



# Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project



# Mainstreaming gender in the BOBLME Project

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# **Mainstreaming gender in the BOBLME Project**

Gender audit and recommended actions for mainstreaming a gender  
perspective in the BOBLME project  
and its Strategic Action Programme (SAP)

By Cecile Brugere

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper was prepared to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the BOBLME Project and SAP. The gender audit of international and regional instruments the eight BOBLME partner countries are signatories, as well as national development and fisheries policies highlighted uneven progress in tackling gender inequalities and accounting of gender issues, overall denoting a cultural and institutional environment that may not be at all times conducive of gender mainstreaming initiatives. While the majority of the BOBLME Project documents audited were found to be gender-blind based on their sole contents, this was attributed to a lack of awareness rather than an intended oversight. Despite the relative advancement of the project, entry points to mainstream gender in the SAP were identified through:

- The addition of a statement of political will or commitment to gender,
- The consideration of gender-sensitive actions,
- The addition of a section on cross-cutting issues covering gender training, communication, legislation, capacity building at field level, gender-disaggregated data collection and research on gender issues,
- The consideration of incentives and accounting mechanisms,
- The earmarking of a specific budget for gender-related activities at project level and strategic actions.
- The addition of a pathway to impact.
- The use of outcome mapping as a form of monitoring and evaluation.

The last two are seen as pivotal in capturing the changes that are expected as result of both mainstreaming gender in the project, and the project's own influence in progressing towards gender equality.

In addition to these, key recommendations for future action by the BOBLME partner countries include:

- Commissioning of a gender-sensitive review of legislation and regulatory frameworks in the BOBLME partner countries,
- Following through the mainstreaming of gender in the NAPs, mirroring what has been proposed to mainstream gender in the SAP,
- Tackling gender-disaggregated data collection as soon as possible,
- Ensuring the continuous provision of gender inputs throughout the project duration,
- Strengthening the participatory processes undertaken so far by the project,
- Avoiding falling in the Women in Development/efficiency rhetoric and maintaining a focus on the addressing of gender issues and inequality,
- Supporting gender training and capacity building at all levels, beyond the life of the project.

## ACRONYMS USED

ASEAN	Association of SouthEast Asian Nations
BOBLME	Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem
BPFA	Beijing Platform For Action
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAD	Gender And Development
GAP	Gender Action Plan
ILO	International Labour Organization of the United Nations
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAP	National Action Plan
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RFLP	Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme
RPJMN	National Medium Term Development Plan (Indonesia)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SFLP	Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme
SPA	Strategic Priority Areas
SRG	Self-Reliance Groups
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Assessment
WID	Women In Development

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Objectives and structure of the paper

This paper has been prepared by Dr Cecile Brugere, socio-economist and gender expert in fisheries and aquaculture, on behalf of the FAO Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) project. The paper forms an output under sub-component 1.4 of the BOBLME Project, which is part of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) elaboration process. The main objective of this paper is to provide an analysis of the attention given to gender issues as reflected in the BOBLME Project Document and Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), and which will need to be taken into consideration for, and included in, the BOBLME SAP document under elaboration. In doing so, the following questions will be answered:

- (i) To what extent have gender equality objectives been anticipated in the project document?
- (ii) To what extent does the TDA poses gender issues?
- (iii) Are prospective, planned or implemented activities contributing to, or challenging existing gender inequalities?
- (iv) Are there any gender issues that have not been addressed but need to be addressed by inclusion in the BOBLME SAP?
- (v) Which entry points for actions that will be needed in order to meet gender equality objectives can be identified?

This assignment covers the following countries: Maldives, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia (see **Appendix I** for full Terms of Reference). It was completed as a desk-study, making extensive use of published and grey literature, project documents and national governments documentation, accessed from libraries, the worldwide web or personal sources. A full list of the documents consulted for the assignment as well as references cited in this paper is provided in **Appendix II**.

This document is targeted at BOBLME Project management and implementation partners, and at fisheries and environment officials and government staff concerned with social development and resource management. The mid-term evaluation of the project highlighted that gender issues had not been adequately covered in the BOBLME Project. This report aims in part to redress this oversight, and to show that, despite the advancement of the project activities, entry points for mainstreaming gender in the project and progressing towards gender equality can still be found. The paper identifies those entry points and describes the facilitation actions that mainstreaming will involve in the forthcoming stages of the project. However, gender mainstreaming will only go as far as the commitment of those in charge of, and involved in, the project at all levels of its implementation. As such the commissioning of the present study does not constitute gender mainstreaming as such, but only a step towards it.

The rest of this introductory section clarifies key gender concepts and notions that will be used throughout the paper. A special mention is made to the attention that gender has received in the context of fisheries and aquaculture, and more broadly agricultural development and environmental management. Part 2 outlines the methodology adopted to conduct the assignment. After a review of key international and regional instruments for gender equality, progress towards it is assessed at national levels through an analysis of national policies and development initiatives (Part 3). In Part 4, the conceptual framework developed in Part 2 is then used to carry out a “gender audit” of key documents of the BOBLME Project, results of which are presented following a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) format. Lessons from this exercise, as well as a review of other experiences and complementary literature on gender mainstreaming, are then used



in Part 5 to propose ways forward to mainstreaming gender in the BOBLME SAP under elaboration. When relevant, additional recommendations for mainstreaming gender in the NAPs are included (Part 5). Part 6 summarizes key points and concludes.

## 1.2. Key gender concepts and frameworks

### 1.2.1. Gender concepts

**Gender** is the socially and culturally constructed identities of men and women. Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, access and opportunities of men and women, boys and girls, in a society. Therefore, it is not relegated to a sole focus on women's issues. Instead, it is an examination of issues of equality/inequality and differences based on sex: men and women's roles and responsibilities vary based on the particular social environment and are rooted in the power dynamics that prevail in a society.

There is sometimes a confusion between the terms "equity" and "equality" in their application to gender. **Gender equity** refers to the *process* of fair and just treatment of women and men (i.e. the set of actions, attitudes, and assumptions that provide opportunities and create expectations about individuals) to reach gender equality. **Gender equality** is therefore *when men and women are being treated equally and have equal opportunities and responsibilities*. Gender equality, however, does not necessarily mean equal numbers of men and women or boys and girls in all activities, nor does it necessarily mean treating men and women or boys and girls exactly the same. In the context of international development, it signifies an "aspiration to work towards a society in which neither women nor men suffer from poverty in its many forms" (World Bank, 2005), and in which women and men are able to live equally fulfilling lives. It implies enhancing the ability of women and men to enjoy the status and opportunities that enable them to realize their potential to contribute to social, economic and political development.

As will be detailed in Part 2, the inclusion of gender issues in development interventions evolved from a focus on women's roles, to one on gender relations and empowerment.

The handling of gender in policies and approaches has led these to be distinguished according to their sensitivity to gender and the extent to which they contribute to gender equality (after March et al., 1999):

**Gender-blind policies/approaches:** policies/approaches that make no distinction between men and women, which leads to a bias in favour of existing gender relations. The possibility of differential outcomes for men and women, or of outcomes that impact on relations between them, is either not acknowledged or considered to be incidental.

**Gender-aware policies/approaches:** policies/approaches that "recognize that women are development actors as well as men, that the nature of women's involvement is determined by gender relations which make their involvement different, and often unequal; and that consequently women have different needs, interests and priorities" (March et al., 1999).

These distinctions are used further in the paper.

The World Bank's latest World Development Report (2012) on gender equality and development places a particular emphasis on women's **agency**, both individual and collective, to challenge gender inequalities in the societies where they are encountered. Agency – which applies equally to both men and women, is understood here as "the process through which women and men use their endowments and take advantage of economic opportunities to achieve desired outcomes" (p. 150); "agents" being those who act and bring about change, and who have the "capability" to do so, as put forward by Sen (1999).

**Gender mainstreaming** is defined as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality” (ECOSOC, 1997).

Gender mainstreaming will therefore involve a process of change, a “transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women”. Thus, the International Labour Organization (ILO) goes a step further by saying that “Mainstreaming is not about adding a "woman's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda<sup>1</sup>”.

The practical implications of this is at a project management level are that “questions of gender must be taken seriously in central, mainstream, “normal” institutional activities, and not simply left in a marginalized, peripheral backwater of specialist women’s institutions” (Charlesworth, 2005).

**Mainstreaming a gender perspective** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a “strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated”<sup>2</sup>.

Mainstreaming gender in the BOBLME SAP and related documents will therefore mean that gender considerations will be included in the document, and that the actions that will result from the implementation of the SAP at national levels (described in the NAPs) will enable (i) equal benefits to be received by the men and women targeted by these actions, and (ii) the advancement and empowerment of women in places where gender gaps exist. Mainstreaming gender in the BOBLME SAP will also demonstrate to all project partners and evaluators that the project is “serious” about contributing to women’s empowerment and gender equality.

### 1.2.2. Gender frameworks

The progression in conceptual thinking about the role of women in development goals is reflected in the progressive move from “Women in Development” (WID) to “Gender and Development” (GAD) that took place over the last four decades. Whilst today the latter prevails in the development discourse, this slow evolution has left in its trail a number of approaches, methods and tools that, to various extents, can capture gender issues, but also lead to different outcomes in terms of empowerment and gender equality. WID-based approaches initially focused efforts at field and project levels to better involve and target women. GAD approaches went further by aiming to better address gender issues in development and progress towards gender equality.

As a consequence, frameworks have been elaborated for different purposes, although many have features in common. Some frameworks can be used at different stages of the project/programme cycle: conception/design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of impacts. Some can be used for analytical purposes and focus on specific target groups, while others focus on institutions. The latter are particularly relevant for gender mainstreaming purposes. Despite these variations, they can be broadly categorized in two groups: those focusing on *efficiency* (earlier frameworks encompassing WID approaches), and those focusing on *empowerment* (later frameworks, based on

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, third session, New York, 25-27 February 1998.

GAD concepts). At one end of the spectrum, the efficiency approach aims to create projects and programmes that allocate resources most efficiently, based on the realization that it is inefficient to ignore women in the distribution of resources. At the other end of the spectrum, and closer to where we want to be – the empowerment approach emphasizes the “transformation of gender relations, through women’s self-empowerment” (March et al., 1999: 25). March et al. (1999) provide an excellent and critical review of the frameworks that have been developed over the last five decades, specifying their purpose and providing examples of their application. It is important to bear in mind that the choice of the “right” framework – or mix of frameworks – will depend on the tasks at hand, the prevalent geo et socio-cultural contexts, as well as the values, assumptions and motivations of the users of these frameworks. In any case, however, the choice of a gender framework is not politically neutral: it will help go a step further in understanding what affects women’s and men’s lives in a given society and design solutions to bring about positive and intended change. **Appendix III** provides an overview of all these frameworks’ aims, uses, advantages and limitations.

In addition, it is also worth keeping in mind what *empowerment* means – here, it is the process of **change** through which one gains the ability to make choices about his/her own life, provided that alternatives exist and are known (Kabeer, 2003). Agency, resources and achievement have been identified as the three inter-related dimensions underpinning empowerment (*ibid*). Agency implies an active choice on the behalf of an individual (or “agent”), and resources are the medium of power. Both agency and resources make up people’s achievement, i.e. the extent to which their capabilities are realized. Empowerment and capabilities are thus as a stepping-stone towards gender equality.

If the BOBLME programme is to contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment, actions spelt out in the SAP (and future NAPs) will need to both account for agency and ensure that the necessary resources (financial and human) are made available to support this. Capabilities achievement, and the process of change that it implies will be, on the other hand, an important aspect of the monitoring and evaluation of the programme’s impact.

### **1.3. The (special?) case of gender in fisheries and aquaculture**

What gender issues are found in fisheries? Are they any different from other natural resource-based sectors and if so, why?

Women’s involvement in, and contribution to, fisheries is more significant than often assumed, but national statistics hide their contribution to the sector. From gleaning, near-shore fishing, aquaculture to post-harvest activities, women could constitute nearly 50% of the total labour force in fisheries and both men and women fulfil complementary roles throughout the capture fisheries value chain (FAO, WorldFish, World Bank 2009)<sup>3</sup>. Despite this, however, disparities between men and women in fisheries exist in terms of (WorldFish, 2010):

- Lower labour productivity within the sector and inefficient allocation of labour at household and national levels,
- Customary beliefs, norms and laws and unfavourable regulatory structures of the state, reduce women’s access to fisheries resources, assets and decision-making,
- Disparities in income, asset and power that are likely to be enhanced by the impact of climate change.
- Different senses of identity and belonging to networks, which are known for shaping power relations and livelihood opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup> The same is likely to be true in the case of the aquaculture value chain.

What most gender studies in the fisheries sector will highlight is the complexity of gender issues at local levels. Examples of such complexity are provided in Box 1. Interestingly, however, fisheries can also contribute to women's wellbeing (MDG6) and empowerment (MDG3) by improving their nutritional status at key times of their lives, and allowing them to gain income and power through their engagement in the sector (Heck et al., 2007).

**Box 1: The complexity of gender roles: narratives from Benin, Niger and The Gambia**

- The fish supply chain is dominated by powerful men and women with capital. Actions by them (e.g. bulk buying and hiring the labour of poorer community members) can worsen the dependency of poorer post-harvest groups.
- Poorer socio-economic groups have little control over the fish marketing chain, operate with low profit margins and are more vulnerable than wealthier groups to decreases in catches and poor services in processing, conservation and micro finance. Their activities are less profitable because they have only access to poor quality fish and are unable to keep fish fresh since they lack ice and marketing information. Loans from micro-finance institutions serve more as revolving funds for marketing than investment loans for fishing and processing equipment, and both informal and formal credits are risky.
- Female entrepreneurs are more responsible than men for meeting household expenses but are less mobile, less educated and less involved in policy and management decisions than their male counterparts. Poorer women use revolving funds to meet household expenses in periods of poor catches and this reduces the funds available for business. The majority of female-owned fishery enterprises are therefore small and grow slowly, if at all.
- Women point to hostile male behaviour aimed at keeping them minor players in the sector. Male solidarity between wholesalers and boat owners allows men to monopolise the landed fish and, through male members of the ice plant management committee, to monopolise ice supply (The Gambia).
- All socio-economic categories use family labour, especially women's labour. This limits women's access to education, training and alternative income-earning activities.
- Men who are by division of roles excluded from processing or fish transformation and with no independent capital to buy own equipment for fishing are dependent on relations with female processors (Benin).

Note: Where no country is indicated the comment applies to all three.

Source: *Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Programme fieldwork, 2005, in Holvoet, 2008*

Despite geographical and cultural nuances, fisheries and other natural-resource based sectors such as forestry tend to present commonalities with regard to gender issues: women are likely to constitute an important part of the "rural poor" who depend on fisheries, agriculture and natural resources for their survival, but are often excluded as a user group from decision processes over their management (FAO, IFAD and World Bank, 2009). Like in other natural resources sectors, production, management, markets and technical concerns have dominated debates. Having said that, the particular and specific nature of aquatic resources (encompassing both capture fisheries and aquaculture) compared to land-based resources, however, their anticipated role in food security and poverty alleviation and the impact gender relations can have on the achievement of these, gives a unique character to the relationship between gender and fisheries (and aquaculture).

Over the last decade or so, an interest in this relationship has been emerging. However, this has not led to the advancement of women in the sector, despite the important – yet undervalued – role they

play in fish supply chains (FAO, 2007, Williams et al., 2012a). Most fisheries and aquaculture management instruments such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its technical guidelines have so far been gender blind and, as a result, the systematic inclusion of gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture development initiatives and projects, has remained patchy at best (Williams et al., 2012b). The publication of the “Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook”, as a joint effort between several multilateral development agencies (FAO, IFAD and World Bank, 2009) has however enabled to reset the focus on the importance of considering gender issues in rural, agriculture-based development and spurred renewed attention to the topic. The explicit mention of gender and capacity development in the 2010 Phuket Consensus on aquaculture (FAO, 2012) is perhaps a sign that things are beginning to change and that opportunities for meaningfully mainstreaming gender in fisheries management and aquaculture development can be harnessed from the quantum generated by the Sourcebook and high-profile publications that have followed (e.g. FAO, 2011).

## 2. Methodological approach used for the review of documents and the elaboration of recommendations for the SAP

The first part of this assignment is likened to a gender audit<sup>4</sup>. Its purpose is to assess the extent to which known gender concerns in fisheries, or likely to arise following the implementation of the BOBLME Project, have been included and addressed in the BOBLME Project planning and documents produced to date.

Selected principles and components of existing gender assessment frameworks were used to compose a conceptual frame comprising questions and issues to guide both an ex-post audit (what has been included or not) and an ex-ante one (proposing a way forward to better integrated gender considerations in the future of the BOBLME Project). This frame was applied to the review of instruments and policies at international, regional and national levels promoting gender equality, as well as the BOBLME Project documents themselves (**Appendix IV**). Findings from the audit have been presented in a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) or “traffic light” format as appropriate, for the sake of readability and for flagging potential issues or entry points for further action for managers and decision-makers in the BOBLME countries. Any departure from this methodological approach in response to the specificity of the documents analyzed is signaled further in the text.

Beyond this exercise, the information contained in both **Appendix III** and **Appendix IV** may prove to be useful for the project managers and stakeholders in the future stages of the project, in particular in development of the NAPs and the roll-out of the second phase of the BOBLME Project, as a reminder of considerations to bear in mind for including gender issues.

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<sup>4</sup> The term “audit” is here preferred here to “analysis” (or assessment). Whereas gender analysis is concerned with the understanding of the reality of men and women in the context of projects and development interventions, the term “audit” – or evaluation, understood here as in a business context, more accurately reflects the purpose of the present assignment, which is to analyse a documented reality, rather than reality itself. As analysis and audit also have different objectives and implications, this terminology distinction may also help clarify the respective use and implementation of these two approaches.

### 3. Progress towards women’s empowerment and gender equality at international and national levels

#### 3.1. Gender equality in the international commitment to human rights and poverty alleviation

##### 3.1.1. Overview of key international agreements and instruments that promote gender equality

###### *The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*

The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN Assembly has been signed and/or ratified by all members of the BOBLME during the 1980s and 1990s. The Convention is the only human rights treaty that affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. The CEDAW however, only makes an allusive reference to the environment and natural resources-based development in Article 14, which addresses women in “rural development”.

Review of the BOBLME countries’ CEDAW implementation reports, and conclusions of the Committee show different levels of progress in the implementation of the Convention. This is addressed in greater detail in section 3.2.

###### *Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action*

All eight countries of the BOBLME participated in the Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. They all adopted the “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” which resulted from this conference and reaffirmed their commitment to it successively in 2000, 2005 and 2010. The Declaration embodies the commitment of the international community to the advancement of women and to the implementation of the Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programs at the national, regional and international levels. If implemented, the Platform for Action will enhance the social, economic and political empowerment of women, improve their health and their access to relevant education and promote their reproductive rights. The action plan sets time-specific targets, committing nations to carry out concrete actions in such areas as health, education, decision-making and legal reforms with the ultimate goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in both public and private life.

Asian Member states (which included all BOBLME countries) signed the Bangkok Declaration on Beijing+15 in 2010, in which they “committed to intensify efforts towards the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action” and “to promote the active mainstreaming of a gender perspective”, including in “Environmental, disaster management and climate change adaption programmes” (ESCAP, 2010). The need to account for “women’s needs and knowledge of natural systems (...) in the development, planning and implementation of environmental policies” and to strengthen agricultural policies and mechanisms to incorporate a gender perspective, and in cooperation with civil society, support farmers, particularly rural women, with education and training programmes” also received a specific mention in the Declaration. Although all BOBLME States – to the exception of India who was not present – reported progress in the implementation of the Plan for Action, none of these achievements related specifically to the inclusion of women or the mainstreaming of gender in the environment sector. This is in line with the fact that much progress remains to be done to address gender issues in the “Women and environment”, an area of concern pointed out by ECOSOC (2010).

### **Millennium Development Goals**

All BOBLME countries have endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Of these, MDG 3, to “progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women” is the one addressing gender issues head-on, whilst MDG 5 (“improve maternal health”) addresses a fundamental women’s issue. Indirectly however, all other MDGs, but in particular 1 (“eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”), 2 (“achieve universal primary education”), 4 (“reduce child mortality”), 6 (“combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases”) encompass gender issues, as well as 7 (“ensure environmental sustainability”) despite its more gender-neutral wording. A review of progress in 2010 showed that India and Bangladesh were ranked amongst the top 20 countries having achieved absolute progress towards the MDGs (in 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> position respectively), and Thailand and Sri Lanka, in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> positions in relative terms, based on an aggregation of selected targets for each goal (ODI, 2010). Amidst a mix of encouraging signs and uneven progress, closing the gender gap in terms of health and education is fundamental to progress towards the other targets. Yet increasing women’s agency in this process should be seen as just as important (Kabeer, 2003). In relation to fisheries, the MDGs have been found to provide “compelling framework for articulating the value of fisheries for poverty reduction and long-term socioeconomic development” (Heck et al., 2007).

There is little doubt that the most powerful of these instruments to progress towards gender equality is the CEDAW. Conversely to other commitments, countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. This has been reflected in some amendments brought to national legislations to support the implementation of the CEDAW and support national commitments to the promotion of gender equality. Progress however has been uneven to date, and the relative plethora of international commitments only glosses over the engrained reluctance of some nations to wholeheartedly embrace gender equality. This can give rise to concerns that sectors such as the environment and infrastructure, traditionally perceived as devoid of gender impacts, may be last to benefit from such a thrust. Indeed, as the report will later show in the case of BOBLME countries, this perspires through the seemingly low awareness of gender issues which may slow down the uptake of gender-sensitive measures in the implementation of the project, and overall mainstreaming of gender issues at national levels.

#### **3.1.2. Overview of regional agreements and instruments to promote gender equality**

The BOBLME countries are split amongst the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, with Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC, with Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women’s East and Southeast Asia Regional Office signed a Framework for Cooperation Agreement on 8 June 2006. This Agreement signalled the commitment of both organizations to work for the active involvement of women in the social, economic and political spheres in accordance with the 1988 Declaration on the Advancement of Women in ASEAN<sup>5</sup>. They developed a Framework for Cooperation in the ASEAN Region which objective is to promote and implement the 1988 Declaration on the Advancement of Women, the 2004 Vientiane Action Programme, the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the Beijing + 10 Outcome Document and the MDGs. The framework covers consultation and information and knowledge dissemination through exchanges, technical assistance through capacity building and implementation of activities under the ASEAN Work Plan for Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality (2005-2010), and research, advocacy and awareness-raising through promoting, raising awareness and facilitating action to address issues

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aseansec.org/8685.htm>

highlighted in the 2004 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN region (2006-2010) and the 2004 Vientiane Action Programme (Source: ASEAN and UN Women websites).

Similarly, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and UN Women South Asia Regional Office in 2007, to help the Member States strive towards the goals of gender equality based on the empowerment approach. This regional agreement was informed by the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the Beijing+5 Outcome Document, the MDGs, and the SAARC Development Goals. With an objective to “promote mutual learning and cross fertilization among developing countries for effectively tackling the challenges relating to gender discrimination, women's human rights and women's participation”, the Memorandum of Understanding outlines a comprehensive set of aims in the areas of consultation and knowledge sharing, support and active cooperation, and knowledge and research, including the development of a gender database in SAARC on progress on gender equality in the South Asia region<sup>6</sup>.

### **3.2. Gender equality at national levels (BOBLME countries)**

#### **3.2.1. Review of the inclusion of gender considerations in national policies and instruments of relevance to mainstreaming of gender in the BOBLME Project**

##### **3.2.1.1. Global Gender Gap Index**

The 2012 Global Gender Gap Index (Hausmann et al., 2012) captures the magnitude of disparities between men and women and tracks their evolution over time. Table 1 presents the ranking of BOBLME countries – with the exception of Myanmar, out of the 135 countries for which data and analysis were possible.

**Table 1: Ranking of BOBLME countries according the 2012 Global Gender Gap Index.**

Country	Rank
Sri Lanka	39
Thailand	65
Bangladesh	86
Maldives	95
Indonesia	97
Malaysia	100
India	107

Source: Hausmann et al., 2012.

The global index incorporates sub-indexes of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, political empowerment<sup>7</sup> and focuses on the monitoring of gaps (rather actual levels) and gender equality (rather than empowerment per se). Figure 1 provides an overview of the evolution of the global index in each country of the BOBLME (with the exception of

<sup>6</sup> Source: UN Women website.

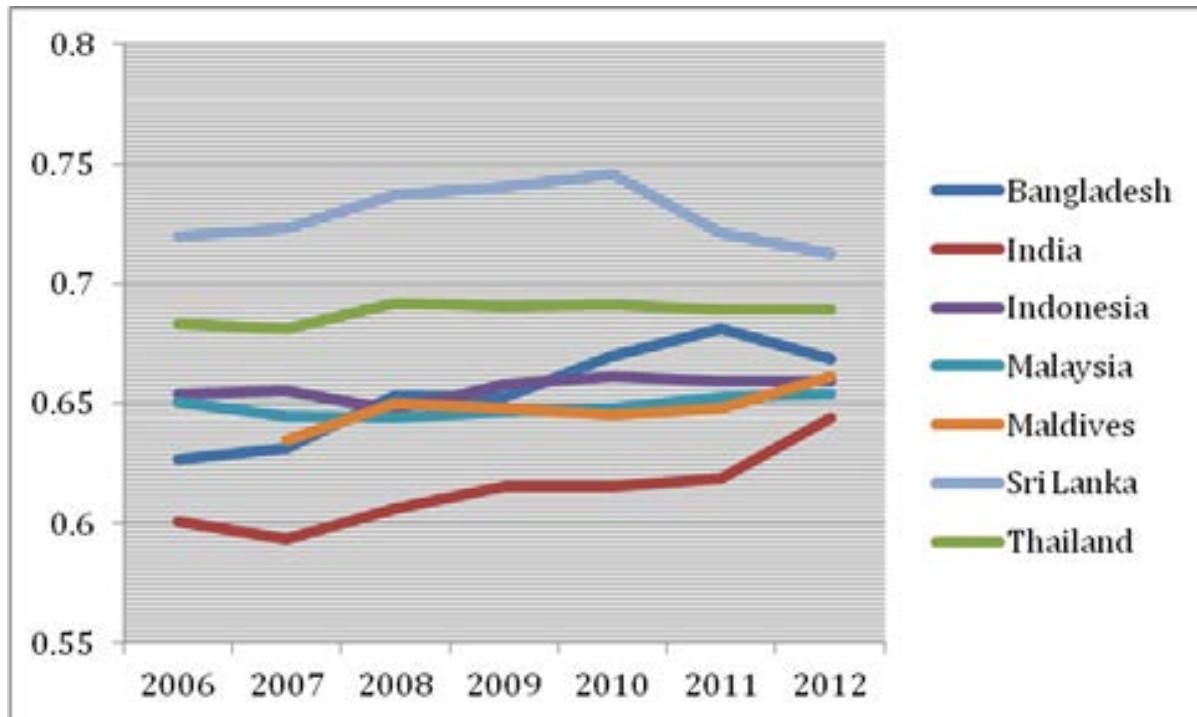
<sup>7</sup> More information on the calculation of the index and weights applied to its four main components are available in the report itself (available online at:

[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GenderGap\\_Report\\_2012.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2012.pdf)).



Myanmar). While India, Maldives, and Bangladesh have made significant progress, others (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia) have remained stagnant, or even declined (Sri Lanka, though remaining with the lowest gender gap of the BOBLME countries in absolute terms). This sets forth the “gender scene” within which the BOBLME Project will have to operate at national levels.

**Figure 1: Evolution of the Global Gender Gap Index in BOBLME countries.**



### 3.2.1.2. CEDAW implementation

The analysis of the CEDAW implementation reports and of feedback from the CEDAW Implementation Committee enabled to dig further into gender issues that are of relevance to the implementation of the BOBLME Project at national levels. Of the overall progress made towards women’s empowerment and gender equality in all areas of the Convention, only those aspects related to the conditions of women that are deemed to be of direct and indirect relevance to the natural resource-focus of the BOBLME Project are extracted from the CEDAW implementation reports and conclusions. A “traffic light” system was adopted to evaluate each State Party’s progress in those areas of the Convention deemed of relevance and importance to the BOBLME Project activities (Table 2).

In Table 2 (next page):

A (Myanmar): Recommendation to involve women in project design and carry out a gender impact assessment prior implementation of all development projects.

B (Maldives): Recommendation to pay particular attention to the impact of societal attitudes and expectations on women’s opportunities to seek employment in the tourism and fishing sectors.

C (Thailand): In every ministry and department a high-ranking official has been assigned as Chief Gender Equality Officer and a Gender Focal Point has been appointed to promote gender equality. Provided the Gender Focal Point is identified in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and that this person is conversant with fisheries issues, this will be very important to mainstream gender in both the SAP and in particular the Thai NAP.

**Table 2: Traffic light<sup>1</sup> assessment of the implementation of the provisions of the CEDAW relevant to the project in BOBLME countries.**

	India (2007)	Malaysia (2006)	Myanmar (2008)	Sri Lanka (2011)	Bangladesh (2004)	Maldives (2007)	Thailand (2006)	Indonesia (2006)
Employment opportunities for women <sup>2</sup>					n/a		n/a	n/a
Legal support for women <sup>3</sup>		n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Gender-disaggregated data								n/a
Micro-finance, self-help groups for women		n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Awareness and training on gender								
Health care for women/ food security		n/a						n/a
In rural areas		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a
Women's public participation and decision-making								
Work conditions for women (incl. wage gap)		n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	
Challenging of stereotypes								
Timeliness of reporting					n/a			n/a
Inclusion of CEDAW in domestic law								
Budget for gender-sensitive programmes/initiatives		n/a				n/a		n/a
Other mentions of relevance to BOBLME Project	-	-	A (see text)	-	-	B (see text)	C (see text)	-

n/a: no information available in report reviewed.

1. Interpretation of the Committee's feedback on implementation progress:

"urges" or "requests" were assigned a red light (not enough progress was made).

"calls upon" or "recommendations" were assigned an orange light (some progress was made, but more needs to be done).

"welcomes", "commends" etc. were assigned a green light (significant progress was achieved).

2. In India, *rural* employment is specifically referred to (employment was mentioned only in general terms in the other country reports).

3. Special reference is made here to legal support available in rural areas.

### **3.2.1.3. *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national development plans***

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), conditional to lending from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, were meant to reflect governments and civil society groups' integrated vision for national development. In the aftermath of developing PRSPs, countries went on to elaborate their own national development plans or strategies. Overall, consideration of women and gender issues appears fragmented and their addressing in PRSPs and national development plans uneven. Consultation processes leading to the elaboration of the PRSPs and national development plans have also been found to be not always adequate. If health and education are often prime entry points for addressing women's needs (though usually at a practical level), gender is usually not mainstreamed in other sections of the documents, in particular in those related to natural resources management and fisheries (Whitehead, 2003).

BOBLME countries' PRSPs or national development plans<sup>8</sup> were carefully reviewed to assess their gender contents and sensitivity, as well as gain an insight into each government's intentions regarding fisheries, agriculture and rural development, and environmental management, and how gender issues specific to these sectors were to be addressed – if at all. To this end, particular attention was given to sections on fisheries and natural resources management, development of entrepreneurship and social protection – all deemed to be of direct and indirect relevance to the objectives of the BOBLME Project, the SAP and future NAPs.

The Government of **Bangladesh** is said to have produced one of the most gender-sensitive PRSPs in 2005, thanks to its collaboration with an NGO and local citizen groups and a strong emphasis on participatory consultations that included the poor and women (Gender Action, 2007). Gender equality is used as one of the supporting strategies of the PRSP, and explicit attention is given to "women's rights and advancement", as well as "governance for the poor and women". If women's issues in agriculture, in the rural non-farm economy, in infrastructure, energy etc. are addressed

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<sup>8</sup> Latest versions of PRSPs for Bangladesh (2005), Maldives (2008) and Sri Lanka (2002) available on the internet were used. Maldives' recent National Framework for Development 2009-13 complemented the information from the country's PRSP. Out of India's 10<sup>th</sup> Plan (2002-07) having been accepted by financial institutions as equivalent to a PRSP, and the country's 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2007-12) being more recent, the latter – out of which only Volume 3, on Agriculture, Rural Development, Industry, Services, and Physical Infrastructure – was used. For Indonesia, only the interim PRSP could be found (2003), and was complemented with information from the country's National Medium-Term Priority Framework 2010-14 and Book I of the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2010-2014. For Myanmar, the country's cooperation framework with UNDP was used, as neither PRSP, nor national development plans could be accessed. Malaysia does not appear to have produced a PRSP and the country's Tenth Plan 2011-15 was used. Full references for the documents used in this section and the next are provided in the list of references (**Appendix II**).

specifically in these chapters, *fisheries* (dealt with under “Agriculture and Rural Development”) does not mention women nor gender.

Gender mainstreaming in national development appeared high on the Government of the **Maldives’** agenda for the period 2006-2010, perhaps as a result of limited progress towards the implementation of the CEDAW. In its PRSP, “empowerment of women and protection of vulnerable groups” is a development goal in itself, underpinned by a policy on the development of “mechanisms to increase economic and socio-political participation of women” and one on the “strengthening of institutional frameworks and mainstreaming of gender concerns in national policies and programmes”. These two policies should constitute an enabling environment for the project’s operations since they involve the “sensitization and education of the public in general and women in particular about non-stereotypical areas of employment”, the collection of “gender-disaggregated data for policy formulation, planning and resource allocation in all sectors”, and the “strengthening of the capacity of the gender ministry to mainstream gender concerns”. Worthy of note in this regard is the specific mention women receive in relation to fisheries development and management, addressed under the goal of “enhancing trade, supporting businesses and building competitive industries”: the “development and implementation of incentive programmes to encourage and facilitate participation of youth and women in the sector” underpins the intention to increase human resources capacity to support sector development and diversification”, therefore indicating that women are seen as pivotal in this. Although not explicit, strategies under the policy aiming at “ensuring sustainable socio-economic development of fishing communities to maximize social and economic benefits” could be designed to include women and be gender-sensitive.

In relation to broader environmental concerns however, to “ensure a protected and safe environment for all Maldivians”, neither gender, nor ‘people’ in general are alluded to, despite the fact that they could have been relatively easily catered for relation to capacity development, data/information collection and policy, regulations and adaptation in the context of integrated coastal zone management.

“Gender” has also been granted a section of its own in the more recent 2009-2013 National Framework for Development. A positive development has been the establishment of Gender Focal Points at Deputy Minister-level, in all sectoral ministries and whose role is to “facilitate gender-mainstreaming efforts in all sectors through provision of technical expertise and developing sector-specific tools and guidelines for gender mainstreaming”. The expertise for gender analysis and gender-responsive planning and evaluation of all projects and programmes was planned to be available by the end of the plan period. If so, the gender expertise available in the Ministry of Fisheries will constitute a strong advantage for the mainstreaming of gender in the SAP, and NAPs in particular.

Surprisingly however, especially in comparison with the important mention of women in fisheries in the PRSP, no references are made to gender in the new fisheries development goals of the country, despite a short mention of gender (in terms of “balance/equity through adaptation of staffing policies and plant and accommodation design”) and human rights (in terms of “Promote the right to employment and sustainable livelihoods”) amongst cross-cutting themes and programmes relevant to the sector. This may be due to the fact that the National Framework focuses more strongly on economic development than the PRSP (stronger focus on poverty alleviation and reforms needed to this end).

The Government of **Sri Lanka** (2002) was committed to mainstream gender considerations in all its antipoverty efforts, whilst at the same time recognizing that “although considerable efforts to mainstream gender considerations in public policy and planning purposes [have been made], few

government agencies explicitly include a gender perspective in their poverty reduction plans". To address this gap and combat gender discrimination, the Government intends to train staff in gender analysis and monitoring and evaluation, and to deploy efforts to include gender considerations in programme and project designs. At the attention of women in particular, the Government intends to "promote employment and equal opportunities", establish "entrepreneurship development programmes" and improve the availability of childcare facilities. It is also specific about disaggregating labour data collection and producing gender-disaggregated indicators to monitor and evaluate its PRSP implementation.

As in the case of the Maldives' PRSP, Sri Lanka gives explicit attention to the potential role of women in its Fisheries and Ocean Resources Policy Action Plan (included in the PRSP) to: "facilitate and encourage fisher-women in potential self-employment activities" in a reform that was due to take place over 2003-2005<sup>9</sup>. It is unclear however, under the country's "community-driven development and environmental sustainability" objective, how the "community coordinating committees" efforts on coastal stabilization, conservation and management of reefs, improvements of water exchanges in lagoons and cooperation for social infrastructure improvements will target men and women and contribute to gender equality. An expansion of "opportunities for poor coastal communities to participate in decision-making processes" may have implicitly intended to include a gender focus, but it would be interesting to verify if the reform of the Coastal Conservation and Fisheries Aquatic Resources Acts meant to follow in 2003 to increase local participation in coastal zone management did include women and addressed gender concerns. The same would need checking for reforms concerning women's equal access to agricultural extension programmes (intended for 2004) and to support women's entrepreneurship (intended for 2002). Intentions to develop micro-credit schemes that address the poor are equally vague about how disparities between men and women in terms of access to financial services may be overcome.

Gender and women's issues are woven through each section of Volume 3 on agriculture, rural development, industry and infrastructure, of India's comprehensive 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2007-12). In the context of agricultural development, which encompasses fisheries and aquaculture, the "group approach" it proposes to empower marginal groups, including women, is seen as a means to benefit small farmers for production marketing, land access, and pooling of resources (land, finances, technology). Further, to address gender equality issues and ensure women's equal rights to land and infrastructure, the Government intends to (i) name women as cultivators in registries and surveys where land ownership is de facto rather than de jure, (ii) sensitizing existing infrastructure providers (extension, credit, agricultural inputs etc.) to gender issues, and promote women's cooperatives – using the "group approach" to enable women to access these inputs jointly and to "empower them". These measures could have an influence on the design of future activities at national level, in particular in relation to coastal developments including aquaculture, but also for the commercialization of fisheries products.

Fisheries and aquaculture however, do not mention women or gender in the section dedicated to them.

In the context of rural development, the Government intends to extend access to loans and credit for the rural populations, and provide incentives to lending institutions. Although no further details are provided on who the intended target group is (men, women, ethnic minorities etc.), it is anticipated that, as indicated in the Government's plans to support micro and small enterprises (section on "Ensuring rural and urban livelihoods" of the Plan), an important emphasis will be given to women (i.e. provision of "social security cover" and improved access to credit and advice). In addition to the implications this has for the generation of "women entrepreneurs" the Government

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<sup>9</sup> The actual implementation of this reform, and others announced in the PRSP, would need verification, which was beyond the scope of the present assignment.

wishes to establish, it opens up opportunities for the project to target commercially-oriented activities for Indian women to engage throughout the fish value chain.

**Indonesia's** Interim PRSP (2003) overall contained little information of relevance to the present assessment, to the exception of its "women empowerment policy", presented as a cross-cutting policy, which aimed at decreasing the gap between men and women's participation in development. This is partially redressed in its National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2010-2014 which included "pro-people" equitable and just development and the elimination of gender discrimination (5<sup>th</sup> National Development Mission). "Conservation and utilization of the natural environment that supports sustainable economic growth and increased welfare of the people" is at the heart of its 9<sup>th</sup> priority (on Environment and Management of Natural Disasters), but makes no further reference to who the specific users and beneficiaries of the programmes that will underpin this priority may be<sup>10</sup>. Amongst the country's "other priorities" of development, in the field of the "welfare of the people", "formulating policies and guidelines for applying the mainstreaming of gender and children's issues by ministries and government agencies" comes in 8<sup>th</sup> position (out of 10 priorities), sandwiched between the development of local tourism and performing well at international sporting events. As disappointing as this may be, the resolute human-rights approach that the government has adopted in the elaboration of the 2010-14 RPJMN, and its continuous commitment to combating all forms of discrimination and ensuring prosperity for all can be seen as two overriding intentions towards the further implementation of the CEDAW and the creation of an enabling environment for the implementation of the BOBLME Project.

The Government of **Malaysia's** Tenth Development Plan (2011-15) states that the "empowerment of women will be a key agenda in this Plan. Under its goal of "Moving towards inclusive socio-economic development", the Plan specifically refers to "empowering women to enhance their economic contribution". This is particularly important to bridge the gap between the number of well-educated women and the number of those actually employed, yet close (at least in tone) to the efficiency goal of the Harvard approach to gender, out of which equality may not emerge. Notwithstanding, this could have positive implications for the project implementation at national level (NAP), as a support to the recruitment of women in the national project implementation team. Not only is this congruent with the 2009 National Women Policy, it is also in harmony with the skills development programme for single mother entrepreneurship that are to be put in place, and the work of the future Special Committee to "implement gender sensitization programmes in the public sector". Although "Building an environment that enhances the quality of life" is a goal, actions related to the "valuation of the Nation's environmental endowments" are limited to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the management and protection of wildlife. Fisheries, seen as an economic activity rather than as a natural resource management one, is addressed throughout the Plan, in relation to post-harvest and marketing, and the production of high-value commodities (from agriculture).

The Government of **Thailand** has resolutely adopted a people-centred approach to development in its Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016). Sustainability of the environment and natural resources and strengthening of social capital are guiding values throughout the document to improve resilience and adaptation. Yet, despite this, fisheries and explicit gender considerations do not appear in the summary version of the Plan<sup>11</sup>, although, as in the case of Malaysia, the intention is to promote women to "managerial and decision-making positions at local and national levels for greater contribution to the country's development". Although no details are

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<sup>10</sup> It is anticipated that further sectoral information is available in the second volume of the RPJMN, but it could not be accessed.

<sup>11</sup> The full version of the Plan could not be found, despite extensive searches.

provided, the indicators proposed to monitor progress on social, economic and environmental aspects could each be presented by sex, shall the disaggregation of such data be taken forward.

Little information could be obtained about **Myanmar's** development intentions, never mind about how gender considerations would fare in these. Of relevance however is the positive influence of self-reliance groups (SRG) that have improved women's decision-making power in the household and developed their social and human capital, prompting UNDP to make empowerment the goal of SRGs rather than a by-product of their success (UNDP, 2007). The expected outcome of this endeavour is that "More SRGs and other village communities, particularly marginal farmers, landless poor, women and the most vulnerable, will have enhanced knowledge and skills for carrying out environmentally-friendly land and natural resource management practices. The bridge between women, poverty and the environment that the SRG initiative constitutes certainly deserves attention in the elaboration of the country's NAP.

#### **3.2.1.4. National Fisheries (and Aquaculture) Development Policies**

Huntington and Macfadyen (2011) provide an extensive review of the contents of fisheries, marine environment and coastal zone management policies, and of their formulation and implementation processes in the eight BOBLME countries.

With a generic mention of "communities", and the "poor", **Bangladesh's** National Fisheries Policy (1998) is gender-blind. The country's National Programme of Action for Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities<sup>12</sup>, which has a bio-physical focus, fares only slightly better with an intention of using sustainable livelihoods as a means to "to promote community ownership of resources and empower the women". Strategy 4 on "Promotion of awareness and capacity building (training, awareness, research and monitoring)", although unspecific to any target group, could be tailored and used as a channel for raising awareness on gender issues.

In contrast, the country's National Fisheries Strategy (2006) is more progressive. It dedicates a small section to gender and proposes a number of practical steps to promote the role of women in the sector through:

- extension activities targeted at women to enable them to "benefit from training and provide access to knowledge".
- a monitoring system that collects "gender-disaggregated data to track progress on gender targets laid out in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper".
- opportunities where "women can provide useful inputs to the development of the fishery", including value-addition to fishery products.
- a higher number of "women employed by the support agencies and development of their linkage with women".

An efficiency motivation however underlines these propositions. How equality benefits will be drawn from women's participation in these activities remains unclear and is likely to require some attention.

Book II of **Indonesia's** National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2010-2014, which contains information about sectoral development could not be found. Notwithstanding, the country's National Medium Term Priority Framework spells out the identified priorities for fisheries and aquaculture development, considered here as a development strategy equivalent. In this

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<sup>12</sup> This document is undated. However, in light of references to other documents quoted in the text, it is expected to have been produced around 2004, i.e. between the National Fisheries Policy and the National Fisheries Strategy.

document, guided by “pro-growth, pro-poor, pro-job and pro-environment sustainability” goals, the strategy for the fisheries sector focuses on “increasing the welfare of fishers and stakeholders in marine and fisheries communities by making fisheries the main sources of economic growth and decent (preferably green) job creation, especially for women and youth in poor coastal areas and small islands”. Individual entrepreneurship and community participation are presented as cornerstones for marine and fisheries development, but they lack specificity as to how both will be implemented, despite their potential contribution to the empowerment of both women and men. Gender and women are however directly targeted under Strategic Priority Area (SPA) FI/1: “Community Development & Empowerment through Ecologically and Economically Sustainable Aquaculture & Fisheries Programs for Small Scale Fishers & Fish Farmers in Coastal and Small Island Areas (PSS-2-01)” and SPA FI/3: “Improving Quality of Fish Products and Profitability of Small-scale Fishers

through Better Quality Assurance, Marketing and SME Management (PCS-3-06)”. Capacity building at managerial and research levels, in which women’s involvement could be promoted, is dealt with under SPA FI/6: “Strengthening Human Resource Capacity and "Tacit" Knowledge Management & Sharing by Using Results of Science & Technology-based Research on Marine & Fisheries Development (PSS-4-05)”.

Further, it is also recognized that “Mainstreaming the role and participation of women in agri-development programs would also be an important strategic priority for action”, and the Framework calls for the establishment of five types of services targeted at male and female farmers or agricultural/food producers, all of which can act as supporting vectors for the implementation of BOBLME activities related to these domains of intervention at national levels:

- “(a) Infrastructure and farm inputs, incl. irrigation/water management, farm road maintenance, agricultural equipment/machinery as well as inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.),
- (b) Organizational Support, incl. farmers associations, rural agri-business ventures, etc.,
- (c) Extension, Education/Training, and Research, incl. facilitation of knowledge management and sharing of new, innovative and best practices on agri./food technology applications, etc.,
- (d) Agricultural Credit, incl. micro-finance programs for small-scale farmers, esp. women,
- (e) Marketing of agriculture/food products, incl. value-added processed food.”

**Maldives’** attention to gender in its fisheries policy was addressed in the preceding section.

**India’s** Comprehensive Marine Fishing Policy (2004) “attaches top priority to ensuring [fishermen households’] social security and economic wellbeing”. Despite extensive welfare support schemes and measures proposed for the most vulnerable, and a “participatory programme with the active involvement of coastal people, particularly in the fishing community” in mangrove replanting, and in ornamental fish breeding and coastal cage aquaculture in the Union Territories and Islands, the targeting of beneficiaries is unclear (e.g. who in the household, who in the community?).

**Malaysia’s** Third National Agricultural Policy aims for the development of viable and self-reliant farmers and fishermen’s institutions. The formulation of a specific human resource development program targeted at “farmers and fishermen” to “equip them with better managerial and entrepreneurial skills to undertake commercial mixed farming [and fishing]”, along with the strengthening of the “role of farmers’ organisations and fishermen’s associations through active participation of these organisations as business entities within the agricultural sector”, are appropriate measures to this end, but fall short of identifying the targets and beneficiaries of these actions.










Under **Sri Lanka's** Ten-Year Development Policy Framework of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Sector 2007-2016, "very high priority will be accorded to the improvement of the social infrastructure available to the fishing families and the coastal inhabitants". Yet, it is unclear how the proposed infrastructures (which range from housing, social security and health facilities to educational and organizational support in relation to credit, fishing inputs, marketing) will address women's needs and enable a progress towards gender equality in fishing communities. Policy objective to "increase employment opportunities in fisheries and related industries and improve the socio-economic status of the fisher community" is for example, not supported by a Measurable Indicator Target that is gender-disaggregated: only a total number of persons is indicated. The target to "establish income generating activities among coastal fishing communities" and the strategy/action to "Strengthen women groups in fishing communities and encourage them to promote savings" is the only clear reference to gender in the Framework. All other targets under this objective are gender-blind.

**Thailand's** ten-year Marine Fisheries Management Master Plan (2008) wants to achieve "Sustainable Fisheries Development based on the Sufficiency Economy that places the people at the centre". Despite a high commitment to the participation of "fishermen organizations/communities" in the co-management of fisheries and the promotion of alternative livelihoods, the profession is invariably portrayed as male, and the Plan fails to recognize the role women play in the sector or to address gender issues engrained in it. The "creation, accessibility, timeliness, completeness, and reliability of a fishery database" is one of the strategic measures for the "structural strengthening and efficiency improvement of fisheries bodies", and although this is not specified, it provides an opportunity to collect gender-disaggregated data. The Government's intention to "support individual fishermen, groups or fishermen associations, and fishing communities to enable them to participate in data collection and analyses" is an endeavour in direct relation to the implementation of the BOBLME at national level and where gender equality in terms of equal participation and benefits can be considered. When it comes to including gender considerations, the Government's Fisheries Policy Directions (2006), which also include a strategy for the development of aquaculture, has shortcomings similar to those of the Master Plan.

**Myanmar's** fishery policy document could not be found. However, the country's national policy goals for the fisheries sector to the 2040 horizon are summarized in FAO (2010). The goal "to upgrade the socio-economic status of fishery communities" is amongst them, but the information provided was insufficient to complete an adequate analysis of the gender-sensitivity of the policy.

As it was done in the case of the CEDAW implementation, the overall assessment of gender sensitivity of national fisheries policies and strategies is summarized in a traffic light table (Table 3). The traffic light representation of the findings does not imply a judging of the governments of the countries for which the light is red. It rather denotes, albeit simply, the level of conduciveness of national institutional contexts to the mainstreaming of gender in forthcoming phases of the BOBLME Project.

**Table 3: Traffic light assessment of the gender-sensitivity of BOBLME countries national fisheries policies.**

Bangladesh		Notes: Significant coverage of gender issues, along with the targeting of actions at specific groups warranted a green light. The mention of gender issues, or at least women on more than one occasion, and denoting an awareness of gender, warranted an orange light. Lack of mention of gender or women all together, revealing a gender-blind policy, received a red light.
India		
Indonesia		
Maldives		
Malaysia		
Myanmar	n/a	
Sri Lanka		
Thailand		

### 3.2.1.5. *National legislation*

Legislation governing the use of natural resources can have important impacts on women and gender relations. The establishment of marine protected areas for example, could raise barriers of entry for women and penalize further their marginal access and use coastal and marine resources.

An audit of the gender-sensitivity of national legislation was not part of this assignment. However, carried out by someone with both legal and gender expertise, it could involve answering questions like (developed from UNEP, undated):

- Is there adequate basic legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (Constitutional law, Anti-discrimination Act)?
- Is there any evidence of explicit discrimination against men or women in legislation governing the use of natural resources?
- Is there evidence that the current legislation governing the use of natural resources may result in indirect discrimination against men or women?
- Was gender expertise part of the information and consultation inputs into the drafting of legislation?

### 3.3. Conclusion

Although commonalities among all BOBLME countries' fisheries policies were highlighted in Huntington and Macfadyen's review (2011), one point upon which there is considerable variation is that of the inclusion of gender considerations and of the role of women in the sector. Some encouraging initiatives have however been found: gender (sex)-disaggregated data (Bangladesh), gender focal points (Thailand and Maldives), staff training in gender analysis and monitoring (Sri Lanka), support services to women entrepreneurs (India and Indonesia), promotion of women in managerial positions (Malaysia and Thailand), and interesting community-based initiatives (Myanmar). Overall however, a gender perspective is not well mainstreamed even in those countries

that fare better in the assessment: strategies tend not to consider the differential impacts on men and women of the actions proposed, and target groups are not always well identified. Consequently, the mainstreaming of gender in the SAP may be more readily accepted in some countries than others. The “acid test” will come however at the time of mainstreaming gender in the NAPs: not only will future NAPs need to capitalize on positive efforts at national levels, they will also need to broaden their coverage of gender issues to ensure that the mainstreaming of gender at national levels is coherent and comprehensive.

#### **4. Results from the gender audit of key documents of the BOBLME: Project document, Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and preliminary SAP.**

The BOBLME initial project document, the TDA and supporting assessments that led to its completion, and the preliminary SAP (draft dated 02.08.2012 available at the time of writing) were audited from a gender perspective. Findings are presented according the structure of a gender-focused SWOT analysis.

##### **4.1. BOBLME Project document**

*Overall: gender blind.*

###### Strengths

- The consultative and iterative process undertaken to formulate the project document resulted in strong buy-in by all stakeholders.

###### Weaknesses

- The BOBLME Project document has no apparent commitment to gender equality. If such a commitment may be indirectly inferred from project development objective to ultimately enhance the food security and reduce the poverty of coastal communities in the BOB region, gender equality may not automatically result from this (Jackson, 1996).
- Biophysical and environmental concerns drive the project. Although justified, these leave no room for human concerns. Although it attempts to establish a link with the realization of some of the MDGs, the project document omits both MDG3 and MDG6.
- The extent to which women were included in the consultations for the elaboration of the project document is unclear, either at local/community or higher levels of decision-making. The Mid-Term Review for example, noted that national coordinators were predominantly males.

###### Opportunities

- The project has identified the benefits it will deliver at national levels. Among these are “diversified livelihoods and improved wellbeing among small-scale fisher communities”, which if reconsidered from a gender perspective, could open avenues for progressing

towards gender equality, for example by specifying which group the project would work with (men, women, both) in communities in terms of capacity building.

#### Threats

- There is no clear gender objective defined in the project document. The project is driven by efficiency, not empowerment (c.f. Harvard/WID framework), which is likely to have conditioned the mind-set in which subsequent documents were drafted and activities proposed.

## 4.2. TDA (and related documents)

All TDA-related documents were reviewed: as well as outputs (draft and latest versions available at the time of writing), documents related to the process of elaboration of the TDA (e.g. “TDA Synthesis Report” and national TDAs) were included in the audit.

Overall, all documents were found to be either gender-blind, or to have by-passed human – let alone gender – considerations all together. How to redress this is the topic of Part 5.

### 4.2.1. National TDAs

*Overall: gender blind*

National TDAs<sup>13</sup> vary widely in their format and depth of coverage of transboundary issues. “Gender” as such did not get a mention in any of the TDAs. “Women” however were mentioned once in the Sri Lankan TDA, although the suggestion to involve women as fishers to promote fisheries management compliance evokes an efficiency intention rather than an empowerment one.

“Poverty” and “communities” are not gender neutral. Both were addressed extensively in the Indonesian TDA and in the Thai TDA respectively. Further insights could have however been provided, had a gender lens been applied more evidently to the analysis of these issues in national TDAs. It is therefore difficult to establish the extent to which gender issues and relations are perceived as having a role in the shaping of the root causes of the identified environmental challenges (and what the solving of these would in turn bring in terms of addressing gender equality).

### 4.2.2. TDA elaboration process

*Overall: gender blind.*

A number of suggested actions for inclusion in the SAP relates to the economic development of coastal populations through the promotion of “eco-friendly small-scale” “alternative livelihoods” such as aquaculture, agriculture, community-forestry, etc. (Myanmar) that involve the use of adapted technologies (India) and are sensitive to cultural traditions and knowledge (Myanmar, Sri Lanka), the protection of their rights and assets with legal improvements (Thailand, India, Sri Lanka) and the implementation of incentives for environmental protection initiatives (India). Although the generic wording of these suggestions does not suggest any accounting of gender issues or relations, such suggestions are important to note as they are likely to entail different impacts for both men and women, and could therefore be used as possible entry points for gender mainstreaming if they are to be retained in the SAP.

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<sup>13</sup> Reports from the consultation process used in the elaboration of the transboundary diagnostic at national level.

### 4.2.3. TDA Volume 1 (issues, proximate and root causes)<sup>14</sup>:

*Overall: gender blind*

As in the case of the national TDAs previously analysed, Volume 1 of the TDA lacks gender considerations in its identification of issues and in particular of their causes. Of the 14 issues that were identified under the three themes (overexploitation of marine resources, degradation of coastal habitats and pollution and water quality), none were directly related to gender or human issues more generally. Again, it is difficult to assess from the contents of this document if it is the case that gender is judged as not playing a role in the intensity/gravity of the identified proximate and root causes (this is doubtful), has simply been forgotten, or has been intentionally lumped under broader topics such as “food security needs of the coastal poor” (in relation to the degradation of critical habitats). The SWOT analysis of the issues raised in the document nevertheless enables the interpretation of factors indirectly related to gender.

#### Strengths

- Root causes of some transboundary issues, in particular degradation of critical habitats, are clearly traced back to a human factor, i.e. coastal poverty in BOBLME countries, expressed through food insecurity, lack of livelihood alternatives and overall vulnerability to exogenous factors of the rural coastal poor, all of which indirectly involve working with women and men and thus hold potential for addressing gender inequalities.

#### Weaknesses

- The lack of national, provincial/state coastal development plans through which gender issues could be tackled are likely to make gender concerns in coastal issues a fortiori more invisible.
- Information gaps exist and need to be filled to improve decision-making.
- Communication gaps exist between different groups (scientists, managers, policy-makers and stakeholders). They are also likely to exist among stakeholders themselves, in particular when it comes to communicating with coastal people – both men and women. Rural women do not have the same access to information than men, which may imply a repackaging of the communication means to be used to reach out to target groups<sup>15</sup>.

#### Opportunities

- Research avenues for filling information gaps and supporting decision-making have been identified. A gender component could easily be built in these<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Some of the components of the SWOT of the TDA Volume 1 and TDA Volume 2 repeat each other since Volume 2 provided the background information upon which Volume 1 was built. The SWOT analysis of Volume 2 is however more detailed.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X2550E/X2550e03.htm>

<sup>16</sup> For example: research avenue 1 on the “understanding the role of the BOBLME marine living resources in the national development processes” could identify local, gender-disaggregated values of marine resources in order to incorporate them and ensure natural-resource-based development processes that are inclusive of all social groups, including women. Research avenue 2 on the influences of political economy contexts on the use and management of the marine resources of the BOBLME countries could, following the questions raised in the Social Relations Network, provide insights into the handling of gender issues at an institutional level, and on how this impacts on women’s and men’s interests and needs at local levels. Research avenue 3 on the addressing of the positive and negative effects of

- The future elaboration of coastal development plans and information systems (data collection and analysis) is an opportunity for gender to be mainstreamed in these two initiatives.
- Progress in information technologies (e.g. mobile phones) may open opportunities for reaching groups of men and women in ways that were not possible before, as well as increase voice and role in economic and public affairs, provided the costs of ownership remain low (i.e. promotion of this technology if is done sensitively).

#### Threats

- At policy level, lack of awareness of issues in general, lack of stakeholder participation and weak institutional capacity may undermine the implementation of gender-focused actions, which add another level of complexity to the existing challenge of solving of the transboundary issues affecting the region.
- At local level, gleaning activities are often an important income generating activity for women and children, satisfying both their practical and strategic needs (see for example Masalu, et al., 2010 and Malm, 2009, whose study conclusions, although focusing on the Western Indian Ocean and the Pacific respectively, are likely to be valid to the same extent in the BOB). Despite the threat that these activities pose to local biodiversity when carried out uncontrolled, curtailing them indiscriminately could undermine, or at least have negative consequences on the range of benefits women and their families gain from them.

#### **4.2.4. TDA Volume 2 (review of socio-economic and environmental contexts of the BOBLME countries)**

*Overall: gender blind*

Aside from the fact that this report is an excellent and extremely comprehensive review of the characteristics and issues occurring in the BOBLME, gender considerations are not made explicit. The detailed information contained in the document however, in particular regarding the socio-economic and political characteristics of the BOBLME countries, enables the identification of opportunities and threats regarding the potential to tackle gender issues. The identified “opportunities”, in particular those related to policies and institutions, constitute the main entry points for improving the gender-sensitiveness of the SAP.

#### Human, social and economic development

##### Strengths

- There has been some progression towards the MDGs<sup>17</sup> in the region, in particular MDG 3 on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women (United Nations, 2011)

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exogenous changes on marine resource management and exploitation in the BOBLME could adopt a specific gender lens when it comes to understanding the vulnerability of coastal groups and the mechanisms that have enabled them to deal with change. In this context, investigating women’s practical and strategic needs (Moser’s framework), and determining levels of equality (Longwe’s framework) would be particularly relevant. Equally relevant however would be an examination, at macro level, of the extent to which the “gender-friendliness” of institutions shapes coastal communities’ resilience and adaption to exogenous factors.

<sup>17</sup> This information was not included in the report, yet the recent evaluation of progress towards the MDGs provides a good overview of current socio-economic development against an internationally agreed benchmark. The inclusion of this information, if it is possible, is suggested.

#### Weaknesses

- Low educational attainment may constrain the engagement of women and the raising of awareness of their rights and entitlements.
- Health and economic consequences of HIV, exposure to natural disasters, remoteness are likely to be borne more heavily by women (lower access to social protection and medical services) and could curtail the benefits they could gain from their increased participation in development activities.
- Inadequately defined land and rights for coastal dwellers and women *a fortiori*, are likely to penalize them from seizing new development opportunities, or resisting imposed developments (e.g. tourist resorts, urban/peri-urban developments, industrial developments etc.)

#### Opportunities

- In more conservative societies, the migration of male fishers may open up opportunities for women to increase their responsibility in the management of the household and in community affairs in the absence of a traditional male dominance.

#### Threats

- Increased female migration to the Middle-East and their absence from households and communities may result in long-term imbalances in gender relations at local levels and the slow (if not negative) impact of project activities which have a focus on gender.
- Fisher husbands and brothers' migration usually initially results in increased workload and responsibilities for the household for the women staying behind.
- The risk of displacement resulting from land seizing for economic developments, and its social consequences are likely to be borne more heavily by women.

#### Policies, legislation and institutions:

#### Strengths

- Policies concerning the environment in general, and the sustainable management of the BOB resources, exist. As it was seen in Part 3, some include gender provisions.
- The political will to improve the state of the environment and of the management of transboundary issues affecting the BOB exists. This can in turn give an impulse to the encompassing of gender considerations (gender being also, to some extent, a transboundary issue).

#### Weaknesses

- All described policies and legislation in vigour (concerning the environment and natural resources exploitation) appear gender blind.
- All policies have been formulated with little grassroot participation.
- Institutional capacity is generally weak, so asking for implementing policies that are gender-sensitive is likely to be even more challenging and will require additional resources (money but also training, awareness, time).

- Cooperation between different levels of government is generally weak, which implies that gender-sensitive actions (mainstreaming) will need to be enacted at all levels of administration.

#### Opportunities

- All countries are attempting to devolve natural resources management responsibilities to local communities, and there is an overall thrust for the decentralization of central administrations to lower levels of government (provincial/local), opening up possibilities for gender-balanced bottom-up participation and the voicing and adequate consideration of gender concerns in decision-making processes.
- The potential for promoting existing traditional and customary rights in the sustainable management of the BOBLME is also an entry point for ensuring that women's claims to these rights are enshrined in new documents and measures.

#### Threats

- Administrative and logistical constraints brought about by new/reformed institutions (e.g. horizontal and vertical cooperation and communication between different levels of government) and institutional processes (i.e. new "ways" of doing things) may risk to further exclude women and ignore gender issues.

### **4.3. BOBLME SAP development report and complementing Draft Action Programme (02.08.2012 version)**

The BOBLME SAP development report (BOBLME, 2012) presents the consensual decisions made by the project national coordinators and independent SAP experts in February 2012. These decisions relate specifically to the exact wording of the Regional Environmental Objective and of the three Ecosystem Quality Objectives that will form the core of the SAP under elaboration. Although these four overriding objectives have the merit of being very clear, they cloud over any general human development objectives (let alone gender equality ones) that could be indirectly addressed through their achievement. Although the document reports discussions over the importance of "cross-cutting features such as capacity building, enforcement, education - communications, inclusion of youth", these fail to make it into the Draft SAP document framework (annex VI of the February 2012 meeting report). It is therefore unclear whether or not it is the intention of the SAP writing team and project national coordinators to embed gender and "human" issues (broadly speaking) into these objectives.

Annex IV of the SAP development report containing draft objectives, targets, indicators and actions for inclusion in the SAP was superseded by a more recent version of the SAP "Draft action programme" (dated 02.08. 2012) which was used instead in the present assessment. A careful review of this annex reveals that most of the actions proposed could indirectly include gender but those highlighted amongst the "opportunities" of the SWOT analysis that follows are considered as direct entry points where gender issues and women's participation could be targeted. These opportunities should therefore be capitalized on in priority over the other actions that can address and include gender in the longer term.



### Strengths

- Communities are identified as a key stakeholder and their involvement in the management of the BOBLME (apart from Theme 1 where they are only mentioned in passing). As said before, working with communities can be a conduit through which gender issues can be addressed provided a number of steps are followed.
- Local women's groups, are to be targeted regarding awareness and communication on the protection and restoration of mangrove habitats (Theme 2, issue 1).
- The need for empowering local communities is recognized (Theme 2 mainly).

### Weaknesses

- None of the listed actions specifies who is targeted (men? Women? Both?).
- "Communities" and other target groups (especially when it comes to awareness and communication) tend to be considered as a homogeneous group<sup>18</sup>.
- No monitoring and evaluation is envisaged in the document, let alone that of the possible gender impacts (positive and negative) that may arise out of the proposed actions.

### Opportunities – entry points for tackling gender in the proposed SAP actions

#### *Immediate (actions and areas where a gender component can be easily built in)*

- The recognition of the important role of communities and local groups in working towards the achievement of the three objectives is an entry point for more targeted gender actions. The specification of who to work with (women, men, both) is however absolutely essential in this process, as well as the monitoring of the impact of their equal involvement (i.e. who gains and how, who loses and why).
- The suggestion to use some legal instruments such as stewardship arrangements with local communities (Theme 2, issue 1).
- The promotion of research on traditional management of mangroves and their reliance for supporting livelihoods may enable to highlight the diverse relationships and benefits men and women draw from this resource.
- A number thematic areas for human capacity development, e.g. management and restoration of mangroves, targeted at policy makers, NGOs, and local communities, can be designed to constitute an entry point for gender awareness. Those on the development of alternative livelihoods, targeted specifically at local communities, will need to be designed and run in a manner that not only involves women, but help them draw direct benefits from the training received (in terms of income, status, power both within the household and the community, and overall, challenge prevailing gender relations and beliefs – if these were identified as a hindrance for progress towards gender equality).
- Awareness and information on the societal costs of action/non-action for pollution will need to clearly distinguish the effects (and their costs) on different social groups (men, women, poor, ethnic minorities, youth etc.) as, for example, pollution has a differential impact on men and women (Clougherty, 2010).
- The lack of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system will enable the design of one that adequately encompasses gender issues and impacts (see Part 5).

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<sup>18</sup> Exception is made in Theme 2, issue 1, where local communities, including local women's groups, are to be targeted regarding awareness and communication on the protection and restoration of mangrove habitats.

*Longer term (actions and areas where a gender component can be build)*

- Some institutional reforms, such as the devolution of decision-making to the lowest level (Theme 2) or the establishment of national multi-stakeholder platforms for the management of pollution (Theme 3), in particular if they require the enactment of new laws, could account for gender issues and balance, but may not be realistically expected to occur within the lifetime of the project and would require additional resources.

## Threats

- Male bias in the suggested actions and target groups (e.g. “fishermen’s communities”) may reflect a lack of awareness and undermine the gender-sensitiveness of the SAP and forthcoming NAPs. This will need to be offset through the training and capacity building of the SAP and NAP writing teams or through a writing process specifically ‘accompanied’ by a gender expert.
- A marketization bias also pervades a number of SAP actions, in particular those focusing on the quantity and quality of coastal resources “products” (and which therefore command a price in the market place) such as timber and fish. This is likely to exclude the value of unpaid work and non-monetary benefits (i.e. ecosystem “services”) that women and vulnerable groups benefit from.
- If kept unchecked, both biases could lead to policies and other measures that fail to recognize inequalities in access to these resources.

**4.4. Conclusions from the gender audit**

The lack of consideration of gender issues in the draft SAP – the future main output of the BOBLME Project, is not surprising: had gender issues been brought up more prominently in the TDA, they would have naturally made their way into the SAP. Since the SAP will guide the development of the NAPs, it is therefore fundamental that the issue of gender inclusion be redressed in the SAP in order to avoid similar oversights at national levels. The decision over the contents of the draft SAP document framework is not questioned here, nor criticized, since the SAP structure was adopted by consensus. However, the recommended (but gender-blind) actions for implementation in the SAP (and consequently for the future NAPs) may have adverse consequences on the very groups the project is aiming to lift out of poverty and vulnerability in the longer term.

Notwithstanding the concern that the overlooking of gender dimensions in the present SAP version and supporting documents raises about the awareness and real intentions of those involved in the elaboration of the SAP, the gender audit has allowed to identify a number of opportunities that the SAP can capitalize on to mainstream gender in its activities. Recommendations detailed in Part 5 provide the means to do so and should enable the mainstreaming of gender in both the document and in the actions that the project will entail at national levels.

Anticipated benefits from the project at national level in terms of provision of “diversified livelihoods and improved wellbeing of small-scale fisher communities” and the anticipation that the implementation of the SAP would lead to “enhanced food security and reduced poverty for coastal communities”, thereby addressing a number of the MDGs (Project document, 2008) implicitly signals the BOBLME countries’ desire that their commitment to poverty eradication and gender equality be reflected and integrated in the SAP and in the NAPs, and that the omission of gender in the project and its documents is the consequence of a lack of awareness and expertise on gender issues rather than an intended oversight.

## 5. Mainstreaming gender in the BOBLME SAP (and NAPs)

### 5.1. Why is gender mainstreaming important? Benefits and challenges.

Section 1 of the paper highlighted the importance of gender in fisheries. The environment and gender are intimately linked because: i. gender mediates environmental encounter, use, knowledge, and assessment; and ii. gender roles, responsibilities, expectations, norms, and the division of labor shape all forms of human relationships to the environment (Seager and Hartmann, 2005). Thus, touching on either the environment or gender will have an impact on, i.e. create a change on, the other and vice-versa. Mainstreaming gender in environmental projects therefore provides a means by which simultaneous progress towards environmental sustainability and gender equality is made. In addition, gender mainstreaming is also justified on arguments of justice and equality, credibility and accountability, quality of life, alliances and for the “chain reaction” they will trigger (UNEP, 2010).

As a result, mainstreaming gender in development interventions, regardless of their nature, is generally advised because the impact of such interventions will go a longer way and achieve more than if gender issues are ignored. For example, PRSPs of those countries that had recognized and incorporated gender issues in their initial assessments were found to have a higher impact (Kabeer, 2003). Yet at project level, actual examples of the positive, “measured” impacts of gender mainstreaming are few and far in between. Two regional fisheries projects are however an exception and their positive experiences at mainstreaming gender in their activities are reviewed in section 5.2.3.

However, even if it “makes sense” to mainstream gender, and despite (some) good intentions, evaluations have shown that it is not yet even across agencies and projects, and that gender has yet to become “everyone’s business” (Risby and Todd, 2011). There are two overarching reasons for this. The first is that gender mainstreaming requires some preliminary “homework”/ background work in order to first get a picture of the prevailing ‘gender landscape’ (situation of men, women and their power relations in a given context, obtained through a gender analysis) and reflect on how the issues identified through this homework could be worked into a project’s objectives, actions, indicators and resource allocation. Time, expertise and budgetary constraints, as well as multiple development priorities have however been shown to often get in the way of such an undertaking.

The second challenge relates to resistance to change. Gender mainstreaming is a political act (March et al., 1999). Development initiatives for which gender equality is not a primary aim, such as those driven by bio-physical objectives (e.g. natural resources management, infrastructure development etc., by opposition to health and sanitation which more ‘naturally’ lend themselves to integrate gender considerations), may face resistance in their engagement with gender issues. Overcoming political resistance and misalignment between project objectives (usually reflecting its donor’s policy and/or priorities) and countries’ priorities regarding gender mainstreaming and equality requires in-depth engagement and dialogue, which again, are likely to be constrained by time, changing priorities and human and institutional capacities.

### 5.2. Review of gender mainstreaming experiences

#### 5.2.1. Key lessons from gender mainstreaming policies and practices in other fields

There is usually a gap between gender mainstreaming intentions and observed gender impacts at field level (Risby and Todd, 2011). This section seeks to dig more into this issue by reviewing gender mainstreaming experiences in fields which, like fisheries and the environment, can be perceived as bearing no apparent relation to gender issues, with an objective to learn lessons that could be of relevance to the BOBLME Project.

*Sustainable energy:*

Critical actions emerging from the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme's (AFPP) guidance to ensure the successful mainstreaming of gender were to define what the gender objective was – alongside more technical objectives, and to append a Gender Action Plan to the project document (ENERGIA, 2010). The experience of the AFPP in mainstreaming gender is overall very insightful and a number of the practical steps to prepare, design, implement, and monitor and report gender considerations have been reworked as suggestions to mainstream gender in both the SAP and NAPs (see sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2).

*Environment and early warning:*

Out of an analysis of the components of the failure of mainstreaming gender in environment and early warning in the work of UNEP – many of which echo the shortcomings identified in the mainstreaming of gender in the BOBLME Project documents, projects aiming to bridge environment and gender face three challenges (after Seager and Hartmann, 2005):

- The tendency to fall into the stereotypical image of the rural woman having a special relationship to nature,
- Issues of scale and causality, i.e. the mismatch between the wider scale of environmental studies and the fine-grained and local analysis of gender issues, and between the causal relationships between local happenings (both environmental and social) and larger processes and drivers.
- The provision of gender-disaggregated data and indicators.

The first point should engage project planners to reflect on their personal views and understanding of women and nature. The second point has implications for the actual design of actions that will be included in the SAP. Indeed, scale interactions and feedback loops (panarchy, drivers/responses) are becoming increasingly recognized in the shaping of social-ecological systems resilience. Both are of particular relevance in a large ecosystem as sensitive to manage (from both an environmental and social and economic point view) as the BOBLME. Finally, the need for gender (or at least sex)-disaggregated data is a recurrent plea, but one that still remains to be adequately addressed.

*Water and sanitation in cities:*

To mainstream gender in their water and sanitation in cities activities, UN Habitat (undated) conducted rapid gender assessments, out of which thematic priorities for action emerged. These ranged from gender-friendly technical sanitation interventions (e.g. sanitation facilities that cater for the needs of women, men, children and disabled people) to managerial ones that involved women and men in decisions over urban river catchment management. Importantly they placed a strong emphasis on the implementation of cross-cutting activities such as: training and capacity building (both within communities and at institutional level, with municipalities and local authorities and women's organisations), the organization of workshops on gender awareness at the attention of the wider public in every location where a sanitation intervention was implemented, the organization of high-level policy consultations to draw the attention of policy-makers on the need and importance to mainstream gender in their programmes and identify where progress was being made and where gaps remained. Of relevance to the elaboration of the BOBLME Project documents were the benefits drawn from establishing an iterative process, in the form of repeated interactions and communications between stakeholders at different levels: the **flexibility** to revisit plans for the incorporation of feedback and the adaptation of gender contents to evolving situations as a result of the project implementation at national levels should be carefully considered.

*Agricultural water management:*

Gender seems to have fared better in water management initiatives. Despite uneven progress on the ground, the specific inclusion of the “pivotal role of women as providers and users of water and guardians of the living environment” in the high-level statement that emerged from the 1992 Dublin Conference on Water and the Environment certainly gave an impulse for gender to feature high in the international water development programmes and conferences that followed (Seager and Hartmann, 2005). Aware of the constraints that natural resources and water managers are operating under, the CGIAR has issued a “minimum agenda on gender mainstreaming” in their water-related programmes (CGIAR, 2006). Their approach is to provide a list of “things to do” to specific stakeholders. These include not only water specialists at various levels (“practitioners in the field”, “policy-makers and funding agencies”, “researchers and trainers in water and agriculture”), but also gender experts, who too are enjoined to not only bring their social knowledge in technical agendas, but also to broaden their perspectives to understand local situations from the perspective of the water technician. Indeed, and in relation to the BOBLME SAP and future NAPs, the BOBLME Project agenda and the gender equality discourse will only be bridged if both natural and social scientists make respective efforts to broaden their understanding of each other’s discipline and concerns. If gender experts are recruited to provide advice further down the line during the NAP elaboration and beyond, it is important that they too adapt and pitch their expertise at the right level.

*Peace building and conflict resolution:*

Peace building, as remote to the BOBLME context as it may seem, is related to it inasmuch as it encompasses the addressing of conflicts, and conflicts – at all levels – not only happen in the management and use of transboundary resources, but also do involve women and gender relations in their long-term resolution. Effectively mainstreaming gender in peace involves the promotion of institutional change and culture, i.e. a change “from within” that enables institutions to better account and cater for human rights, and in which the promotion of women’s participation is key (Pankhurst, 2000). Additionally is the need to work with both men *and* women to change the negative types of “masculinities” that tend to dominate in conflict situations. This is of direct relevance to the general context of fisheries and other transboundary resources management where many issues are at stake, and where conflicts of interest are likely to arise, even within nations.

**5.2.2. Gender mainstreaming in other LME projects**

All the project documents and outputs of large marine ecosystems projects co-funded by the GEF, closed or ongoing, which could be found on the internet<sup>19</sup> and were reviewed in search of experiences of gender mainstreaming that the BOBLME could learn from.

Of the Agulhas and Somali, Benguela, Guinea and Canary Current LMEs and of the Caribbean, Yellow Sea and Mediterranean Sea LMEs, only few alluded to gender issues, usually in generic terms and without specifying how recommended actions would be implemented and help progress towards gender equality (Table 4).

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<sup>19</sup> Extensive searches on the project websites, the GEF website and other websites (e.g. NOAA) were conducted, and where possible, project contact points were contacted for documentation. This, however, yielded uneven results: of those projects now closed, only one SAP could be found (Guinea Current LME). Project documents were found in most cases, and TDAs occasionally. Complementary documentation was also reviewed where it was accessible (see Table 4 for complete list of project documents reviewed).

The GEF/UNEP Handbook on Governance and Socioeconomics of Large Marine Ecosystems (Olsen et al., 2006), although recognizing that opportunities to individually thrive and collectively achieve sustainable development are conditioned by race, gender and socio-economic status (citing the World Bank's World Development Report on Equity and Development, 2006), is not explicit about the effect of gender inequalities on the sustainable management of LMEs, nor about how gender issues should be tackled and incorporated in LME projects and their key outputs. Few insights were therefore be gained from the review of other LME projects, apart from the conclusion that, in comparison to other LMEs, the BOBLME Project, by having identified a shortcoming in its addressing of gender issues, could become ahead of the game and set forth an example, if it pursues its efforts to address them.

**Table 4: Review of the inclusion of gender (issues and/or mainstreaming) in Large Marine Ecosystems projects.**

Large Marine Ecosystem	Documents reviewed	Reference to gender
<b>Agulhas and Somali Current</b>	Project Document Mid-Term Evaluation	No specific mention of "gender" or "women", although "empowerment" is referred to through the establishment of a partnership with NEPAD, which includes increasing women's empowerment amongst its domains of action.  Stakeholder participation is mentioned in the project document, yet without specific reference to who participants are.
<b>Benguela Current</b>	Project Document Request for CEO endorsement SAP Implementation report Jan-Mar 2010 Benguela Current Commission (BCC) Interim Agreement	Only a reference to "support to the BCC to identify initial activities for gender mainstreaming, involving the youth and generating awareness about HIV/AIDS and fisheries" is included in the SAP Implementation report.
<b>Guinea Current</b>	SAP (2008)	In the section dealing with cross-cutting issues, gender is referred to amongst a set of actions dealing with "communication, information, education and awareness". The particular action is "ensuring gender-based participation at the policy formulation process in the design and management of development information and communication initiatives in coastal and marine areas".  The involvement of men and women, and thus the indirect addressing of gender issues is implied in another action on: "effective involvement of non-government and community-based organisations in order to reach the grassroot and facilitate the management process of coastal and

		marine areas”.
<b>Caribbean</b>	PDF Block A Revised PIF document Pipeline concept paper	Nothing on gender.
<b>Mediterranean Sea</b>	Project Document TDA SAP BIO (for the conservation of biological diversity) SAP MED (to address pollution from land-based activities)	Under the “promotion of governmental and political practices compatible with the protection of biodiversity”, which broadly concerns governance and solidarity (SAP BIO), it is envisaged to “encourage public participation, access to environmental and other information relevant to sustainable development, especially the role of women as essential actors for sustainable development”.
<b>Yellow Sea</b>	Project Document	Nothing on gender.

### 5.2.3. Gender mainstreaming in other fisheries-related regional projects

More useful lessons and practical advice on the successful mainstreaming of gender in fisheries-related projects can be learnt from the British-funded Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) in West Africa and the Spanish-funded FAO Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia (RFLP).

Implemented in 1999 in 25 countries of West Africa, the **SFLP**, by explicitly adopting a sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) – and the underpinning concepts of capabilities and institutional interplay that shape people’s livelihoods – was able to widen the focus on the biological components of fisheries that prevailed in fisheries agencies, to include social, economic and institutional dimensions in the fisheries management agendas of the participating countries (Allison and Horemans, 2006). This innovative approach led to the recognition that gender issues mattered. Particular attention thus was paid to them in the poverty profiling that preceded interventions, and later in areas of intervention that aimed at strengthening social and human capital in the communities where the project was implemented. These were as varied as literacy training for women and fish traders, where literacy was found to hamper participation and benefits, joint participation of men and women in theatre productions addressing HIV/AIDS issues in fishing communities, use of social communicators in meetings on fisheries management attended by both men and women, the canvassing of village committees to include women amongst their members, etc.

The gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the SFLP mirrored the one proposed by FAO (2002), and implemented it from the bottom up on the belief that “by producing tangible and motivating results at the operational level, a gradual move of gender concerns to the bigger goals of cultural and social change and empowerment and equality can be achieved” (Holvoet, 2008). The practical steps the project followed, which triggered a positive evolution in the perception of women’s position and gender relations at community and policy levels, are summarized in Box 2, as an illustration of “best practice”.

**Box 2: An example of “best practice”. How gender was mainstreamed in the SFLP project.**

To start with, the project developed a gender analysis toolkit that combined various components of existing gender analysis frameworks (see **Appendix III**) and was adapted to the West African context. A factor of success in the implementation of the analysis and the progress towards gender equality it led to was to establish partnerships with actors at community and meso-level from the outset of the investigations: not only community male and female members provided information for the gender analysis, they were involved in the analytical process and together elaborated a “community gender strategy” which informed action plans for the community-based organizations (CBOs) involved in the project. The two-way trickling of information from the community up to the meso-level (CBOs) which later informed decision-makers at the macro-level (policy formulation) and back was part of the “vertical mainstreaming strategy” of the project. In addition, the toolkit was applied throughout the fish value chain to ensure that gender roles and relationships between male and female actors of different socio-professional groups were analysed. The use of social dialogue, communication, participatory and transparent processes also helped to mainstream gender “horizontally”, i.e. across other, non-fisheries institutions, and led to the progressive integration of gender in organizational development and the policies, institutions and processes (the “PIP” box of the SLA), that affect men and women’s lives in fishing communities.

*Source: Holvoet, 2008.*

In Asia, and learning from the SFLP experience, countries participating in the **RFLP** (among which were Indonesia and Sri Lanka) recognized that there was no single way to mainstream gender in fisheries development. They highlighted a number of factors that could contribute to it: the constitution and improvement of social networks and the promotion of women’s leadership, business skills and participation in decision-making bodies (e.g. in co-management mechanisms), improved access to, and control over, resources, markets, means of production and social capital, dissemination of information on gender issues (Lentisco and Alonso, 2012). As was highlighted earlier, they also recognized that flexibility and possibility of adaptation to a changing reality were essential in project implementation (*ibid.*)

Both projects lead to the dissemination of gender-specific outputs, ranging from a handbook for mainstreaming gender in fisheries cycle management (Arenas and Lentisco, 2011 for the RFLP) to policy briefs on gender in fisheries (FAO, 2007 for the SFLP), aimed at both managers and policy-makers.

#### **5.2.4. Conclusions**

Challenging preconceived ideas about the role and relationship of women and nature, building flexibility in the design and implementation of a project that allow them to adapt to an evolving gender reality, along with explicit work on gender issues and the direct targeting of women through specific actions are all possible avenues that the BOBLME Project can consider to mainstream gender in its operations. While gender-specific project outputs such as those disseminated by the SFLP and RFLP project are not envisaged in the case of the BOBLME Project, the approaches used to mainstream gender in these two programmes, and lessons learnt from this can inform some



practical steps that can be taken by the BOBLME Project<sup>20</sup>. The experiences of these two regional projects have informed the practical mainstreaming steps suggested in the section that follows.

### 5.3. What to do next: Recommended actions (entry points) to mainstream gender in the BOBLME SAP (and indirectly, for subsequent NAPs)

Many of the lessons drawn from Risby and Todd (2011)'s examination of experiences in mainstreaming gender equality across donor organizations' programmes have informed the recommendations that follow. Fundamentally however, the validity of these recommendations will depend on a degree of organizational change within the project and governmental teams of the BOBLME countries to bring about change and achieve the project's ultimate (human) objective, beyond the SAP's own three objectives. For this to happen, acting through three levers is encouraged (after Kabeer, 2003):

1. **Awareness lever:** long-term and regular training and capacity building of national project staff on gender issues.
2. **Communication lever:** improve the flow of gender-related (and other cross-cutting) information between the different stakeholders, both horizontally (across disciplines and roles) and vertically (across hierarchies).
3. **Incentives lever:** assess the gender mainstreaming efforts made through monitoring and performance appraisal. The implementation of incentives systems and accountability has been identified as key in the systematization of the mainstreaming of gender (Risby and Todd, 2011).

These three levers, which underpin all the mainstreaming actions that follow, should be considered as the overarching principles to guide the future work of the project and its team in this regard.

#### 5.3.1. Recommendations for the elaboration of the SAP

Fisheries came to recognize the importance of gender rather late: gender does not figure in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), and came into the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) as an after-thought thanks to the efforts of De Young and Charles (2008) to ensure that human, and *a fortiori* gender, dimensions of fisheries were adequately covered in the implementation of the EAF. As it is expected that the SAP will closely follow the principles of the CCRF and EAF, care needs to be taken not to de facto omit the wider human implications of these approaches.

##### 5.3.1.1. Conception and elaboration process of the SAP:

- Involve a **higher number of women** in the SAP writing teams.
- Organize a **training session** on gender aspects as soon as possible for members of the SAP writing team, and for national project coordinators and their teams.
- Involve a **gender expert**, if possible from the region, in the writing process (at least at review stage before finalization of the SAP.)
- Follow a **gender check-list (Appendix V)** to ensure that gender is woven throughout the document and that no doubt is left to any future reader, user of the SAP, and evaluator about the attention paid to gender by the project. Note that if a similar check-list is used at the time of the elaboration of the NAPs, it needs to be applied *consistently* across all BOBLME countries.

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<sup>20</sup> Noting however that BOBLME as an LME Project is designed very differently from a "fisheries livelihood" project and as such has far less opportunities to act on the "community level" (notwithstanding the formulated development goal).

### 5.3.1.2. **Structure and contents of the document:**

Consider a rewording of the project's ultimate objective and add a **statement of political will** on gender equality

Ideally, the SAP should include amongst its objectives one about progressing towards gender equality. The initial intention of the project to alleviate poverty and improve the lives "of coastal populations" could be reworded as "of men and women equally in coastal areas". As simple as it may sound, it could set forth a more gender-sensitive tone to the rest of the SAP and show not only greater awareness of gender equality, but that it is the intention of the project to ensure that both women and men benefit equally from the BOBLME Project.

The elaboration stage that the SAP has presently reached may however prevent this. Notwithstanding, a **joint statement of political will or commitment** of all BOBLME partner countries to gender equality in the future implementation of project activities at the outset of the SAP could be an alternative to a rework of the project objectives. Leadership commitment is fundamental to trigger long-term changes in mindsets and organization that mainstreaming requires (Risby and Todd, 2012). A sign of such a commitment could be in the form of a consensual statement of political will, or a "gender mainstreaming Charter", signed by all BOBLME member governments, at senior level, to demonstrate commitment to the principle of, and desire to enhance, gender equality at local, national and regional levels. It is however important that the terms of this statement or Charter resonate enough with the existing mandate of institutions of those signing it in order to be easily accepted and to last over time. Assistance from a gender expert should be sought to draft the terms and contents of the Charter. The Charter needs to specify *how* and *by whom* gender mainstreaming is to be undertaken, i.e. give an explicit mandate to the project in relation to gender equality.

#### Ensure that **SAP actions are gender-sensitive**

As it was not known at the time of writing which of the listed actions in the Draft Action Programme would make it into the final SAP, the recommendation here remains generic. It involves asking one question before the listing of each action in the SAP: "**Will this action affect men and women differently?**". If the answer is yes (likely), it means that the planned action needs to be refined and that some form of gender analysis should be carried out regarding the extent and reason(s) of that difference. Exploring the gender equality implications of each proposed action may lead to a complete re-thinking in the way each action is developed and implemented, or may only require some minor adjustments.

Although the inclusion of gender-sensitive actions may be the most obvious way to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account in the BOBLME Project, it is relatively easy, in the planning of such activities, to fall in the Women in Development / efficiency (cf. Harvard Framework) rhetoric and to perpetuate the failings of past mainstreaming initiatives. Local, field-level activities should therefore do more than simply write women in their design (Risby and Todd, 2011): actions should specify the groups they are targeting (e.g. those for men, those for women, and those addressing the relationship between them). For example in the case of co-management: women need to be consulted and to participate in co-management meetings (WID), *and* their opinions are heard and concerns fully taken into account in decision-making processes (GAD objective). Similarly, post-harvest and micro-finance activities are typically involving women, but are not the only activities where women play an important role in the fish value chain (FAO, 2007). To avoid these pitfalls, it is suggested that, at a time when opportunities for the choice of interventions at national levels are still open, that those interventions that can directly address gender issues be selected in priority, and that assistance from a gender expert be sought to design them with gender equality in mind.

Add a section on **cross-cutting issues** that will encompass gender-related actions

Inspired from the Guinea Current LME SAP, it is recommended that a section on **cross-cutting issues** be added as an integral component of the “Action Programme”<sup>21</sup>. This section would deal specifically with human capacity building and training, legal issues, institutions, awareness and communication. Such a section would constitute an entry point for gender issues, to be “woven” into each of the cross-cutting issues, instead of gender being a stand-alone section.

*Regarding training and awareness of project and government staff on gender*

This recommendation refers to the **human resources that are needed for taking forward the gender agenda till the project end (and beyond)**. Aware and skilled personnel is needed to conduct gender analyses and to push forward a gender equality agenda throughout the project implementation, from design to monitoring and evaluation. Gender training is “a range of activities which seek to inform, raise consciousness and equip different categories of persons with the skills to enable them to address gender inequalities in their work, their lives, and in society at large” (Acquaye-Baddoo and Tsikata, 2001: 61, cited in Warren, 2007). Gender training, and more generally, awareness raising about gender issues, their importance and ways to tackle them, is therefore a key mechanism to make gender “everyone’s business” and thus account for it in all project-related activities. This crosscutting issue, which may eventually be broadened to include training about other aspects of relevance to the project, is seen as a fundamental addition to the SAP. Yet, training should not be a panacea, and gender courses and awareness raising programmes need to be carefully crafted to be effective. Some pitfalls to avoid are listed below, with suggestions for overcoming them and ensuring their relevance to the BOBLME Project staff and partners.

### **Tailoring**

A training needs assessment is recommended prior to the delivery of any training on gender. Objectives for gender training can be very diverse: from awareness and sensitivity, analysis at field level, training for policy-makers, to skills development for women (Warren, 2007), depending on what is to be achieved. Consequently, “one-size-fits-all” gender training courses are generally ineffective at effectively raising awareness and providing the right tools for addressing gender issues as part of broader development programmes. Given the importance of training that ought to be emphasized in the SAP and NAPs, particular efforts to avoid this shortcoming should be made: training courses, and their delivery, should be tailored to the needs of trainees, which will vary across BOBLME countries, but also agencies (government, NGOs, local community organisations, etc.) and levels of responsibilities (e.g. senior officials, extension officers).

Assistance in training needs assessments and the actual design and the specific tailoring of training courses should be sought from experts in gender training, and supported by appropriate budgetary allocations. The delivery of courses contents will also be more effective, memorable, and bear longer-term impacts if it is targeted at smaller groups who have expressed similar training needs. Furthermore, similar to any learning process, gender concepts will become more effectively ‘anchored’ and translated into practice if the courses are part of a longer-term capacity building programme on gender issues, instead of being delivered as a ‘one-off’ course. This may be even more the case if the turnover among staff and government officials is relatively high, and skills and knowledge need to be brought up-to-date regularly.

### **Identify “gender champions”**

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<sup>21</sup> This section is envisaged as action-oriented, and as such, as differing from the more general/background text of the sub-section that precedes the “Action Programme” under Chapter 3 of the Draft SAP document framework.

This concerns who training should be planned for (within the project). All people at all project levels should be eligible for, and encouraged to attend, training and awareness raising courses on gender. However, it may be worth considering the training of those in leadership positions at national levels in priority. The reason for this is to avoid what is called “policy evaporation”: the fact that documents’ intentions, if not concretely supported by high-level management actions, will ‘evaporate’ before they reach the ground and fail to bring the intended impacts (Derbyshire, 2002). Gender champions need to be situated within “senior and middle management, with sufficient power to (a) support and influence the implementation of gender mainstreaming policy by technical staff; and (b) ensure that partner government receive the necessary assistance” (Risby and Todd, 2011). In this sense, gender champions are fulfilling a different role from gender focal points whose role is perceived as more one of liaison and communication than technical advice. However, in those countries where gender focal points are not yet in place yet or cannot be identified, champions can fulfill their role. This role would be to influence the mainstreaming process and ensure that it is consistent at all project levels. This commitment to gender within national teams should eventually lead to the commitment of the institutions national teams belong to.

However, if gender training proves difficult to incorporate in the SAP, or implement in practice, alternative mechanisms for obtaining the relevant gender expertise, especially at national level, are available, such as establishing partnerships with institutes or organisations familiar with gender issues, resorting to consultancies or recruiting experts. Corresponding budget allocations need then to be made to cover the costs associated with such measures. Such a budgeting needs to be planned throughout the duration of the plan (and through to the NAPs) to ensure that the inputs of gender specialists be provided *throughout the duration* of these interventions.

#### *Regarding communication*

This concerns mainly communication and information flows about gender within the project. For a number of reasons, gender specialists are likely to remain a minority and to work amongst non-gender specialists. Ensuring that gender-related information imparted to non-gender specialists, such as the natural resources and fisheries management experts and officials involved in the BOBLME, trickles down to field level is a big challenge. For this purpose, the identification of a “**gender focal point**” to “disseminate gender-based knowledge resources across sectors at the country or field level, as well as to provide informal backstopping and advice to supplement formal training” is recommended (Risby and Todd, 2011). The role of these gender focal points is considered pivotal in facilitating the implementation of levers 1 and 2 on training and communication, but they need to have a clear mandate, with clear responsibilities and well-defined functions, for their role to be credible and valued by both their non-specialist project peers and the project beneficiaries.

#### *Regarding legislation*

One of the recommended actions of the SAP should be to carry out a gender audit of national legislation related to fisheries and environmental management to assess the gender-sensitivity of the legal and regulatory frameworks governing fisheries and environmental management at national levels. Some pointers on how to do this were provided in section 3.2.1.5. If this is taken further in the NAPs, it could result in legal and regulatory changes, and/or the promotion of new and gender-sensitive laws.

#### *Regarding capacity building at field level*

The SAP should include actions that promote capacity building at field level, for both men and women in fishing and coastal communities, and for community-based organisations. Whilst capacity building schemes need to be tailored to prevailing cultural contexts (thus the ways to promote, and

proceed with, such training will need to be detailed in the NAPs), the promotion of capacity building/training of women in non-traditional activities, such as, for example, swimming (Aguilar and Castañeda, 2001), should be considered. Box 3 shows how the involvement of women in such a non-traditional activity (masonry) was approached.

Support actions that consider the development of self-help groups, associations and networks at local levels are also recommended, as long as they recognize and build on the leadership of women (Aguilar and Castañeda, 2001). While the activities of such groups must challenge existing gender relations (i.e. move from WID to GAD and empowerment), this should be done sensitively and within the primary objective of the project (improved aquatic resources management of the BOBLME) in order to avoid a possible backlash towards women in more conservative societies where such empowerment may be perceived as a threat to dominant cultural traditions.

### **Box 3: Encouraging women to become biogas masons in Nepal**

Commonly held perception is that women are not strong enough and not technically inclined to do the physical work associated with masonry. In many cultures, it is also not accepted that women do this kind of work. Women masons in the Nepal Biogas programme have gone through this very phase, and have, over time, managed to gain confidence in the market as well as respect from their families. This achievement has taken many years but today, the biogas programme has not only women masons but women operating as supervisors as well as proprietors of biogas companies. Strategies that worked well included:

- A visible commitment to gender issues at the programme level, and articulated at the highest levels,
- Conducting special women focused masons training programmes,
- Additional affirmative action to encourage women as masons, such as:
  - Conducting special training for women masons to build their confidence and skills, and following this up with combined (men and women together) refresher training,
  - A special incentive of NRs 1000 is provided to women masons (during the initial years, this was provided to all participants (men and women), later to be given only women), participants are provided this incentive
  - Women masons were allowed to take up the job as per their convenience with respect to geographical area, they wanted to operate in, the company they wanted to work for and staying overnight at the site,
  - Ensuring conducive atmosphere for women masons through provision of personal security while attending the train (provision for companion while attending trainings), organizing child care, holding trainings close to women's homes,
  - A continuous process of encouraging men counterparts, especially the owners of biogas companies. Some of the training on O&M include women users only.
  - Encouraging rural women to become masons through women mobilizers. Today women farmers themselves, on hearing about the trainings via friends and women mobilizers, approach BSP that they wish to join, as it gives them a good new job opportunity.

*Source: ABPP Africa project, ENERGIA, 2010.*

*Regarding data collection*

The SAP should recommend that all envisaged collection of data and information be **gender-disaggregated**. This not only means that figures or facts should separately relate to men and women's conditions, but also that the process of collecting the data be gender-sensitive, i.e. that male bias be avoided through, for example, the careful planning and organization of meetings, focus groups, interviews etc. at community and household levels, to hear everyone's voice. Note however that although gender-disaggregated data is crucial (especially for the establishment of a baseline, for the monitoring and evaluation of impacts and for reporting requirements), collecting data separately for men and women is not sufficient on its own and needs to be guided by gender-aware analyses and intentions. Indeed, if quantitative data collection lends itself to the description of men and women's participation (e.g. counting how many women and men have participated, how many women and men have received direct support from the project, etc.), it is not sufficient to generate insights on the prevailing gender relations between these same men and women, nor is it enough to monitor any changes in relations that may result from the implementation and influence of the project. Thus, a mix of *quantitative and qualitative data*, the latter focusing on perceived changes in power (im) balances and women's strategic needs, has to be collected and its analysis integrated in the monitoring and evaluation of the project's impacts on gender equality.

*Regarding the design of research-oriented activities*

If the SAP includes some research-oriented activities<sup>22</sup> that will require implementation at country level, it is important that they are gender-sensitive, and that, as said above, any collection of information and data that underpins them be gender-disaggregated. Such data could also be used for baseline purposes and monitoring and evaluation. Note in this regard that linking national research activities with those of international research institutes operating in the region such as CGIAR centres which have adopted a deliberate gender focus in their work (Ashby et al., 2012), may enable to fast-track and strengthen this process.

The SAP can support gender-sensitive research activities by (after Ashby et al., 2012):

- (a) Prioritising those research activities and topics that consider potential for gender-differentiated impacts as a criterion for selection.
- (b) Field-testing and assessing research interventions with respect to their potential to benefit or adversely affect different social groups, including women.
- (c) Testing and evaluating research interventions with representatives of socially and gender-differentiated groups of users using bottom-up, participatory, gender-sensitive methods.
- (d) Publishing tools, strategies, models, case studies and guidelines that make a specific reference to the gender implications of the investigations carried out.

Consider **accountability mechanisms** and the use of **incentives**

The SAP could consider the promotion of the use of incentives and accountability requirements to ensure that efforts are made to deliver the project commitment to gender equality. Although the use of incentives has been so far uneven across donor-funded programmes, and should not be seen as a silver bullet to the failings of gender mainstreaming, they could stimulate further the attention to be paid to gender in the project.

Incentives for those (and their institutions) who incorporate gender in their work can be both tangible (e.g. pay level, promotion, increased budgets) and intangible (e.g. professional recognition

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<sup>22</sup> The "research" meant here is action-oriented, i.e. with a development purpose, not fundamental/blue-sky research.

and institutional credibility). Accountability mechanisms could be implemented as part of monitoring and evaluation; the mere fact of knowing that one is accountable for his/her actions and that a monitoring system of such actions is in place usually acts as a strong incentive for compliance. This dimension of monitoring and evaluation is dealt with in section 5.3.3.1.

On a practical level, incentives can be used to ensure that gender training is mandatory for management and project staff as part of a more general capacity development process. Thus, attendance to gender training courses for example, and the translation of new learning and improved awareness in the actions implemented under the NAPs, could be monitored and rewarded where appropriate and according to a set of predefined criteria known to all.

Incentives can also be used to attract and recruit female field workers in partner countries when it comes to the implementation of project activities at national level. Their training and employment should be seen as an integral part of gender mainstreaming in the project. Incentives in this case could include non-financial advantages such as organizational flexibility and part-time employment possibilities to attract women applicants and retain them throughout the implementation of the project.

Earmark **budget** funds for gender-related activities

The SAP implementation budget needs to support all gender-related activities. This is a *sine-qua-non* condition to the mainstreaming of gender in the BOBLME Project itself. In the light of past evaluations that have attributed limited mainstreaming and impact to insufficient financial resources (Risby and Todd, 2011), earmarking of specific funds to activities that address directly and indirectly gender issues is essential. This will ensure that BOBLME countries' commitment to gender equality through the SAP implementation is backed by appropriate financial resources. Budget allocations for gender mainstreaming can support, throughout the project cycle:

- Project activities themselves at national/field levels. Although it is anticipated that budgets will be made available for this purpose at national level for countries to implement the SAP and their respective NAPs, an additional allocation to those activities that particularly emphasize gender may be considered. A balance should be sought between the support of activities that directly target women and those that address gender relations more profoundly.
- The recruitment of the appropriate gender expertise, as was suggested earlier.
- Most importantly, the monitoring and evaluation of the project activities, when the progress made by the project towards on gender equality will be evaluated.
- The monitoring of the gender mainstreaming process itself, through for example, the undertaking of a "gender-responsive budget analysis" both at the time of budget allocation (baseline) and at the end of the project, as part of a final evaluation of the project's gender "value for money".

Lack of tracking of gender-related expenditure is a recurrent weakness of most donor-funded (non-specialist) projects and programmes (Risby and Todd, 2011). In the management of budgets, it will therefore be important to keep track of how much ends up being actually spent on gender mainstreaming and activities involving gender issues at national level. Not only is this important to ensure that sufficient funds are deployed to support gender-related activities in the project implementation, it is also important for the monitoring of the efficiency and impact of the mainstreaming process itself.

Add a **pathway to impact** focused on gender

The addition of a **gender-sensitive pathway to impact** to the SAP would emphasize the positive gender impacts the project is intended to have on its intended beneficiaries. A pathway to impact is

an ex-ante analysis of the anticipated impacts of planned project actions. Here such a pathway would touch more closely on gender issues. Its elaboration will demonstrate how the environmental improvements stemming from the realization of the three Ecosystem Quality Objectives of the SAP are expected to translate into welfare improvements amongst coastal populations. This is all the more essential given the project development objective. Failing this, it will remain unclear how ultimate beneficiaries in the BOBLME countries, and in particular women, will be reached and how their wellbeing will improve thanks to the project intervention. Such a plan will show how the project, which has so far been predominantly focused on natural resources, will benefit BOB coastal populations and contribute to gender equality. A “pathway to impact” is however different from a M&E Plan which focuses on the ex-post evaluation of activities, although the former will inform the latter.

Writing a pathway to impact here would involve answering three questions:

- What is the project trying to achieve in terms of gender?
- What changes in people do the project teams expect to see, at all levels (within the project team itself, at national level within governments, at local levels within communities and within households)?
- How will these changes come about?

Practically, this involves: 1. Identifying the long-term gender goal of the project and the assumptions behind it. 2. Backwards mapping and connecting the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve that goal. 3. Identifying the interventions that the project will perform to measure desired change. Note that while possible indicators of progress and performance can be mentioned under step 3, they should be further developed in the section of the SAP dedicated to M&E (see section 5.3.3 of this paper).

Not only relevant to the SAP, a pathway to impacts would also demonstrate a commitment of the project and its teams to *change*, the concept that underpins both progress towards gender equality and outcome mapping. Considerations over how the project SAP will translate into benefits at national levels could also guide the development of the NAPs, and thus ensure their close linkage with the SAP (Cooke and Webster, 2009).

### **5.3.2. Some tips for the NAPs**

Many of the recommendations made in the previous section for mainstreaming gender in the SAP apply to a similar extent to the mainstreaming of gender in the NAPs. Some further “tips” are provided here, in relation to:

#### *National capacity:*

To ensure that the mainstreaming of gender becomes a reality, it goes without saying that, as was the case for the implementation of the SAP, those in charge of the elaboration and implementation of NAPs will need to be gender-aware. This needs to be clearly spelt out in the sections of these documents dealing with responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of the national plans and project activities.

Gender focal points and/or champions in each country (section 3.2.1.4) will need to be identified as a matter of priority, and consulted throughout the NAP elaboration process for both technical gender inputs and improved communication.

More women are also needed in national teams in charge of implementation of the NAPs.

#### *Gender analysis:*



Carrying out a gender analysis at national level, *prior to or in parallel with the elaboration of the NAP* contents, is necessary to inform the nature and design of project activities to be implemented at national levels. A gender analysis should also enable to identify those organisations and programmes at micro and meso level working towards the empowerment of fishers and farmers, both men and women, that the project could collaborate with.

The RFLP Mainstreaming Manual (Chapter 3 in Arenas and Lentisco, 2011) and the WorldFish Center web pages<sup>23</sup> are very good resources for gender analysis and the use of the tool kits they both provide is encouraged. Note, however, that ideally toolkits should be handled by people with a relative familiarity with gender, or who have received prior training in their implementation. Incentives for the implementation of these toolkits could be considered here to ensure that the analysis is carried out and important gender issues that the NAPs will have to incorporate are flagged up from the outset.

#### *Gender Action Plan:*

A Gender Action Plan (GAP) needs to identify where, why and how specific gender mainstreaming activities need to be undertaken. The elements of a GAP are indicated in Table 5. Whilst the gender analysis will provide information, a GAP could assist in presenting it in a project document. A GAP can either be integral to a NAP, or appended to it.

**Table 5: Key elements of a Gender Action Plan (GAP)**

Gender goal	What do we want to achieve in the project in terms of gender.
Expected outcome	What specific outcomes are expected.
Activities	What activities are proposed in order to achieve the goal and outcome.  These would include Programme level activities as well as organizational level activities (such as gender training for field staff, hiring women at management level etc.)  Monitoring indicators and plan  Targets and measurable indicators for the outcomes expected, how they will be tracked (discussed in detail in Section 5.3.3)
Budget	What is the timeline for implementation.  What are budgetary provisions to implement the GAP.

*Source: adapted from ENERGIA (2010).*

<sup>23</sup> Introduction:

<http://www.worldfishcenter.org/our-research/research-focal-areas/gender-and-equity/tools-introduction>. Matrix and tools for gender analysis in fisheries and aquaculture:

<http://www.worldfishcenter.org/our-research/research-focal-areas/gender-and-equity/tools-sec1>.

Options for gender analysis related to project interventions:

<http://www.worldfishcenter.org/our-research/research-focal-areas/gender-and-equity/tools-sec2>.

Overall, the involvement of stakeholders from the conception to the implementation of the BOBLME Project is one of its major strengths. Stakeholder participation should be maintained, as is the intention, throughout the finalization of the SAP and the elaboration of the NAPs. More emphasis should, however, be placed on the organization of consultations that ensure a gender-sensitive stakeholder engagement process, for example by keeping records of, and reporting who were the stakeholders, especially at national and field level (how many men, how many women, participated at each consultative stage? How were their separate concerns and voices captured, and accounted for, in the project planning process and design of interventions?). Not only should this help future project evaluations, it should also ensure more gender-sensitive NAPs. The fact that the elaboration of the NAPs has not been initiated yet is as an opportunity to seize to ensure that a gender perspective runs throughout and be an integral component of these documents.

### 5.3.3. M&E of gender mainstreaming and impacts of the BOBLME Project (for inclusion in the SAP and NAPs<sup>24</sup>) and relevant indicators

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an integral part of gender mainstreaming and it is recommended that gender-sensitive M&E be a fundamental part of the SAP (and NAPs).

M&E is understood at two levels. One is the M&E of the achievements and benefits of the project activities, with particular regard to the incremental progress contributed by the project towards gender equality at regional and national levels. The other is concerned with the M&E of the mainstreaming process itself, i.e. how well the project is tackling and addressing gender issues in its design and implementation, in other words, how its actions are reflecting its commitment to gender equality. The two are obviously linked: the latter paving the way to the former, provided that assumptions about *change* are met. Each of these two aspects is framed in the “Theory of Change” that underpins Outcome Mapping (Box 4), and dealt with successively in the following sub-sections.

#### Box 4: Theory of Change and outcome mapping

*What is the Theory of Change?* It is defined and understood in a number of ways, but from an earlier conceptualization as “a theory of how and why an initiative works” (Weiss, 1995, cited in Stein and Valters, 2012), it is being understood as “a way to describe the set of assumptions that explains both the steps that lead to a long-term goal, and the connections between these activities and the outcomes of an intervention or programme” (Stein and Valters, 2012: 3, after Andersen, 2004). This description is therefore based on a process of reflective analysis and critical thinking about the sequence of events that is expected to lead to a desired outcome (Vogel, 2012) – i.e. answering *how* and *why*.

*Why is it relevant to the M&E of gender mainstreaming and gender impacts?* The Theory of Change (ToC) is relevant to the M&E of gender mainstreaming and impacts in the context of the BOBLME on a number of accounts. The first is that achieving gender equality is itself grounded in a process of change, so in this instance, the ToC lends itself to the study, implementation and monitoring of that change. The second is that, although not new, it is increasingly promoted in the donor community as a progressive approach to embrace the complexity of change, to demonstrate how results can be achieved, and to promote locally/nationally-owned development. Third, because the reflection that underpins it is

<sup>24</sup> It is expected that the SAP currently under development should closely guide the development of the BOBLME Phase II project document, with differences expected mainly in format, not in contents, to satisfy GEF requirements (R. Hermes, personal communication, Sept. 2012).

recognized as helping moving beyond “business as usual”, through greater contextual awareness and clarity about the rationale, assumptions and long-term goals of development programmes (Vogel, 2012). Fourth, because, as the present paper has highlighted, gender is a cross-cutting and complex issue that is best captured through flexible, non-linear frameworks. Last, but in direct relation to the BOBLME Project and the current elaboration of the SAP, because it has been found to help with strategic planning (better design of interventions in relation to expected outcomes) and with M&E, allowing organisations to assess their contribution to change and to reassess their interventions (Stein and Valters, 2012).

*Why propose a M&E system based on this theory instead of one based on a conventional logical framework?* While logical frameworks (LF) graphically illustrate program components, linking activities, inputs and outcomes through an assumed link of causality, a ToC approach will actually articulate these underlying assumptions to explain how and why a desired change is expected to come about (Batchelor, 2010). Desired change is usually expressed as an “outcome”. Outcome mapping fits with the ToC process, recognizing complexity and a range of possible outcomes (through influence rather than control), thus challenging the direct causality of LF, and of the M&E systems based upon this logic: it does not focus on measuring deliverables and its effects on primary beneficiaries but instead on behavioural change exhibited by secondary beneficiaries, in the belief that these will lead to long-term changes and positive outcomes beyond the actual life of the project (Earl et al., 2001).

*Three basic concepts of Outcome Mapping (OM).* The first key concept is that of “outcome”, as indicated above. By using outcome mapping, a programme is not claiming the achievement of development impacts; rather, the focus is on its contributions to outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, enhance the possibility of development impacts – but the relationship is not necessarily a direct one of cause and effect (ODI, 2009). A second key concept is that of “boundary partners” who are “those individuals, groups, or organisations with whom the [project] interacts directly and with whom [it] can anticipate opportunities for influence. These actors are called boundary partners because, even though the [project] will work with them to effect change, it does not control them. The power to influence development rests with them.” (Earl et al., 2001: 41). These people play an essential role in the flow of information and influence that leads to outcomes. “Progress markers” is the third key concept: they describe the behavioural changes or actions the project would like the boundary partners to exhibit by the end of the project. They are classified as “expect-to-see” (realistic and immediate response visible during the project life), “like-to-see” (ideal responses expected by the end of the project) and “love-to-see” (idealistic to unrealistic responses that could happen beyond the life of the project, and are beyond its “sphere of influence”, or control) (*ibid*).

Outcome Mapping (OM), as a form of M&E, will enable better planning, monitoring and evaluation of the project by adequately capturing the human and gender dimensions of the project and giving them the importance they deserve. Furthermore, a review of ten years of use of OM across the world concludes that this approach has helped to promote a learning culture and evaluative thinking

in projects and organizations (Smith, Mauremootoo and Rassmann, 2012). This is in the logical suite of the transformation that gender mainstreaming aims to achieve<sup>25</sup> and in line with the recommendation for flexibility in project implementation made by Lentisco and Alonso (2012, in relation to the RFLP).

#### **5.3.3.1. M&E of gender mainstreaming in the project**

To guide the monitoring and evaluation process of gender mainstreaming in the project itself, the question to ask is: **“how well is the project tackling and addressing gender issues in its design and implementation?”**

The four pillars upon which change is founded are needed to mainstream gender equality in projects, namely: (a) effective leadership, (b) adequate financial and human resources, (c) availability of appropriate procedures and processes, and (d) appropriate organizational incentives and accountability structures (Risby and Todd (2011). So, in line with the principles of the Theory of Change and Outcome Mapping, Figure 2 describes the process by which the BOBLME Project can move from gender outcomes to impact, i.e. gender equality, through gender mainstreaming. The intermediary steps can be used as “progress markers” to monitor the uptake and effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming process.

Indicators will need to be decided by the BOBLME Project team. Table 6 however suggest a “scorecard” for gender mainstreaming in the project that can be used to check how well the project is doing at mainstreaming gender in its own activities and management. Some quantitative indicators are suggested, in order to refine the dichotomous response to the evaluative statement.

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<sup>25</sup> The gender-sensitive outcome mapping approach presented here is focused on the monitoring and evaluation of the gender impacts of the BOBLME, but this approach could easily be extended to all the other components and objectives of the project, should the managers find the process useful.

**Table 6: A gender mainstreaming scorecard for the BOBLME Project.**

*(Italic: suggested quantitative indicators that will need to be discussed by the project team)*

**1. BOBLME Project commitments**

- Gender issues are covered and adequately addressed in the SAP.
- A Gender Charter/Statement of political will is signed by all BOBLME partner countries.
- A gender action plan (GAP) is included in each NAP.

**2. Implementation mechanisms**

- A specific budget line supports gender-related activities (GAP) in the implementation of the project at national level (*percentage – to be decided – of overall budget which is dedicated to gender-related activities*).
- National gender focal points are identified and involved in the oversight of project implementation at national level.

**3. Internal (project) capacities**

- All staff receive professional training on gender issues (*percentage – to be decided - of staff who has attended a yearly training course on gender*).
- Gender experts are recruited and regularly inputting into project and national level documents.

**4. BOBLME Project culture**

- A balanced male/female ratio amongst project staff is established.
- All staff is sensitized to gender (*100% of staff has completed an online gender sensitization course, or similar*).
- Flexible work arrangements are considered to facilitate the involvement of women as project team members.

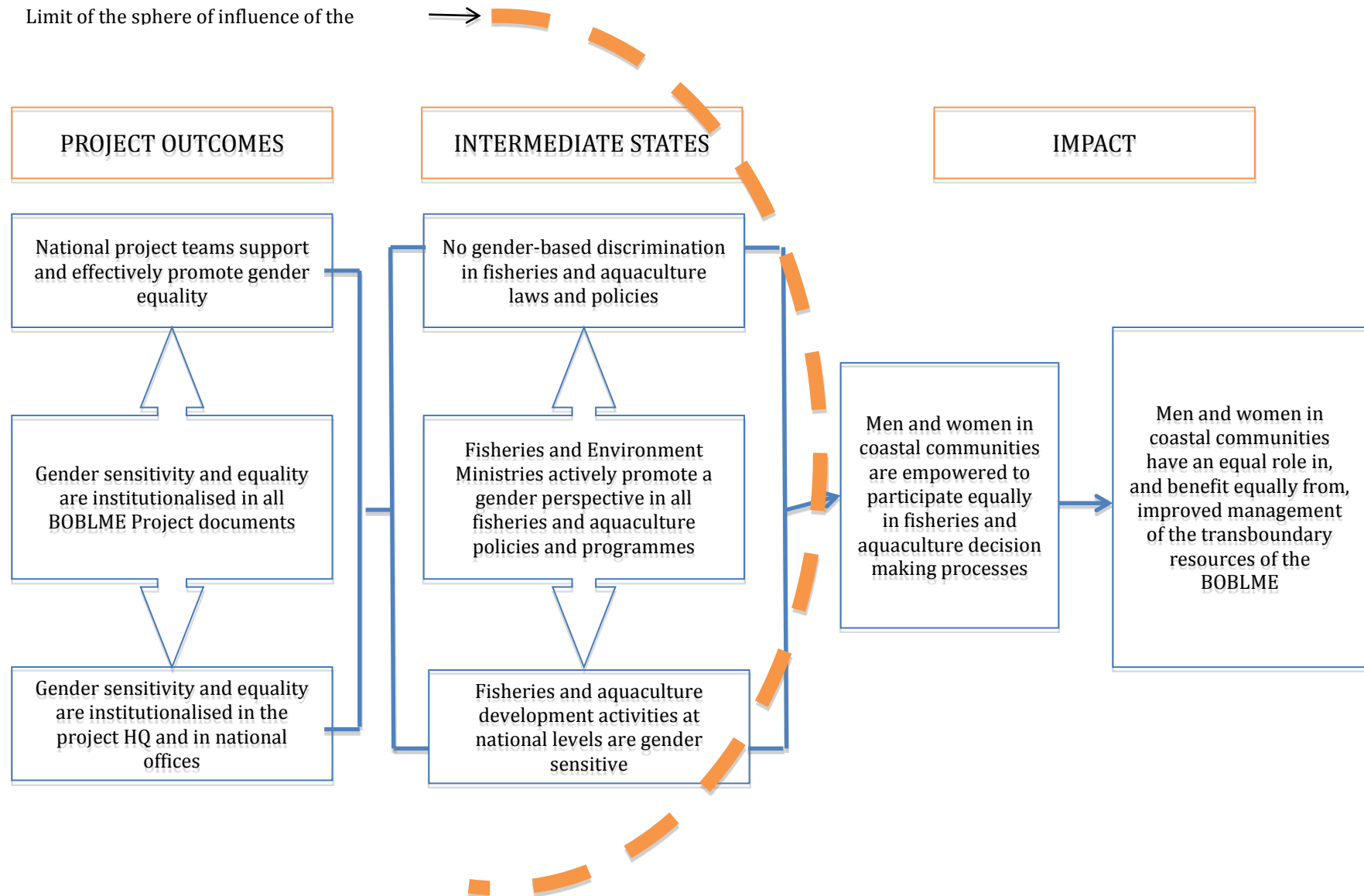
**5. Accountability mechanisms**

- Monitoring and evaluation of the project covers gender issues and behavioural changes towards greater gender equality.
- Project staff performance appraisals incorporate questions related to the addressing of gender issues in their work.

Source: developed and adapted from Moser (2007).

**Figure 2: From outcomes to impacts: the influence of gender mainstreaming in the BOBLME Project**

(adapted from Risby and Todd, 2011; Earl et al., 2001)



**5.3.3.2. *M&E of the project activities on gender equality through gender-sensitive outcome mapping***

M&E features as a section under the SAP implementation chapter in the Draft SAP document framework (Appendix 6 of the Report of the SAP Process Development Workshop, 15-17 February 2012). The elaboration of a detailed M&E plan will provide an opportunity to address the gender gap identified in the BOBLME Project documents so far. This section thus provides some pointers to help with the design of a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system for the future of the project. While M&E of gender mainstreaming was more relevant to the SAP, this section is more relevant to the NAPs since it is through them that activities will take place at field level.

The question that will need answering in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of these plans is: **“to what extent do the BOBLME Project activities have improved the lives of coastal men and women and contributed to women’s empowerment and gender equality?”**

A second, subsidiary, question to ask will then be: **to what extent do the BOBLME Project results reflect its commitment to the principle gender equality?** (CIDA, 2010). This question is a one of alignment: it enables to link the question asked in section 5.3.3.1 with the one that precedes.

Given that the actual activities that will make it into the NAPs remain to be decided, and that these will be very context and culture specific, it is not possible at this stage to propose a list of gender-sensitive indicators to monitor the impact of NAPs on gender equality at national levels. Some examples of different types of indicators are nonetheless suggested (Table 7), but their choice will very much depend on the monitoring questions that will have to be formulated.

**Table 7: Types of indicators for monitoring and evaluating the influence of the BOBLME Project activities on progress towards gender equality**

Type	Description	Benefits	Drawbacks	Examples
<b>Checklist indicators</b>	Ask whether something is or is not in place (the measure is a question of yes or no).	Good for monitoring processes and commitment. Simple and inexpensive data collection.	Lacks a quantitative aspect. Can be subject to interpretation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are women as well as men participating in meetings?</li> <li>- Are both men and women targeted by field activities?</li> <li>- Are specific provisions made to account for women's lack of mobility or time?</li> <li>- etc. (in relation to the project activities)</li> </ul>
<b>Statistics-based indicators.</b> <i>Must be sex-disaggregated.</i>	"Traditional" indicators describing a situation/stage and measuring changes over time (in comparison to a baseline or previous measurements) using quantitative/statistical data.	Statistics may already be available from other sources (e.g. national statistics). Can be relatively simple to collect if a strict protocol is followed. Unlikely to suffer from bias.	Rarely provide a qualitative perspective. Need to refer to a <i>baseline</i> to assess changes over time.	Male : Female ratio in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment (fishing, marketing, extension services...)</li> <li>- Participation in training, management meetings....</li> <li>- Capture, post-harvest, management activities</li> <li>- Health care access (can include incidence of water-related diseases)</li> <li>- etc. (in relation to the project activities)</li> </ul>
<b>Indicators requiring specific forms of data collection</b>	Indicators that involve collecting qualitative data on judgments and perceptions, through sociological surveys, focus groups, interviews etc.	Very useful and insightful indicators, especially in the context of gender, to assess changes in attitudes as well as progress towards intended	Requires a well-defined and replicable qualitative data collection and analysis methodology so that indicators can be compared over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % of coastal population that feels women should be primarily responsible for post-harvest activities?</li> <li>- % of extension services perceived as dispensing</li> </ul>



	The information collected can then be quantitatively analysed and presented.	outcomes and impacts.	time. Needs to refer to a <i>baseline</i> . Often resource-intensive (time, money, human resources).	gender-biased information - % of women who feel empowered from partaking in fish-related activities - % of women and men who feel their decision making has changed following the implementation of the project - etc. (in relation to the project activities)
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Source: developed and adapted from UNEP (undated)

## 6. Conclusion and key messages

On the basis of the state of the overall institutional environment prevailing in the region, and given the relatively advanced stage of elaboration of the SAP and the consensual agreement that has been reached amongst the BOBLME countries regarding its structure and contents, a **gender-sensitive pathway to impact** and monitoring and evaluation plan based on the theory of change and **gender-sensitive outcome mapping**, are suggested as **two fundamental additions to the SAP** if the project is serious about progressing towards gender equality, whilst retaining its focus on addressing the transboundary environmental issues faced by the BOBLME. A gender-sensitive pathway to impact will demonstrate the commitment to, and thorough consideration of, gender aspects by the project management and national teams, whilst the use of gender-sensitive outcome mapping is in line with the transformation sought from a commitment to gender equality. This will enable to address gender issues ex-post in the SAP and give a stronger “human” orientation. It will also be a progressive manner to capture, monitor and evaluate how the project activities will benefit men and women in coastal areas and lead to long-term changes.

In addition to the practical avenues that the SAP writing team may wish to consider to mainstream gender in the SAP document itself, key recommendations for future action by the BOBLME partner countries include:

- Commissioning of a gender-sensitive review of legislation and regulatory frameworks in the BOBLME partner countries,
- Following through the mainstreaming of gender in the NAPs, mirroring what has been proposed to mainstream gender in the SAP,
- Tackling gender-disaggregated data collection as soon as possible,
- Ensuring the continuous provision of gender inputs throughout the project duration,
- Strengthening the participatory processes undertaken so far by the project,

- Avoiding falling in the WID rhetoric and maintaining a focus on the addressing of gender issues and inequality.
- Supporting gender training and capacity building at all levels, beyond the life of the project.

The last point is fundamental to ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes “everyone’s business”. This can however only effectively happen if mainstreaming works with national frameworks and institutions in place, whilst at the time, using its influence to effect change and progress towards gender equality.

It is recognized that the implementation of some of the recommendations for gender mainstreaming made in this paper may be more demanding than others: the development of a system to monitor and evaluate gender mainstreaming and gender impacts based on the Theory of Change will for example require an important shift in conceptual thinking, not only in terms of apprehension of gender issues, but also in terms of project design and conceptualization of its impacts. This prioritization is left to the judgment of the project and national teams. The extent to which the recommendations provided in this report will be included in the SAPs and tailored to national situations in the NAPs will however reflect the commitment of the overall project to gender equality. But if this commitment is real, the project has the potential to go much further than achieving its regional and environmental quality objectives, and as such, set forth an example for future LME projects.

## Appendix I Terms of reference

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TASK(S) AND OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED

Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are working together through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and lay the foundations for a coordinated programme of action designed to improve the lives of the coastal populations through improved regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries (BOBLME Project).

One of the two major outputs of the BOBLME Project is to produce an agreed Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) that identifies and prioritizes the major transboundary environmental and fisheries concerns in the BOB. This is a prerequisite to the other major output expected from the Project - the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) that will address and remediate these concerns and will also ensure the long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the BOBLME Programme. The TDA is a scientific and technical assessment method through which the water-related environmental issues and problems of a region are identified and quantified, their causes analysed and their impacts - environmental and economic, assessed. Finalization of the TDA falls under Sub-component 1.1 of the BOBLME Project. The objective of 1.1 is to build on the BOBLME's existing draft Framework Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (FTDA) and complete the Project's TDA. SAP development commences after the TDA is adopted, and is addressed under Sub-Component 1.4. A Regional SAP team is constituted (team composition: Regional SAP Coordinator, Regional SAP Champion(s), country coordinators, SAP writers). And a SAP Team Meeting is held to develop a SAP framework and structure, as well as SAP development process.

The study under this TOR relates to the analysis (gender assessment) of the attention given to gender issues as reflected in the BOBLME Project Document and in the revised/updated TDA, and which will need to be taken into consideration for and included in the finalization of the SAP document. This should cover in particular the issues of gender equality (in terms of rights, opportunities, value, situation and outcome, as well as the power of individuals) in development cooperation and the management of natural (fisheries) resources and the environment.

The gender assessment should reveal the extent to which gender equality objectives have been anticipated in the project document; the extent to which the TDA poses gender issues, and whether or not prospective, planned or implemented activities are contributing to or challenge existing inequalities and whether there are any gender issues that have not been addressed but need to be addressed (e.g., by inclusion in the BOBLME SAP). It should also contribute to the identification of entry points for actions that will be needed in order to meet gender equality objectives.

**Work to be carried out includes**

1. Reviewing relevant international, regional and national instruments that promote gender equality principles and gender mainstreaming, and that are, or may be, applicable to fisheries and aquatic and environmental management in the BOBLME countries (incl. the SAP's of other LME Projects);
2. Provide highly specialised, innovative and technical gender expertise in the analysis of the BOBLME Project Document and the updated BOBLME TDA, using a gender approach;
3. Advise on the actions BOBLME and countries, in the remaining 2 years of project implementation, should take to mainstream gender in BOBLME and to address gender issues;
4. Advise and provide recommendations as to what considerations and actions BOBLME and countries need to take into account in the SAP for gender mainstreaming, and propose indicators to monitor such actions.

Work independently and perform the assigned work with no technical guidance.

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### Appendix III Summary table of the remit, uses, advantages and limitations of gender analysis and mainstreaming frameworks

Framework name and author(s)	Purposes/Uses ( <i>ex-ante</i> , <i>ex-post</i> <sup>26</sup> )	Tools	Advantages	Limitations
<b>Harvard Analytical Framework</b> <sup>27</sup> , Overhold et al. (1985).  Affiliation with Women in Development (WID) – efficiency approach	To help planners design more efficient projects and improve overall productivity.  Used <i>ex-ante</i> and <i>ex-post</i> , and for gathering information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Activity profile.</li> <li>2. Access and control profile.</li> <li>3. Influencing factors.</li> <li>4. Check-list for project cycle analysis.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical and hands-on, in particular for data collection and analysis.</li> <li>- Gives a clear picture of gender labour divisions.</li> <li>- Clearly distinguishes between access and resources.</li> <li>- Relies on facts rather than theory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ignores the equity perspective</li> <li>- Does not encourage a sufficiently thorough analysis.</li> <li>- Fails to specify the importance of the participation of men and women themselves in the analysis.</li> <li>- Does not address cultural context and institutional influences.</li> <li>- Emphasizes separation rather than connectedness and inter-relationships between individuals and groups.</li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> *Ex-ante*: for the planning of interventions, *ex-post*: for the evaluation of interventions, projects, programs or policies.

<sup>27</sup> Also called Gender Roles Framework or Gender Analysis Framework.

Framework name and author(s)	Purposes/Uses ( <i>ex-ante</i> , <i>ex-post</i> <sup>28</sup> )	Tools	Advantages	Limitations
<p><b>Moser Framework,</b> Moser (1993)</p> <p>Affiliation with Gender and Development (GAD) – empowerment approach</p>	<p>To set up “gender planning” as planning in its own right and achieve the “emancipation of women from their subordination, and their achievement of equality, equity and empowerment” (p.1).</p> <p>Used <i>ex-ante</i> and <i>ex-post</i> (esp. tool 5), and for planning at all levels. Often used in conjunction with the Harvard Framework.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification of gender roles / women’s triple role (reproductive, productive, community work).</li> <li>2. Gender needs assessment (practical and strategic<sup>29</sup>).</li> <li>3. Disaggregation between control of resources and decision-making within the household.</li> <li>4. Planning for balancing the triple role.</li> <li>5. Distinguishing between the different aims of interventions (whether they relate to welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency or empowerment<sup>30</sup>).</li> <li>6. Involving women and gender-aware organisations and planners, in planning.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible and easily applicable.</li> <li>- Moves ‘planning’ beyond a sole technical concern.</li> <li>- Challenges inequality.</li> <li>- Powerful to assess practical and strategic gender needs.</li> <li>- Makes all areas of women’s work visible.</li> <li>- By distinguishing between policy approaches, it encourages questioning of an intervention’s purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can miss power imbalances between men and women.</li> <li>- Women’s and men’s activities are emphasized separately, rather than the relationship between the two.</li> <li>- Does not highlight forms of inequality.</li> <li>- The division between practical and strategic gender needs can be artificial.</li> <li>- Ignores men as ‘gendered’ beings.</li> <li>- Change over time is not captured as a variable.</li> <li>- May encounter strong resistance if the emancipation goal of the framework is not recognised as legitimate.</li> </ul>

<sup>28</sup> *Ex-ante*: for the planning of interventions, *ex-post*: for the evaluation of interventions, projects, programs or policies.

<sup>29</sup> Practical gender needs: those immediate needs to assist women in their survival in their socially accepted roles, within existing power structures (e.g. adequate living conditions, health care, access to safe water and sanitation and income-generating opportunities. Policies that address practical gender needs are seen as not directly challenging gender inequalities (Moser, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> The Welfare, Equity and Anti-poverty approaches predate the Efficiency and Empowerment approaches which prevail today. The Welfare approach (1950-70) was criticized for being top-down and not challenging the sexual division of labor and women’s subordination. The Equity approach (1876-85) recognized women’s triple roles and specific needs, but was criticized for being threatening to men and is unpopular with governments. The Anti-poverty approach, postulates that women’s poverty is a problem of underdevelopment, not subordination, and emphasizes the productive role of women. Although still popular with NGOs, it has been heavily criticized by some scholars on the grounds that antipoverty policies do not necessarily improve the position of women (Jackson, 1996). The Efficiency approach (since the 1980s) seeks to meet women’s practical gender roles, but relies on simplistic assumptions about women’s time elasticity and the benefits of their participation in development initiatives. The Empowerment approach (1990s onwards) seeks to empower women through the fostering of their self-reliance, and openly acknowledges the centrality of power relations between women and men.

Framework name and author(s)	Purposes/Uses ( <i>ex-ante</i> , <i>ex-post</i> <sup>31</sup> )	Tools	Advantages	Limitations
<b>Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM),</b> Parker (1993)	<p>To help determine the impacts development interventions have on men and women through bottom-up community-based analysis.</p> <p>Used for participatory planning at all levels, as well as <i>ex-ante</i> and <i>ex-post</i>.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis at four 'levels' of society (women, men, household, community).</li> <li>2. Analysis of four kinds of impacts (labour, time, resources, socio-cultural factors)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Designed for community-based work and bottom-up participatory analysis.</li> <li>- Simple and systematic, uses familiar concepts and categories.</li> <li>- Transformatory as well as technical to initiate a learning process.</li> <li>- Considers both gender relations and examines men's and women's experiences separately.</li> <li>- Includes intangible resources (e.g. time, socio-political issues).</li> <li>- Can capture changes over time if matrix is reapplied at regular intervals.</li> <li>- Can be used in interventions that target men.</li> <li>- Can be used for quick data collection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relies on a good facilitator.</li> <li>- Some factors or subtleties can get lost in the broad categories.</li> <li>- Does not consider inequalities which cross-cut gender divisions (e.g. ethnicity).</li> <li>- Excludes macro and institutional analysis.</li> <li>- Subordination and other power issues may be overlooked.</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> *Ex-ante*: for the planning of interventions, *ex-post*: for the evaluation of interventions, projects, programs or policies.

Framework name and author(s)	Purposes/Uses ( <i>ex-ante</i> , <i>ex-post</i> <sup>32</sup> )	Tools	Advantages	Limitations
<b>Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis Framework,</b> Anderson and Woodrow (1989)	<p>To help outside agencies plan aid in emergencies, in a way that both addresses immediate needs and allows long-term social and economic development.</p> <p>Used in disaster preparedness (<i>ex-ante</i>) and emergency response (<i>ex-post</i>).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinguishing categories of capacities and vulnerabilities (physical/material, social/organizational, motivational/attitudinal).</li> <li>2. Adding dimensions of 'complex reality' (disaggregation of communities by gender, disaggregation according to other dimensions of social relations, change over time, interactions between categories, analysis at different scales and levels of society).</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maps' complexity</li> <li>- Encourages a long-term perspective.</li> <li>- Examines social interactions and the psychological realm.</li> <li>- Simple but not simplistic.</li> <li>- Includes other forms of inequality.</li> <li>- Can be adapted to macro-level analysis.</li> <li>- Challenges the status quo.</li> <li>- Highlights people's capacities as well as vulnerabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analysis of power relations can be omitted, leading to gender-blind recommendations.</li> <li>- Does not include an explicit agenda for women's empowerment.</li> <li>- Not a participatory tool (concepts difficult to use directly with communities affected by crisis)</li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> *Ex-ante*: for the planning of interventions, *ex-post*: for the evaluation of interventions, projects, programs or policies.



Framework name and author(s)	Purposes/Uses ( <i>ex-ante</i> , <i>ex-post</i> <sup>33</sup> )	Tools	Advantages	Limitations
<b>Women's Empowerment Framework,</b> Longwe (1991)	<p>To help planners question what women's empowerment<sup>34</sup> and equality means in practice, and from this point, assess critically the extent to which a development intervention is supporting this empowerment.</p> <p>Used ex-post, at project, programme or organisation level.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determining levels of equality (from lower to higher: welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, control<sup>35</sup>).</li> <li>2. Determining levels of the recognition of 'women's issues'<sup>36</sup></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moves beyond practical and strategic gender needs to show them as a progression.</li> <li>- Emphasizes empowerment.</li> <li>- Strongly ideological (both an advantage and a limitation)</li> <li>- Useful to identify the gap between rhetoric and reality in interventions.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not a 'complete' framework (needs to be used as a tool kit in conjunction with other frameworks)</li> <li>- Static, does not indicate how situations change over time.</li> <li>- Only looks at the relationship between men and women in terms of equality and omits rights, claims, responsibilities.</li> <li>- Does not examine institutions, organisations involved and the macro-environment.</li> <li>- Hierarchy levels may make users think that empowerment is a linear process.</li> <li>- May lead to an over-focus on women instead of gender relations.</li> </ul>

<sup>33</sup> *Ex-ante*: for the planning of interventions, *ex-post*: for the evaluation of interventions, projects, programs or policies.

<sup>34</sup> Longwe defines empowerment as "enabling women to take an equal place with men, and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production on an equal basis with men" (in March et al., 1999: 92).

<sup>35</sup> *Welfare* : defined as material welfare (food, income, medical care), relative to men. *Access* : defined as women's access to the factors of production on an equal basis with men (land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities, public services). This implies the application of a principle of equality of opportunity, which may – or may not – be enshrined in the law. *Conscientisation* : understood as a conscious understanding of the difference between sex and gender and an awareness that gender roles are cultural and can be changed. *Participation* : defined as women's equal participation in the decision-making process, in policy-making, planning and administration. *Control* : denotes women's control over the decision-making process through conscientisation and mobilisation, to achieve equality of control over the factors of production and the distribution of benefits. Implies no dominance over the process by neither men nor women.

<sup>36</sup> 'Women's issues' is very specifically defined by Longwe as all issues concerned with women's equality in any social or economic role, and involving any of the levels of equality and thus goes further than women's traditional and subordinate sex-stereotyped gender roles.

Framework name and author(s)	Purposes/Uses ( <i>ex-ante</i> , <i>ex-post</i> <sup>37</sup> )	Tools	Advantages	Limitations
<b>Social Relations Framework,</b> Kabeer (1994)	To analyse existing gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, responsibilities and power, and to design policies and programmes which enable women to be agents of their own development.  Used <i>ex-ante</i> (design of policies and programmes) and <i>ex-post</i> (institutional analysis)	Rather than tools, the framework engages its user(s) to reflect over a number of questions <sup>38</sup> : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is development increasing human well-being?<sup>39</sup></li> <li>2. What are the prevalent social relations?<sup>40</sup></li> <li>3. How do institutions function?<sup>41</sup></li> <li>4. How “gender-friendly” are policies?<sup>42</sup></li> <li>5. What are the immediate, underlying and structural factors that cause problems, and their effects on those involved?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gives a holistic analysis of poverty.</li> <li>- Aims to place gender at the centre of an entirely new framework for development theory and practice.</li> <li>- Concentrates on institutions.</li> <li>- Links analysis at all levels.</li> <li>- Can be used in a dynamic analysis.</li> <li>- Highlights gender relations and emphasises women’s and men’s different interests and needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasises structure rather than agency (i.e. potential of people to bring about change in institutions – the structures).</li> <li>- Gender may become subsumed in a complex examination of cross-cutting inequalities.</li> <li>- Complexity of the analysis may intimidate and become an obstacle for political action.</li> <li>- Difficult to use in a participatory way with communities.</li> <li>- Requires an extensive knowledge about the context of the analysis.</li> <li>- Blurred definitional boundary between an “institution” and an “organisation”.</li> </ul>

Source: March et al., 1999.

<sup>37</sup> *Ex-ante*: for the planning of interventions, *ex-post*: for the evaluation of interventions, projects, programs or policies.

<sup>38</sup> In Kabeer’s book, these are presented as “concepts”. However, to ease understanding and analysis, they are reworked here as “questions”.

<sup>39</sup> This involves an assessment of a development intervention not only in terms of technical efficiency, but also in terms of how well it contributes to the broader goals of survival, security and human dignity.

<sup>40</sup> Social relations determine what people are and have, as well as roles, responsibilities, claims, rights and control. They also change over time

<sup>41</sup> This involves an institutional analysis at State, market, community and family/kinship levels and the challenging of the ideological neutrality and independence of each of these institutions.

<sup>42</sup> This involves distinguishing between gender-blind and gender-aware policies. Policies in general can be divided into two broad categories depending on the extent to which they recognize and address gender issues: i. Gender-blind policies (often implicitly male-biased), and ii. Gender-aware policies. While the former should lead to a rethinking of assumptions and of practices to move towards the elaboration of gender-aware policies, the latter can be further divided into three categories: a. Gender-neutral policies (leave existing distribution of resources and responsibilities unchanged), b. Gender-specific policies (intend to meet practical gender needs within the existing distribution of resources and responsibilities), and c. Gender-redistributive policies (intend to transform existing distribution of resources and responsibilities and to meet strategic gender needs). They are not mutually exclusive and one may precede the other.

## Appendix IV Conceptual frame summarizing the analytical tools used for the gender audit of key BOBLME Project and national policy documents

<p><i>BOBLME Project Document</i></p> <p>Moser tool 5 – Distinguishing between aims of interventions</p> <p>Social Relations tool 1 – Purpose of development intervention/policy</p>
<p><i>TDA (and national TDA documents)</i></p> <p>Moser tool 1 – Identification of gender roles and women’s triple role</p> <p>Moser tool 2 – Practical and strategic gender needs assessment</p> <p>Capacities and vulnerabilities tool 1 – Distinguishing categories of capacities and vulnerabilities</p> <p>Social Relations tool 2 – Institutional functioning</p> <p>Social Relations tool 5 – Causes of problems and their effects</p>

*National policies and plans*

Moser tool 5: Distinguishing between aims of interventions  
Social Relations tool 1: purpose of development intervention/policy  
Social Relations tool 2: institutional functioning  
Social Relations tool 4: gender-friendly policy assessment  
Social Relations tool 5?: causes of problems and their effects

*SAP (of BOBLME – in draft form – and of other LMEs)*

Moser tool 4: planning for balancing the triple role.  
Moser tool 5: Distinguishing between aims of interventions  
Moser tool 6: Involving women and gender-aware organisations and planners, in planning.  
Longwe tool 1: Determining levels of equality.  
Social Relations tool 1: purpose of development intervention/policy  
Social Relations tool 4: gender-friendly policy assessment

## Appendix V Gender mainstreaming check-list for project documents

### Background and Justification:

Is the gender dimension highlighted in background information to the intervention? Does the justification include convincing arguments for gender mainstreaming and gender equality?

### Goals:

Does the goal of the proposed intervention reflect the needs of both men and women? Does the goal seek to correct gender imbalances through addressing practical needs of men and women? Does the goal seek to transform the institutions (social and other) that perpetuate gender inequality?

### Target Beneficiaries:

Except where interventions specifically target men or women, as a corrective measure to enhance gender equality, is there gender balance within the target beneficiary group?

### Objectives:

Do the intervention objectives address needs of both women and men?

### Activities:

Do planned activities involve both men and women? Are any additional activities needed to ensure that a gender perspective is made explicit (e.g. training in gender issues, additional research, etc.)?

### Monitoring and evaluation:

Does the M&E plan allow for the differential impact of the project activities on men and women to be visible? Will it examine both substantive (content) and administrative (process) aspects of the intervention? Have indicators been developed to measure progress towards the fulfillment of each objective? Do the chosen indicators allow measuring the gender impacts of progress towards the fulfillment of each project objective? Are M&E data and indicators gender disaggregated? Are targets set to guarantee a sufficient level of gender balance in activities (e.g. quotas for male and female participation)?

### Implementation:

Who will implement the planned interventions? Have all partners and project staff received gender training, so that a gender perspective can be sustained throughout the implementation of the project? Will both women and men participate in implementation?

### Risks:

Has the greater context of gender roles and relations within society and national institutions been considered as a potential risk (i.e. stereotypes or structural barriers that may prevent full participation)? Has the potential negative impact of the intervention been considered (e.g. potential increased burden on women or social isolation of men)?

**Budget:**

Have financial inputs been “gender-proofed” to ensure that both men and women will benefit from the planned intervention? Has the need to provide gender sensitivity training or to engage short-term gender experts been factored into the budget?

**Communication Strategy:**

Has internal communication about gender issues between different disciplines within the project been considered? Has an external communication strategy been developed for informing various publics about the existence, progress and results of the project from a gender perspective?

Adapted from UNEP (undated).



Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are working together through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and to lay the foundations for a coordinated programme of action designed to improve the lives of the coastal populations through improved regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the implementing agency for the BOBLME Project.

The Project is funded principally by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the FAO, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the USA.

For more information, please visit [www.boblme.org](http://www.boblme.org)



Sida



Norad

