

Gender POLICY

For The Belize Conservation Sector

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Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Central America and Dominican Republic



ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
NAFP	National Agriculture and Food Policy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLUP	National Land Use Policy
NPAS	National Protected Areas System
NPASP	National Protected Areas System Plan
NTSMP	National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan
PA	Protected Area
PACT	Protected Area Conservation Trust
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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INTRODUCTION

The initiative to develop a Gender Policy specifically for the Belize Conservation Sector was spearheaded by Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT). PACT's main mandate is to contribute to the sustainable management and development of Belize's natural and cultural assets for the benefit of Belizeans and the global community. It was recognized that key stakeholders, involved in implementation of PACT financed and supported projects needed to be enhanced to ensure that all projects and/or programs developed and implemented through PACT have a strong gender focus; promote gender equality and minimize negative impacts to all beneficiaries.

This policy however is not for PACT, rather it is for the enhanced management of the Belize National Protected Areas System (BNPAS) through the improved capacity of organizational partners and stakeholders who are engaged in the conservation and management of this important national resource. Co-management organizations, civil society organizations and public agencies involved in the management of the BNPAS, all considered as partner organizations, currently do not have individual gender policies to guide their work with stakeholder communities. In practice, many partner organizations are cognizant of the need to be gender-sensitive but this approach is limited and not formally institutionalized. Also, most partner organizations have only limited capacity to support gender mainstreaming with their programs and projects.

Instituting gender mainstreaming within Belize's conservation sector will require an acknowledgement at the governance level of BNPAS. The first step in achieving this is to have a formalized gender policy to which each partner can subscribe and translate to their own organization and work. This policy is therefore seen as the political starting point of gender mainstreaming in the management of the BNPAS.

Given that most co-management organizations are already working with international partners and will continue to do so, this Policy has been aligned with international standards and was developed with the input of organizational partners. Important international and national commitments relating to gender have also been incorporated into this policy.

POLICY CONTEXT

BELIZE'S INTERNATIONAL GENDER COMMITMENTS

This policy is congruent with Belize's international commitments, in particular with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in which the Parties agree that principles of gender equality and empowerment of women should be respected, promoted and considered and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This policy is also guided by Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement, of which Belize is a signatory, where parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems and should be based on and guided by the best available science. This policy recognizes the equal rights of women and men to access the programs and projects that promote sustainable management of natural resources, contribute to sustainable livelihoods while mitigating against the impact of climate change.

BELIZE'S NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

First and foremost, the Constitution of Belize guarantees gender equality for all its citizens and provides them protection from discrimination on the basis of race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex. The Belize National Gender Policy sets out a broad vision as well as a goal to advance the achievement of de jure and de facto gender equality and equity in Belize. The policy also sets out five priorities which are: 1) Health, 2) Education and Skills Training, 3) Wealth and Employment Generation, 4) Violence Producing Conditions and 5) Power and Decision-making. The policy also sets out specific cross-cutting strategies and commitments and outline the specific roles and responsibility of society-wide institutions.

PACT'S GENDER POLICY

PACT's Policy on Gender and Equality commits the organization to achieving gender equality and equity, ensuring that women and men human rights, values and opportunities are promoted and protected jointly during the development and execution of all PACT and Third-party investments, and ensuring that women and men are equal beneficiaries of such interventions. One of the main objectives of the policy is to ensure that "women participate with men as equal stakeholders and decision makers in the design, management and execution of PACT-funded and third-party projects¹." The policy applies to both internal and external operations and processes of the organization.

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Belize signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on June 13, 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and ratified it in December 1993. Since then, the country has been progressively working to honour its commitments under the convention. Belize has developed a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) as part of its commitment to the CBD. This plan documents the current status of biodiversity in Belize, identifies the threats and underlying drivers of biodiversity loss, and presents the strategies

¹ Note that PACT's Gender Policy is currently under review.

required for reducing pressures, safeguarding ecosystems, ecosystem services and species, and improving benefits. The CBD has developed a 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, which defines the Secretariat's role in stimulating and facilitating committed, collective action on gender equality in the context of biodiversity and the need to increase awareness, understanding and capacity to address barriers to equal opportunity. The plan updates the 2008 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention, to align with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This plan includes possible actions for Parties, including Belize, to undertake the implementation of the Convention. Parties are requested to report on actions undertaken to implement the Gender Plan of Action as part of their national biodiversity plans.

GENDER CONCEPTS

Gender: The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable.

Gender equality: The achievement of women and men enjoying equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. The interests needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, while also recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. It does not mean that women and men will become the same but that a person's responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Women's empowerment: The ability and agency of every woman to shape her own destiny, exercise her rights and make her own choices. Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Gender mainstreaming (also referred to as "integrating a gender perspective/approach"): The process of assessing and integrating the implications of any planned action on women and men, as well as including specific provisions for gender equality, including in legislation, policies, programs or projects. It is a systematic approach for ensuring the concerns and experiences of women and men are an integral part 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. The degree of gender mainstreaming within an action can vary (see gender sensitive and gender responsive definitions below).

Gender sensitive: A gender sensitive approach understands and considers socio-cultural factors underlying gender-based discrimination to attempt to redress existing gender inequalities. Gender sensitivity in application differentiates between the capacities, needs and priorities of women and men; ensures that the views and ideas of both women and men are taken seriously; considers the implications of decisions on the situation of women relative to men; and takes actions to address inequalities or imbalance between women and men. In application, gender sensitive has come to mean 'do no harm'.

Gender responsive: A gender responsive approach proactively identifies, understands, and implements interventions to address gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions. Gender responsiveness in application attempts to re-define women and men’s gender roles and relations and contributes pro-actively and intentionally to the advancement of gender equality. More than ‘doing no harm’, a gender-responsive policy, program, plan or project aims to ‘do better.’

Intersectionality: Describes the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect. The concept of intersectionality attempts to capture the complexity of discrimination and how the experiences of individuals differ based on their multiple identities. It recognizes that gender intersects with other socio-cultural characteristics such as race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and age and that these intersections yield a unique set of norms. An intersectional approach recognizes the differences among people of the same group and that must be understood for gender equality to be achieved.

Sex-disaggregated data: Data that is collected, presented, and analyzed separately for women, men, girls, and boys. It allows the identification of existing and potential inequalities based on gender. It is the basis for effective gender analysis.

BELIZE CONSERVATION SECTOR GENDER POLICY

Protected areas and ecosystems provide a wide range of goods and services that communities utilize for their livelihoods and wellbeing. There remains a tendency to look at aggregate benefits of ecosystem services for human wellbeing rather than differences across social groups. If the SDGs are to be achieved and ‘no one is left behind’ it is vital that the variable perspectives, knowledge and interests of both men and women, be integrated into ecosystem services conceptualizations². There is now a growing recognition of the importance of gender integration and mainstreaming in conservation work include activities involving protected areas. The culturally defined gender roles and responsibilities that affect gendered patterns of resource use and divisions of labor (e.g., income, food, childcare, domestic duties) analyses and, ultimately, decision-making is inescapable. Gender inequality is often a manifestation of unequal power situation rooted in unequal distribution of income and wealth and in social norms and tradition. Thus, there may be synergy among efforts towards the reduction of income inequality and gender inequality³. It is therefore with this understanding of the power of gender to shape and impact inequality even in natural resource management that this policy has been prepared.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

The goal of this gender policy is to support the achievement of equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are:

² Fortnam, M. et al. 2019, The Gendered Nature of Ecosystem Services. *Ecological Economics* 159. p.g. 312–325

³ Nazrul Islam, S. 2015, Inequality and Environmental Sustainability. UN-DESA Working Paper No. 145

- I. to advance women's equal participation with men as decision-makers in the management of the BNPAS;
- II. to support women, girls, and children in the realization of their full human rights in the conservation sector; and
- III. to reduce gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of sustainable development.

PRINCIPLES

- I. Gender equality must be considered as an integral part of all policies, programs and projects of partner organizations involved in the management of the BNPAS.
- II. Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that every policy, program and project affects women and men differently.
- III. Achieving gender equality does not mean that women become the same as men.
- IV. Women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality.
- V. Promoting the equal participation of women as agents of change in economic, social, and political processes is essential to achieving gender equality.
- VI. Gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between women and men.
- VII. Achieving gender equality will require specific measures designed to eliminate gender inequalities.
- VIII. Policies, programs, and projects or partner organizations should contribute to gender equality.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The focus of this policy is on gender, rather than specifically on women. Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, needs, interests and capacities of both men and women and these are influenced by social and cultural factors. Therefore, the term 'gender' does not replace the term 'sex' which refers exclusively to biological differences. Men and women often play different roles in society and accordingly they may have different needs. A gender perspective is required to ensure that men's and women's specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities are recognized and addressed. This policy establishes the basis for partner organizations to ensure that the gender differences are considered and dealt with not only in relation to their programs and projects but also internally within the respective organizations.

LINKING GENDER EQUALITY WITH BNPAS PLAN

This gender policy has been aligned with the Belize National Protected Areas System (BNPAS) Plan. The primary purpose of the BNPAS is to have an effective protected areas system for Belize established. Key actions that have crucial bearing to gender issues have been identified. These areas will be addressed in the implementation of the actions of the BNPAS at the site level by partner organizations. The BNPAS itself is aligned with major national plans and strategies including the Horizon 2030, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (NTSMP), the National Agriculture and Food Policy (NAFP), and the National Land Use Policy (NLUP).

NPASP POLICY AND PROGRAMMING PRIORITIES	LINKS WITH GENDER EQUALITY
<p>Activity 1.4.1 Develop and enact co-management agreements to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in PA management</p>	<p>The NPAS Plan calls for the broader inclusion of stakeholders in the management of protected areas away from just the NGO co-manager and the government regulatory agency. These stakeholders include local communities, resource user groups, academia and research institutes, and private sector entities that are located or work within the broader landscapes and seascapes containing the protected areas. Working on the active participation of these groups of stakeholders means that men and women should be given equal opportunities to be involved given the different roles that they play in relation to use and management of natural resources.</p>
<p>Activity 3.2.1 Secure multilateral and international financing for protected areas with a comprehensive plan and clear objectives.</p>	<p>The BNPAS seeks to engage the private sector stakeholders more directly to develop sustainable measures that result in both profitability and conservation outcomes. This would be done by transitioning to sustainable productive activities and the greening of economic production. This process is important, but it will also impact the lives of both men and women whether from local communities, or the private sector. Issues to be addressed such as climate change and sustainable land use regimes will also need to consider the roles and responsibilities of women as it relates to these topics. Economic growth and investments arising from these initiatives must benefit both men and women.</p>
<p>Activity 3.2.2 Explore low carbon development and climate change financing to approach private sector involvement.</p>	<p>To take advantage of low carbon development opportunities that climate financing provides, several steps or measures will need to be carried out. These include developing national capacity to effectively receive and utilize the resources made available, develop mechanisms to ensure full transparency in the way the resources are used for mitigation and adaptation activities, and effective measurement, reporting and verification of the benefits and impact of climate finance</p>
<p>Activity 4.1.1: Consolidate subunits and streamline protected areas to enhance coordinated management and increase system functionality</p>	<p>The consolidating adjacent protected areas into larger management units will require planning and decision-making that must be inclusive of both men and women. These adjustments may affect men and women differently and even exacerbate gender inequalities where they</p>

	exist. It is important then to ensure that there is adequate gender-sensitive consultation and engagement in this process.
Activity 4.1.2 Strengthen the management effectiveness of protected areas	The effective management of protected areas at the site level includes how local communities are affected but it should also specifically include gender concerns. Some of the effectiveness criteria has to do with the impact of protected areas on local communities, decision-making and participation and economic benefits that accrue from the protected area. In all these areas, the issue of gender should be considered as in many instances, women, due to their gender roles are not adequately consulted or are unable to participate. The integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the management effectiveness of protected areas also need to account for gender concerns in a similar way.

LINKING GENDER EQUALITY WITH NBSAP

There are several targets and actions under each goal that will likely have an impact on gender equality. The main goals are listed here and links to gender equality are presented. These are to be assessed further however this provides a starting point for gender consideration.

NBSAP GOALS	LINKS WITH GENDER EQUALITY
GOAL A: Improved environmental stewardship is demonstrated across all society in Belize, as is an understanding and appreciation of marine, freshwater, and terrestrial biodiversity, their benefits, and values	The use and management of biodiversity resources is by its very nature a gendered process. Therefore, it is important that any actions that involves stewardship must ensure the inclusion of both men and women.
GOAL B: Direct and indirect pressures on Belize’s marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems are reduced to sustain and enhance national biodiversity and ecosystem services	Management measures and incentives may affect men and women directly and can further disempower women if their role in the use and management of natural resources are not carefully considered and their voices included.
GOAL C: Functional ecosystems and viable populations of Belize’s biodiversity are maintained and strengthened	Climate change response and protected areas management actions contemplated under this goal both have gender implications. All communication done to support the achievement of this goal must also be gender sensitive.
GOAL D: Strengthened provision of ecosystem services, ecosystem-based management, and the equitable sharing of benefits from biodiversity	Ecosystem services and related benefits are accessed differently by men and women. The sharing of benefits must therefore be equitable

	and this will require an understanding of the gender access to these services.
GOAL E: The NBSAP is implemented effectively through capacity building, informed strategic decision making and integrated public participation	Implementing the NBSAP requires the full participation of women both in terms of input into the process but also in decision-making. Therefore, it is important that institutional mechanisms for the full participation of women at all levels of the NBSAP implementation is developed and carried out.

POLICY STATEMENT AND ACTIONS

The overall aim and intent of this policy is to ensure that all programs and projects for the management of the BNPAS benefit men and women equally, according to their different needs and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels. Furthermore, it is the expressed intention of all partner organizations to address gender equality at all levels of the project design, in the workplace and in the environment in which the organization operates for the socio-economic good of the organization, the environment and society in general. Each partner organization is committed to taking the necessary steps towards achieving this aim of the policy at the organizational and programmatic level.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

Partner organizations involved in the management of BNPAS commit, through recruitment and training, to develop a staff dedicated and prepared to apply a gender perspective in the work and represent gender sensitive values whether off or on duty. Partner organizations will prepare personnel policies and other tools to secure a gender sensitive staff, including the prohibition of sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation. Partner organizations commit to:

- 1) Promote a working culture of respect free from sexual harassment and implement specific sanctions for violations.
- 2) Create an atmosphere conducive to discussion and internal debate on gender-based discrimination, including gender-based violence.
- 3) Put in place institutional procedures which ensure that the needs of boys, girls, men, and women are all met equitably in all programs and projects and the provision of livelihood activities.
- 4) Formulate measures to ensure that gender-specific vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women are systematically identified and addressed.
- 5) Ensure that data on beneficiaries is disaggregated by sex for needs assessment and program planning and gender analysis is integrated into program design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.
- 6) Design strategies for capacity building in gender mainstreaming as part of institutional development programs with special attention to staff training on gender analysis skills; and
- 7) Ensure that reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming are put in place. This includes performance evaluations, budget allocation analysis and actions to enable the full participation of men and women on an equal and meaningful basis in all activities at all levels.

PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL

At the program and project level, partner organizations commit to ensure that concept notes and funding proposals prepared and submitted for local or international financing meets the principles and requirements of this policy. Partner organizations make these commitments in the following areas:

Application and Practice

- 1) Programs and projects shall be based on strong gender sensitive contextual analysis, including access and control of assets and resources. The analysis will seek to understand gender roles and relations in each specific context.
- 2) Gender analysis will influence every stage of the project cycles from conception to design to, planning, implementation, and monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.
- 3) All programs and projects shall identify gender-related baseline, performance indicators and targets through both qualitative and quantitative data.
- 4) Power relations will be identified and change in unequal power relations that intentionally or unintentionally, harm women, men, boys, or girls or any persons on the basis of gender, will be promoted and supported.
- 5) The food security of men and women shall not be undermined by any program or project developed and implemented by partner organizations but rather this will be strengthened.
- 6) Programs and projects focused on sustainable livelihoods will promote equitable access to resources and land rights, possession of productive assets and access to training and information to ensure that it contributes to gender equality.

Inclusion and Participation

- 1) All programs and projects must identify gendered barriers to participation, decision-making, and control of resources and identify measures to address these.
- 2) All programs must analyze and take into account time constraints and increased workload which may be placed on women due to their traditional domestic and caring responsibilities.
- 3) If and when necessary special measures will be taken such as women-only meetings, to ensure meaningful participation of women to give them a voice in matters being discussed and decided.
- 4) Men and women will be engaged in the promotion of gender equality and women's organizing will be supported, as it is often key to change gender relations.
- 5) All programs and projects will ensure a gender balance in the number of beneficiaries to be targeted.

Capacity Development

- 1) Engage in dialogue with all partners on gender equality policy and practice especially beneficiary communities, always respecting each partner's capacity, pace, and strategy for change.
- 2) Gender equality will be included in organizational development support to community partners based on their needs and priorities.

Institutional Learning

- 1) Partner organizations will seek to learn from partner's experience, knowledge, and ideas concerning the mainstreaming of gender.
- 2) Program and project evaluation will include questions with respect to gender differences in participation as well as gender differences in the impacts of the work of the organization.

Advocacy and Communication

- 1) Experiences gained and examples of gender equality activities will be used to advocate for change of laws, policies, and practices with the aim to create change at the national level.
- 2) Contribute to participation of women and girls and use appropriate and gender-sensitive language when advocating for change.
- 3) Sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive data will be used to communicate the impacts and benefits of conservation, and natural resource management at all times.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is a living document and will be updated and revised based on experience and contextual changes of the BNPAS. Each partner organization will translate this policy into their individual policy according to the accompanying policy framework⁴ and will be responsible for:

- A. Increasing awareness and skills of staff and volunteers in considering the social differences between vulnerable men and women when designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs.
- B. Conducting a systematic review of the organization's procedures to put in place gender analysis as part of programming or improving the existing systems.
- C. Re-enabling a gender balance in the different levels of the structure within their organization, to involve more women in the decision-making processes at all levels.
- D. Ensuring equal opportunities among female and male staff members and volunteers in the areas of recruitment, promotion, benefits, training and working conditions.
- E. Assessing the implications of their policies and decisions for men and women, and thus ensuring that all programs and projects of the BNPAS are gender sensitive and gender responsive.
- F. Committing resources to improve the organization's work on gender equality in order to fulfil the intent and aims of this policy.
- G. Incorporating the principles and commitments of this policy to their annual work plans.
- H. Following up on commitments and ensure sufficient governance support for implementation.

⁴ A separate policy framework has been developed to support the implementation of this policy.