational Analysis on Gender in PNG (2016-2017)**

Between 2016 and 2017 an extensive study was carried out on gender and REDD+ entitled the '*Situation Analysis and Recommendations for Improving Gender Inclusiveness and Participation in Papua New Guinea's National REDD+ Strategy and Policies*'. This was conducted by UNDP with the support and endorsement of the CCDA and sought to conduct an in-depth review of the current status of gender and stakeholder dynamics within the country, including within both informal and formal spheres (e.g. policies, institutions, etc.) changes in resource management policies. Due to the low ranking of women in almost all measures of health, education, employment, access to economic resources, political voice and decision-making, it is vital that women are specifically included in all priority social, economic and political policies and actions, especially within the natural resource sector. REDD+ directly links to forest use and local food production in PNG so it's imperative that the roles of women in REDD+ must be emphasized. Success of REDD+ in PNG depends upon greater inclusion of women, as well as men and youth, from planning through implementation.

This REDD+ Gender Assessment aimed to evaluate the status of gender indicators in PNG as they relate to REDD+ programs, actions, and activities. The assessment looked at the Government's capacity to ensure gender equality and inclusion in REDD+ activities while identifying opportunities to promote gender empowerment and mainstreaming across related programs. As a result of the assessment, specific gender recommendations were incorporated into the REDD+ Finance and Investment Plan (RFIP) developed under the FCPF's REDD+ Readiness Program as well as the final National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) and proposed activities. Key gender considerations were integrated into both the planning and implementation processes. Some of the most pertinent issues highlighted from this assessment were as follows:

- **Male-Dominated Decision-Making Structures:** Traditional societal norms often prioritize male decision-makers, marginalizing women's voices in key discussions and negotiations related to REDD+ policies. This gender imbalance results in women being underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making bodies.
- **Cultural Gender Roles:** Cultural perceptions of gender roles in PNG often restrict women's participation. These norms dictate that women's responsibilities primarily revolve around domestic duties, which can lead to the exclusion of their unique insights and contributions to resource management and environmental policies.
- **Lack of Access to Education and Information:** Barriers to education, especially in rural areas, impede women's ability to participate effectively in REDD+ activities. Limited access to relevant information further exacerbates this issue, as many women are not aware of their rights or the mechanisms through which they can engage in policy discussions.
- **Insufficient Support Systems:** Existing institutional frameworks often lack the necessary support mechanisms for facilitating women's participation. This includes inadequate training, resources, and funding for initiatives that promote gender inclusivity within REDD+ processes.
- **Gender-Sensitive Policies:** The absence of comprehensive gender-sensitive policies within various sectors reduces the effectiveness of engagement strategies. While some organizations may acknowledge gender disparities, without formal guidelines, practices remain inconsistent and poorly implemented.
- **Cultural Resistance to Change:** Deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices can resist shifts toward gender equality. Efforts to engage women in REDD+ initiatives must navigate these cultural barriers, often requiring tailored approaches that respect local traditions while promoting inclusive practices.

Although PNG's National REDD+ strategy had not been implemented at this time and the definition of the benefit sharing plan was still in an early-stage, some key points regarding how gender should be considered in benefit sharing design processes were also identified. They include:

- **Recognition of Women's Roles:** The design of benefit-sharing mechanisms acknowledged that women play crucial roles in resource management, yet their contributions and needs had not been fully reflected in policy frameworks. This oversight could undermine the effectiveness of benefit-sharing strategies.
- **Gender Disaggregation of Data:** Proper incorporation of gender into benefit-sharing processes requires the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data related to forestry employment, rights, and resources. However, there was often a lack of available data, which hampers the ability to understand and address gender dynamics.
- **Culturally-Sensitive Approaches:** Effective benefit-sharing designs must consider local cultural contexts and gender norms to tailor strategies that motivate women's

participation. Strategies had been suggested to align community project goals with specific gender roles, ensuring that women are engaged based on their roles and responsibilities within the community.

- Policy Frameworks and Guidelines: While some policy frameworks had started incorporating gender principles, many existing laws and guidelines lacked explicit provisions for gender inclusivity in benefit-sharing arrangements. This gap could lead to unequal distribution of benefits, reinforcing existing gender inequalities.

Apart from REDD+ specific gender-related assessments, copious reports have also been produced by international donors to assess broader impacts on women, both in terms of their roles in forestry and natural resource management and implementation, as well as in changes to their well-being in the course of its implementation.<sup>81</sup> The results of these studies helped shed light on existing gender considerations in the forestry and natural resource sector and potential gaps to consider in REDD+ implementation and also to inform PNG's efforts in how to integrate gender perspectives in its REDD+ efforts moving forward.

#### **4.1.2 Gender inclusion in the REDD+ stakeholder engagement process**

The REDD+ Readiness process in PNG took place between 2011-2017, resulting in the design of the National REDD+ Strategy and other key elements to enable its effective implementation through the establishment of institutional arrangements, the development of the National MRV system and the Forest Reference Level, among others. This process was mainly supported by the UNREDD+ Programme, the FCPF's Readiness Fund and other key development programs.

One of the major benefits of these programs was the funding and coordination of important stakeholder engagement and consultations as well as capacity of multiple stakeholders' in REDD+ and climate change. At the centre of these stakeholder consultations was the inclusion of women's participation as seen in the number of women who were targeted to attend these meetings.

During the readiness phase, some of the vital efforts focused on awareness raising on gender and related activities, which contributed towards informing stakeholders and institutions of gender-related issues within the course of the activities developed. Moreover, capacity-building initiatives under the national REDD+ Readiness phase also helped to enable the government agencies and other key actors at the subnational level to collect, interpret and analyse data in a way that identified and helped to build appropriate responses to gender issues as REDD+ progresses into implementation.

Multi-stakeholder engagement around REDD+ extended beyond the definition of the NRS and the specific GCF RBP project activities to be implemented and helped generate broader knowledge and capacity on the understanding of REDD+ implementation and associated results. The REDD+ participatory process included a series of expert trainings, meetings and consultations held mainly by the CCDA and UNDP as delivery partners under the FCPF program in collaboration with key sectoral agencies such as the PNGFA, DAL, DLPP and CEPA. Table 2 below provides an overview of participatory events, including the number of women that participated.

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<sup>81</sup> FAO. 2019. Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby; ADB. 2012. Papua New Guinea: 2011-2012 Country Gender Assessment; JICA. 2010. Country Gender Profile. Port Moresby; Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). 2012. Stocktake of the gender mainstreaming capacity of Pacific island governments: Papua New Guinea.

Table 2. REDD participatory events between 2015-2019 and participation by gender<sup>82</sup>

Year	Number and type of REDD+ participatory events	# total participants	# Men	# Women	Women's representation
2015	1 Inception Workshop 2 Training sessions 1 REDD+ TWG meeting	55	35	20	36%
2016	22 National Consultation Workshops 2 REDD+ Experts Training 10 Issues and Options Consultation Workshops 2 Palm Oil Consultation Workshops 4 Safeguards / SIS Consultation Workshops 2 Gender Consultation Workshops 2 TWG meetings	120	80	40	33%
2017	2 REDD+ Expert trainings in 2017 Sector planning retreat PreCOP23 Workshop with Private sector Lands Retreat Forestry Retreat CEPA Retreat GRM consultations RFIP/GCF Consultation workshop Provincial consultations in ENB, Madang and WNB	600	318	282	47%
2018	1 REDD+ Expert Training 3 RFIP Consultations 6 Provincial Capacity building trainings 15 stakeholder consultations on different elements of NRS 1 Communications and Knowledge Management workshop 3 TWC meetings	1,420	806	614	43%
2019	10 Stakeholders Consultations Workshops 3 TWC Meetings 2 Communications Capacity Building Trainings 4 Provincial Stakeholder Consultations Capacity Building trainings in target provinces.	1,300	780	520	40%

As indicated above, women have been involved in the REDD+ stakeholder process since its inception, having taken part in the discussions and activities surrounding the benefits from capacity-building processes. Other participatory activities, expert trainings, and forums also

<sup>82</sup> Self-elaboration based on Annex 1 of PNG's SIS Framework endorsed by the REDD+ SES TWC on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

involved women's participation and some of these workshops also focused on identifying women's needs and the opportunities to encourage their participation in REDD+.

### Other Key stakeholder consultations

The USAID-funded *Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF)* program was also instrumental in assisting with REDD+ readiness actions between 2011 to 2016. Key partnerships were established with national NGOs such as the Nature Conservancy (TNC), AusAID (DFAT), local CSO's and local and customary communities in the Adelberts Ranges of Madang Province. Part of these actions included low emission land use planning into existing ward and district land use plans and assisted in influencing national/sub-national level policy support around REDD+ development. Part of the core program activities also involved knowledge sharing and capacity building across the various regions, especially in relation to education on gender equality and gender empowerment.

Most of the gender awareness, knowledge sharing and capacity building was conducted through a series of gender trainings carried out in 2014 and 2015, targeting leading female staff from the CCDA REDD+ division and various 'gender champions' from other core sectors such as PNGFA, Department of Community Development, University of PNG and other local community champions. Participants contributed to the dialogue on gender and women's empowerment issues in REDD+ work and the broader NRM issues in the region. Some of the important outcomes from this work were: 1) internal gender trainings carried out by the trainees within their own agencies/departments/communities; and 2) initial development of a Draft Gender Guideline for CCDA.

The project also looked into REDD+ policy and legislation in PNG and the implications of REDD+ on gender. It sought to highlight the importance of further assessing the level of engagement of women in forestry and natural resources and developing actions to help close the gender gap through gender balanced decision-making across the other sectors.

#### **Capacity building for REDD+ planning and policy in the Madang Province**

The USAID-funded program, Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF) was a regional program for the Asia-Pacific implemented from 2011 to 2016. Its overall objective was to strengthen the capacity of target countries to achieve meaningful and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the forestry-land use sector. In PNG, through key partnerships with the Nature Conservancy (TNC), AusAID (DFAT), local CSO's and local communities in Adelberts Ranges, Madang Province, the program was able to effectively incorporate initial REDD+ readiness actions such as low emission land use planning into existing community land use planning efforts in Madang Province. It was also pivotal in influencing national/sub-national level policy support around REDD+ development as requested by government agencies such as the OCCD, PNGFA and the Madang Provincial Government. As part of the core program activities which involved knowledge sharing and capacity building across the various regions, gender was a pivotal component of this work.

Most of the gender awareness, knowledge sharing and capacity building was conducted through a series of gender trainings carried out in 2014 and 2015, targeting leading female staff from CCDA REDD+ division and 'gender champions' from other core sectors in the country. This included Forestry, the Department of Community Development, University of PNG and local

community champions<sup>83</sup>. Participants contributed to the dialogue on gender and women's empowerment issues in REDD+ work and the broader NRM issues in the region.

Some of the more notable outcomes from this work were 1) internal gender trainings carried out by the trainees within their own agencies/departments/communities and 2) the initial development of a Draft Gender Guideline for CCDA.

The project also looked into REDD+ policy and legislation in PNG and the implications of REDD+ on gender. This worked highlighted the importance of further assessing the level of engagement of women in forestry and natural resources and acting in closing the gender gap by promoting gender balanced decision-making and applying lessons from other sectors.

#### **4.1.3 Gender and free, prior and informed consent support from the UN-REDD Programme**

PNG developed a National Guidelines on FPIC after three and a half years of work, including over thirteen consultations and three full revisions. Released for public comment and expert review from April to June 2014, the guidelines promoted a gender-responsive approach by integrating gender considerations into their operational framework at national, provincial, district, and project levels. They recognize both women and men as customary landowners and primary users of land and resources. The guidelines aim to expand women's roles as primary forest users and ensure their needs, rights, and interests are equitably addressed in REDD+ design and implementation.

#### **4.1.4 Gender in Customary Land Tenure and customary landownership**

of PNG as well as respective land and forestry legislation guarantee clear land tenure rights to customary landowners and recognizes the extent of these rights in relation to forest resources. They also provide the basis for just compensation to be awarded in the event of development and acquisition of land/ resources from customary landowners<sup>84</sup>, which is applicable to both statutory and customary ownership and use rights. Gender equality is recognized as part of these landowning groups and relates to decision making processes over forest/land tenure arrangements and benefits.

Despite the positive inroads being made within government to address gender inequality and discrimination issues, various factors also work to undermine this progress as well. The biggest factor is customary law, its practices and beliefs in PNG which are recognized under the Constitution. These laws hold the power of enforcement within Village Courts, and many are drawn from traditional cultural practices that tend to discriminate against women in relation to social rights and property. Studies of GBV indicate that such violence appears to be widely accepted and "culturally condoned."

Women and youth also play an important role in management and production in forest lands, although in many cases they are not landholders. While they have user rights, women rarely have ownership rights over productive resources. When customary land rights are negotiated, women tend not to have the right to claim a direct share of leases, royalties or compensation payments.

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<sup>84</sup> Section 53 of the Constitution.

#### **4.1.5 Gender in grievance redress and conflict resolution**

Customary land development is also a major priority area for the GoPNG with a legal system in place that extends to all tiers of government and provides avenues for both formal and informal means of redress in PNG as part of the inherent right of access to justice established within the Constitution of PNG.<sup>85</sup>

Women's access and use of these mechanisms is a right that is provided by law and extends down to the grassroots level through entities such as the Village Courts which are set up for this purpose and developed to integrate both customary, mediatory and quasi-judicial forms of redress. Although made accessible by women, many of the customs incorporated into the forms of redress provided tend to discriminate against or disadvantage women because of the strong customary and traditional influence.

#### **2017 REDD+ Gender Assessment**

The most extensive study carried out on gender and REDD+ is entitled the 'Situation Analysis and Recommendations for Improving Gender Inclusiveness and Participation in Papua New Guinea's National REDD+ Strategy and Policies'. This was conducted in 2017 by UNDP with the support and endorsement of the CCDA. This analysis involved taking stock and reviewing the current status of gender and stakeholder dynamics within the country, including within both informal and formal (e.g. policies, institutions, etc.) spheres as well as formulating a set of recommendations to help address the identified gaps and needs for promoting fair, effective and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement in the REDD+ process. It also aimed to assess corresponding implications for REDD+ implementation and future outcomes.

The Gender Assessment highlighted that the empowerment of women and gender equality are core issues for PNG's development. As showed in previous sections, women in PNG are generally underrepresented as decision makers and in positions of power but they play key roles in the economy and resource management and are often significantly impacted by As a result of the 2017 Gender Assessment, the REDD+ Finance and Investment Plan (RFIP), developed under the FCPF's REDD+ Readiness Program, incorporated the economic viability of the National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) and its proposed activities, with key gender considerations integrated into both the planning and implementation processes.

Apart from REDD+ specific gender-related assessments, copious reports have also been produced by the international community and locally to assess broader impacts on women, both in terms of their roles in natural resource management and implementation, as well as in changes to their well-being in the course of its implementation.<sup>86</sup> The results of these studies helped shed light on existing gender considerations in the natural resource sector and potential gaps to consider in REDD+ implementation and also to inform PNG's efforts in how to integrate gender perspectives in its REDD+ efforts moving forward.

#### **4.1.6 Other relevant efforts to mainstream gender in REDD+**

##### **Capacity Building and gender specific data collection**

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<sup>85</sup> Section 37 of the Constitution.

Another key measure for promoting gender equality was through training CCDA/REDD+ staff in the collection and management of sex-disaggregated data and looking for opportunities to allocate these trained personnel in the pilot projects. This was done to ensure that appropriate information/data was collected for monitoring and evaluation. The inclusion of sex-disaggregated data in information management systems e.g., spatial planning data systems, Forest Information Systems (FIS) and Environmental Management Information Systems (EMIS) also helped better identify, monitor and track gender interventions within specific activities during implementation and to improve these measures across core sectors as part of national gender priorities including the REDD+RBP proposal development. Collecting sex disaggregated data also helped and continues to help sectors to integrate gender intervention measures in future policy and planning by the CCDA in specific regions/provinces<sup>87</sup> of PNG as part of the process of field testing this important tool and its application within the rural or traditional setting where most REDD+ actions and activities were anticipated to occur. As part of this process, the CCDA officers involved took particular care in applying gender sensitive approaches in the context of their awareness raising and capacity building activities.

In each awareness raising activity that was conducted, women were often separated from the main assembly and divided into their own groups where female staff from the CCDA would then take them through the brief process of FPIC, its rationale, the laws relating to this and the reasons for its necessity as part of the proposed REDD+ projects being developed. The reason for the division between the male and female participants was to ensure that women were given an opportunity to not only engage in the dialogue but more importantly, to provide crucial feedback from the women's and children's perspective. Women were commonly being overlooked in the core meetings and many times women were either ignored or prohibited from speaking during the meetings due to cultural or customary protocols, particularly within a region of the country where male dominance is prevalent and often enforced.

### **Strengthening women's representation in REDD+ governance**

There are still many gender gaps in REDD+ design efforts to date, but PNG has taken steps as part of its REDD+ implementation to ensure equitable representation of women, including within its governance structure for REDD+. The majority of the CCDA staff within its REDD+ and Mitigation division are female with its head of division, also a woman, and a key renowned supporter and advocate of REDD+ in PNG since its inception. Many representatives from the different government sector agencies, private sector and civil society who are present on the various REDD+ Technical Working Committees (TWCs) are also women and in at least one of the Technical Working Committees focusing on the Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES TWC), 50% are female representatives.

REDD+ SES TWC was established in 2014 and acted as an advisory committee to help oversee the process of ensuring the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards were adapted to the PNG context and effectively implemented within all REDD+ policies and measures in the country.

Despite this level of representation, however, there is still a need for specific gender experts to assist with the development of these REDD+ Policies and measures within both the CCDA and as part of the development and implementation of the REDD+ RBP program, especially as it relates to gender specific interventions. The roles and responsibilities of the expert are detailed in the

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<sup>87</sup> Tarvolo District, East New Britain, Tulu District/Village in Manus Province and Namta District/Village in Eastern Highlands Province.

Gender Action Plan accompanying this proposal, which also includes a specific budget for these key technical personnel..

## **4.2 Gender Considerations in National REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards**

The application of the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards requires adapting them to the reality of each country, taking into account national and regional context, and aligning them with existing policies and national REDD+ actions. Given this, the CCDA created a REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards Technical Working Committee (SES TWC) that acted as an advisory committee to help oversee the process of ensuring the seven (7) UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards are adapted to the PNG context and can be effectively implemented within all REDD + actions in the country. As a result, PNG has adopted a description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances by identifying the various rights and obligations that are embodied in the Cancun safeguards, and examining how these are reflected in the specific country context in the country's legal framework.

Within this national interpretation of the REDD+ safeguards, the following gender consideration was incorporated:

- Safeguard (d) - The right to participate, in particular for customary landowners, local communities and vulnerable groups, is recognized and promoted under the National REDD+ Strategy through the relevant PLRs of the country, which include the promotion of gender equality and the right to free, prior and informed consent.

In addition, PNG's first SOI presents indicators on how safeguards have been addressed that incorporates gender considerations:

### **Cancun Safeguard B**

The Constitution and land and forestry legislation guarantee clear land tenure rights to customary landowners and recognizes the extent of these rights in relation to forest resources<sup>88,53</sup> They also provide the basis for just compensation to be awarded in the event of development and acquisition of land/ resources from customary landowners<sup>89,54</sup>, which is applicable to both statutory and customary ownership and use rights. Land titling procedures are also established via respective legislation and involve the formation of land holding groups to govern them. Gender equality is recognized and guaranteed as part of these groups and relates to decision making processes over forest/land tenure arrangements and benefits.

### **Cancun Safeguard D**

The Constitution recognizes Gender Equality<sup>90</sup> and the Right of women citizens to participate in all economic activities<sup>91</sup>. This is further recognized and encouraged in specific PLRs at the national level<sup>92</sup>. Gender discrimination issues are addressed within specific policies of the public service<sup>93</sup> and applicable within all sectors. There are also dedicated public and private agencies established

to implement this right and to raise awareness and implement policies on gender equality and discrimination in PNG.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Papua New Guinea has a national and international legal framework on gender and human rights that provides guidelines for protecting the rights of women and communities. However, despite this regulatory framework, significant gaps remain in its practical implementation, requiring substantial efforts to bridge the divide between policy and practice. Therefore, the guiding principles for implementing this proposal include compliance with national and international legislation on gender-related matters, as well as strengthening gender considerations to ensure gender equality, the protection of rights, and the full participation of women.

This Gender Assessment provided comprehensive background information to inform gender mainstreaming throughout the design and implementation of the REDD+ RBP Project. As identified, despite the recognition of a diversity of rights for women and gender equality anchored in PNG's legal and regulatory framework, gender inequalities, particularly in land rights, and decision-making. Specifically, this GA achieves the following results:

- Identification of gender gaps and inequalities within PNG's land tenure system;
- Identification of gender inequalities and challenges and risks faced by women and other marginalized groups in PNG around thematic areas of relevance to REDD+ action, such decision-making processes, persists in the forestry and natural resource sectors, labor force participation, forest use, land tenure, safeguards, etc.

Women's participation has been guaranteed throughout the stakeholder consultations; however this is still lacking when it comes to decision-making, particularly at the local or community level. As a result of cultural barriers including male-dominated governance structures, restrictive gender norms, limited access to education, weak institutional support and insufficient gender-sensitive policies, gaps still remain within the benefit-sharing mechanisms, policy frameworks, and engagement strategies.

Moreover, given the high-level nature of PNG's REDD+ strategy at the time when the results were achieved, no specific SEAH/GBV risks were considered [nor triggered] throughout PNG's REDD+ readiness efforts. Accordingly, this is an area to be further examined during project inception, including considering the results of stakeholders' consultations undertaken in preparation of this RBP, consistent with all applicable safeguards.

As underscored in the RBP funding proposal and its accompanying ESMF which underpins this GAAP, the Project is committed to designing and implementing on-the-ground activities to be financed with GCF proceeds in a way that does not create or exacerbate existing gender inequalities, discrimination and GBV, in alignment with international frameworks on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH). The Project has adopted a strict zero tolerance policy towards SEAH and GBV as clearly stated in the ESMF annexed to the funding proposal, ensuring compliance with both the GCF's Gender Policy and FAO's dedicated Environmental and Social Standard 6 on Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence. Accordingly, over the inception phase, the Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan will be updated as part of the comprehensive Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be developed for the project, when further establishing the benefit

sharing plan (Component 1) and refining activities to be implemented on-the-ground (component 2). Some areas of particular attention include:

- Identification of sectors and thematic areas of particular relevance in REDD+ in which gender-responsive actions can catalyse transformational positive change for marginalized groups, such as women and youth;
- Identification of gaps, entry points, and opportunities for mainstreaming gender in the proposed project and broader implementation of REDD+ actions and safeguards, while developing a gender approach that effectively integrates considerations of gender, women's empowerment, and youth empowerment within the country's social, economic, political, and local context.
- Identification of preliminary ideas of activities to incorporate into the Gender Action Plan.

Moreover, as key insights from the GA, a series of recommendations for gender actions to be integrated within the proposed RBP project, particularly relevant for its implementation, were identified and are listed below. These recommendations are in line with PNG's overarching regulatory framework and the NRS and seek to address potential inequalities and discrimination that may emerge as part of the Project's execution. The recommendations are organized by theme as follows:

### **Policy**

- Integrate gender considerations across existing laws, policies and guidelines of key REDD+ sector agencies as part of regulatory processes, e.g., guidelines for approval of FMA's in forestry, guidelines for agricultural project approvals, PA approval processes or as part of ILG approval processes.

### **Project Implementation**

- Ensure there is consistency on gender responsiveness (via key focal points) across the key government sectors/agencies and within the communities involved in the implementation of the project activities, especially at the subnational level.
- Where organizations (e.g., CCDA, etc.) oversee projects or supply funding for REDD+ activities, it could be beneficial to use that position to leverage on contracted parties to require that there be inclusion of women in activities carried out and compliance with REDD+ gender policies.
- Undertake measures within the work on REDD+ Pilot projects (e.g. establishment of quotas, capacity building, etc.) to address identified gender gaps and inequalities within PNG's land tenure system and incentives for environmental services.
- Take affirmative measures to solicit and incorporate the perspectives of women in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the proposed outputs of this proposed project.
- Hire a gender specialist within the project to support the mainstreaming of gender throughout the design and implementation of the outputs of the project, as well as any associated gender action plans and mitigation measures that are developed during the safeguards work and social and environmental assessments, etc.
- Devote and allocate adequate funds, resources and expertise for implementing gender-related strategies, monitoring the results of implementation, and holding individuals and institutions accountable for outcomes that promote gender equality.

- During project implementation conduct qualitative assessments on the gender-specific benefits that can be directly associated to the project.

### **Capacity building**

- Ensure there is gender specific training carried out within CCDA and integrated into REDD+ training programs within relevant sectors, e.g., training for enhanced forest management, sustainable land use, environmental management within protected area committees, etc.
- In stakeholder engagement activities, ensure a gender approach is fully integrated into their design and implementation so that women and men across different stakeholder groups can actively and equitably participate and that their interests, concerns and perspectives are taken into account.
- Build capacity of women and youth from customary landowning groups and local communities on REDD+ and provide them with adequate resources (e.g. training, financing, etc.) to actively participate and benefit from the activities of the proposed project. Strengthening specific capacity needs would facilitate the empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups.

### **Governance**

- The CCDA should encourage strong representation by women on all REDD+ management and committees and ensure CC projects include activities that target women's direct involvement at the community level.
- Introduce measures to assess the extent of involvement or representation of women's interests and needs within ILG's and the decisions made by the ILG management committees.
- Ensure governance arrangements with REDD+ pilot projects (e.g. Program Management Unit) and Project Steering Committees (PSC) are gender equitable in their memberships. In cases where there are seats for civil society groups, ensure women and youth are represented.
- The establishment of women's forest networks or federations at the provincial level in PNG can greatly enhance policy advocacy, capacity building, and innovation. When well-organized and resourced, these networks can effectively promote women's interests, offering opportunities for skill development, awareness-raising, reduced transaction costs, market exploration, and connections to policy processes.

### **Data & Monitoring**

- Ensure that there is a core group within the CCDA and sub-groups within the sectors who are responsible for collecting sex-disaggregated data or gender specific data/information and for disseminating this data to respective sectors to feed into key information management systems, (spatial system, FIS, EMIS and other sources) which are used to design and develop REDD+ programs, policies and plans/activities.
- Strengthen the collection of additional baseline data on gender (e.g. on land tenure, women's involvement in decision-making at local/community levels, etc.).
- Actions should also consider the gender digital gap and differing access rates of youth and remote communities to information.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> GSMA, 2020 and Mehrabi et al, 2020

These recommendations, along with the findings contained in this Gender Assessment form the basis for the development of the Gender Action Plan for this RBP Project, which is presented in the Annex 1 of this document.