

*Technical Paper*

# Gender Analysis of the Bamboo Sector in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda

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### About the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization

The International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the promotion of bamboo and rattan for sustainable development. For more information, please visit: [www.inbar.int](http://www.inbar.int).

### About this Working Paper

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## Foreword

Bamboo is a fast-growing plant that has significant untapped potential in many African countries in terms of generating rural income, restoring degraded lands and combating climate change. For many generations, bamboo has played an important economic and cultural role across Africa. Indeed, Africa's bamboo resources have immense socio-economic, cultural and ecological significance. Yet, despite the long history of the utilisation of bamboo across the continent, the potential of this green economic resource remains largely unexploited.

At present, East Africa's bamboo resources remain largely untapped, despite the fact that the region is endowed with sub-Saharan Africa's largest natural bamboo forests, which account for 3–4% of the world's total known bamboo coverage. Among various other bottlenecks, low-value products and a lack of capacity to adhere to international standards have resulted in the region's exclusion from a global export trade in bamboo products currently valued at over United States Dollar (USD) 1.8 billion.

Nevertheless, if the development of the bamboo sector in East Africa receives adequate support—in terms of the establishment of plantations, skills development, value addition, identification of highly marketable products and linkage to competitive markets—it will avoid hard currency being spent on furniture imports, save forests from destruction and contribute to energy sources for low-income households that depend on wood fuel and charcoal for home and business use.

In an effort to address the challenges associated with the bamboo sector, the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization has introduced the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme to apply the experiences and lessons learned from the hugely successful transformations of Asia's and Europe's bamboo markets to the situation in East Africa. The aim is to enable Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to fully participate in and benefit from the new bamboo economy of the twenty-first century. Currently, during its second phase, the programme is building on Chinese and Dutch expertise with regard to bamboo value chain development, product design, marketing and standardisation in order to help East Africa unlock the vast potential of its indigenous bamboo resources while also contributing to green economic growth, international trade and investment among Europe, China and East Africa.

The gender analysis discussed in this report represents one of the strategic actions performed as part of the programme so as to develop and utilise the understanding of the gender

dimensions and contexts of the beneficiary countries. The report presents the findings of a study concerning gender-based differences between and among women and men when it comes to bamboo resource utilisation and economic activities. It also conveys information about the level of participation, inclusion and decision making by women and men in terms of the bamboo resources management of the target communities. I trust that the valuable information provided in this report will help to make informed decisions regarding the righteous positioning of gender in our bamboo sector development endeavours. Furthermore, I hope that it will allow us to better gear bamboo development projects towards gender responsive approaches whereby gender inequalities and the different needs of women and men are adequately addressed.

**Ali Mchumo**

Director General

International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR)

## Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFR	Central forest reserve
EA	East Africa
EEFCCC	Ethiopia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FGD	Focus group discussion
GA	Gender analysis
GDP	Gross domestic product
INBAR	International Bamboo and Rattan Organization
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (Uganda)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MS Teams	Microsoft Teams
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NAP-GE	National Action Plan for Gender Equality
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TVET	Technical and vocational education training
USD	United States Dollar
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

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## Executive Summary

The Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme is a triangular South-South cooperation involving the Netherlands and China as well as East African countries. The aim of the programme is to support livelihood development, food security and better environmental management in East Africa by developing robust bamboo value chains and a sustainable bamboo industry in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. As part of Phase II of the programme, a gender analysis (GA) study was deemed necessary to assist with streamlining the programme for systematic operationalisation and the attainment of gender-responsive goals.

As a consequence, this paper presents the findings of a study conducted to better understand the gender dynamics at play in relation to the objectives and interventions of the programme as well as to gear the programme from being gender-sensitive to gender-responsive. The study generated a set of country-specific findings highlighting the relevant policy and legislative frameworks governing both gender dynamics in agro-based bamboo enterprises and context-specific gender dynamics, such as those related to cultural and religious practices or beliefs. These findings can inform recommendations for improving the programme's gender strategy in an effort to stimulate the more meaningful participation and beneficial engagement of women in the programme. The recommendations can also apply to other similar natural resource development programmes when it comes to the positioning of gender neutrality in relation to their implementation.

The guiding framework for the study was an interpretative social science paradigm whereby a specific phenomenon can be explained on the basis of multiple realities in a given complex sector, such as the case of the bamboo value chains in the three East African beneficiary countries. Moreover, the lived and observed experiences and realities of gender dynamics were examined by engaging a range of stakeholders in consultations to test and uncover the factors that influence gender dynamics as well as to understand the level of participation, inclusion and decision making by women and men in the bamboo sector.

The study team collected both primary and secondary data. The team mainly employed qualitative methods for the purpose of data collection. The overall approach involved the collection of data through stakeholder consultations and a literature review, the analysis of the gathered data and information, and reporting. The GA followed a largely consultative approach, ensuring that women were targeted for the interviews to the greatest extent possible. The consultations were targeted towards existing stakeholders known to be

knowledgeable of and engaged in bamboo value chain operations across the three countries in order to ensure ownership of the findings and outcomes from the GA.

The study's geographical target areas were Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, that is, the countries where the programme operates. All three countries and the respective programme districts were sampled for the GA in consultation with the regional programme management and in-country officials.

The findings of the study revealed that Kenya and Uganda have demonstrated their commitment to the promotion of gender equity and women's empowerment through the ratification and signing of both international and regional gender conventions and declarations, including the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Limited access to, use and control of resources emerged as common hindrances experienced by women (especially rural women) across the three countries, a situation driven by the generally patriarchal nature of society in all three, which promotes male inheritance and so leads to less access to resources such as land for women. Decision making, including financial decisions, tends not to involve women, with male spouses who own the land and provide financially for the family dominating the financial decision-making to the exclusion of women out. One of the main challenges is that, while 65% of women derive their livelihood from agriculture, a lack of access to land represents an important limitation of their ability to benefit practically from the bamboo sector. The low literacy rates among women (e.g. in Ethiopia, the literacy rate for females is only 44.42% when compared with 59.24% for males) represent another indicator of gender inequality that contributes to low female participation in and benefit from agro-based bamboo enterprises. When compared with Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have higher female literacy rates of 78.19% and 71.5%, respectively. Furthermore, a range of gender-related perceptions framed by the social, cultural and religious beliefs of communities play a role in how and where women and men show interest in the activities of the bamboo sector. It is evident that, generally speaking, the value chain activities preferred by men are linked to higher-value products and higher financial gains, in addition to being considered mainly (e.g. furniture making). By contrast, women and girls tend to avoid working in construction and furniture making, as these trades are predominantly perceived as being the domain of males. However, it is important to note that bamboo industries employ greater numbers of women than men.

Kenya has a generally progressive and enabling policy and legislative environment for advancing gender equality anchored to the 2010 Constitution. The Constitution advocates for women and men to have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres, to ensure that no gender is favoured. Article 27 (6) and (8) of the Constitution direct the government to adopt legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programmes, to implement the principle that no more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies should be of the same gender. The bamboo sector in Kenya is still at a nascent stage and, to encourage investment and the growth of the sector, there is a need for strategies that would encourage private land owners to engage in bamboo agro-forestry to boost the resource base and, possibly, tax exemptions for bamboo products similar to those applicable to other products on the market. In addition, demonstration sites and female champions (e.g. the MIANZI group, a female-led architects' organisation) should be promoted to showcase success by women and encourage other women to join otherwise male-dominated trades such as tile and furniture making using bamboo.

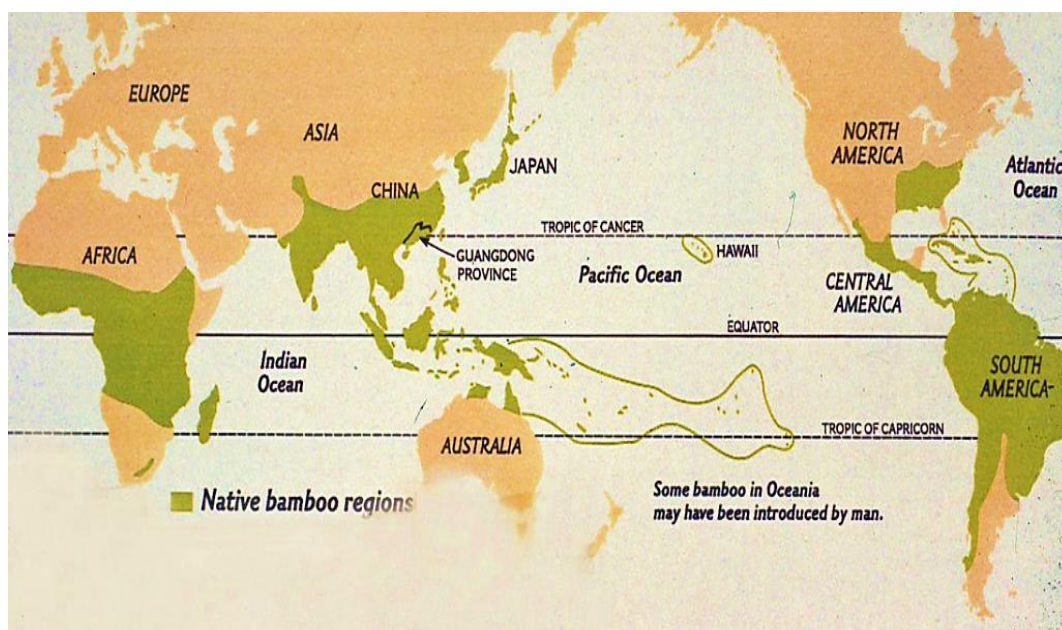
Similarly, while Uganda has an enabling policy framework with regard to gender empowerment and has already implemented the National Bamboo Strategy, various hindrances to meaningful female participation persist and impact the bamboo sector. For example, limitations in terms of access to land for women emanate from the established practice of male inheritance of family assets, thereby preventing women from participating in agro-forestry. However, it has emerged that the government permits the leasing of land for agro-forestry in the Central Forest Reserves (CFRs), which presents an opportunity for women without land to engage in bamboo agro-forestry. Among the range of opportunities that the programme can promote for women are charcoal or briquette making in Arua District (Northern Uganda) and Mukono District (Central Uganda), where bamboo forests can help to meet the demand for biofuels for the purpose of household cooking. In Western Uganda, the opportunities for bamboo enterprises in which women can be equally engaged with men include bamboo agro-forestry (supported by bamboo nurseries) and bamboo-based basketry/craft making. Moreover, Western Uganda is associated with suitable conditions for bamboo agro-forestry and, given the tourism boom in the area, women have the opportunity to benefit through the making and sale of bamboo crafts. The key advantage offered by these bamboo activities is that women can make crafts from their homes after they acquire the necessary skills and tools.

In terms of responding to the identified gaps in the programme's gender strategy, the key recommendations for the programme include male involvement in the journey towards the economic empowerment of women, role models or champions to set the example for women, women-friendly tools to address time poverty and promote their meaningful engagement in bamboo enterprises, training women leaders in community groups or committees in the sector and partnering with existing likeminded organisations and networks to advance women's meaningful participation.

More broadly, the programme's gender mainstreaming would benefit from the addressing of the highlighted gendered challenges, which largely centre on perceptions, limitations in access to resources that affect decision making by women, limited skills and literacy inequalities, as well as lack of role models and demonstration sites. It is important that the programme activities are tracked and lessons are captured to allow reflection not only on statistical participation by gender, but also on gender-specific challenges and dynamics affecting women's involvement on a case-by-case basis. In this way, the programme can develop an adapted approach to effectively address gender needs.

## 1. Background

Bamboo is commonly found in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, mostly in tropical and sub-tropical environments (Figure 1). It is typically found in growing forests, private lands and homestead farms. The global distribution of bamboo by continent is approximately 65% in Asia, 28% in America and 7% in Africa. Bamboo grows on at least 37 million hectares of land worldwide and covers 3.2% of the forest areas of the host countries (or approximately 1% of the global forest area) (Lobovikov et al., 2017). Bamboo represents a sustainable resource that offers multiple environmental, social and economic benefits, and it is associated with huge potential to alleviate poverty, protect the environment and help to accomplish the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 1, 7, 11, 12, 13 and 15. Africa has a total bamboo area of 4.56 million hectares and is home to 115 bamboo species from 48 of the continent's countries. Hence, the region has 12.3% of the global bamboo resources and contributes 7.3% of the total bamboo species (Bahru and Ding, 2021). Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda all play a pivotal role in promoting bamboo value chains for the socio-economic and environmental benefit of East Africa.



**Figure 1.** Diagrammatic map showing the global bamboo coverage

The GA study forms part of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR)'s Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme – Phase II. Nevertheless, the findings of the study also apply to other development interventions concerning bamboo and natural resource management in the three beneficiary countries. The main goal of Phase II is to enhance the climate change mitigations and adaptation benefits by developing inclusive

and sustainable industrial as well as Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) bamboo value chains, thereby resulting in enhanced livelihood opportunities, food security and environmental management in East Africa. Overall, the GA is envisaged as a strategic step towards strengthening the prospects of attaining the gender targets embedded within the programme activities and targeted indicators. It should be noted that, while Phase I of the programme involved some gender-specific activities and targets, it lacked a clear gender strategy and roadmap. The GA study provides the opportunity to address this gap by generating the contextual understanding required to ensure gender-inclusive development within the programme. The GA achieves this by systematically anchoring and strengthening the unique contextual considerations and perspectives of both men and women in the three beneficiary countries in relation to the programme design/activities, which further strengthens and supports the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the drive towards achieving the programme's gender aspirations. It should assist with the mid-course adjustment of the programme in order to achieve gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the findings and recommendations of the GA can be used as inputs for gender strategies with regard to similar development projects in the countries.

The GA represents one of the strategic actions within the programme intended to develop and utilise the understanding of the gender dimensions and contexts of the beneficiary countries. The contextual gender understanding generated through the GA has been developed through stakeholder engagement and a documentation review, including national policy documents and programme documents. The analysis of the gathered information has generated unique findings at the country level concerning the national enabling frameworks for gender, in addition to the knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and practices among the beneficiaries and programme officers, which should inform appropriate programme design and implementation with regard to the attainment of the gender goals. The findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report highlight the insights generated by the study, serve to inform context-specific strategies and suggest actions to be considered in relation to gender responsive programmes run by INBAR at the country and regional levels.

## 1.1 Rationale for the study

The Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme – Phase II recognises that gender equality is a critical factor when it comes to the success of the bamboo development programme as well as the enhancement of food security, nutrition and household income, among other variables. Consequently, gender mainstreaming, which aims at promoting the

drive towards gender equality and women's empowerment, has been positioned at the centre of the programme, as indicated in the programme's logical framework and theory of change. The programme seeks to address gender inequality and the power dynamics that affect decision making and negotiations regarding resources, incomes and opportunities within the bamboo value chain by promoting gender responsive activities and indicators.

The fact that the effectiveness of development programmes in terms of addressing the needs of the target population groups hinges on gender dynamics represents a key consideration. In recognition of this, the programme will implement gender-sensitive, community-based interventions intended to promote the active and meaningful participation and leadership of both women and men in activities supported by bamboo value chains. The programme also seeks to implement gender-sensitive, community-based climate resilience strategies and ensure gender equity in respect of access to, control over and benefiting from bamboo farming system development and value-added, market-driven products.

Prior studies have found gender inequality to be a drawback of socio-economic development (United Nations Population Fund, 2000, 2018; CARE Ethiopia, 2014; FAO and United Nations Development Programme, 2017). Gender inequality reflects injustice, discrimination and the unfair distribution of both resources and influence within societies. The concept is often the root cause of poverty, particularly among women and girls. Gender inequality has also been noted to be a critical barrier to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as a notable barrier to the achievement of the SDGs.

Given the proven link between gender inequality on the one hand and poverty and a slow pace of development on the other, it is imperative that interventions intended to tackle poverty be informed by a GA. Indeed, to adequately address the challenges posed by gender inequality in terms of development initiatives, there exists a need for the strategic direction and focus to be informed by an analysis of this concept.

The purpose of a GA study is to provide a comprehensive situation analysis of the gender dimensions as well as any gaps, barriers and opportunities that may affect or could contribute to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. The findings of this study, as documented in the present GA report, are intended to inform and aid with the development of appropriate programme strategies and actions that promote the meaningful participation of women and allow them to benefit equally from inclusive bamboo development initiatives.

## 1.2 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the GA study is to achieve a better understanding of the gender dynamics at play in relation to the objectives and interventions of the programme and, relatedly, to shift the programme from being gender-sensitive to gender-responsive. The specific objectives of the GA are to:

- analyse the gender dimensions, barriers and opportunities that affect or could affect women's participation and benefits in relation to the programme;
- identify opportunities, strengths, gaps and recommended strategies for designing a gender-responsive strategy in order to enhance the programme's effectiveness; and
- provide recommendations intended to stimulate women's participation and increase the benefits they derive from the programme.

## 2. Approach and methods

The GA study was guided by the interpretive social science (or constructivist) paradigm, which assumes a relativist ontology. This ontology recognises that multiple realities can explain a given phenomenon, especially in such a complex and formative sector as the agro-based bamboo sector in the three East African countries. The realities of gender within the bamboo value chains and programme across the three countries required the rigorous analysis of the participation, inclusion and decision making by women and men in the bamboo sector, which involved uncovering and presenting these lived experiences and realities. The chosen framework and lens allowed the study team to utilise and analyse the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into the programme cycle, women's empowerment within the agriculture index and the transformative GA framework. To this end, the GA investigated the following core areas of inquiry:

- Gender roles, responsibilities and time use.
- Household patterns of power and decision making (including a burden and benefit analysis).
- Access to and control over assets and resources.
- Meaningful participation in public decision-making and leadership.
- Gender and power relations.

The GA study mainly employed qualitative methods for the purpose of data collection, including in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, field visits and focus group discussions (FGDs). The overall research approach involved the collection of data through stakeholder consultations and a literature review, the analysis of the gathered data and information, and the reporting of the findings. The GA adopted a largely consultative approach, ensuring that women were targeted as interview participants to the greatest extent possible. The consultations were targeted towards existing stakeholders considered to be knowledgeable of and engaged in bamboo value chain operations across the three countries in order to ensure ownership of the findings and outcomes of the GA.

The three programme beneficiary countries (Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) were sampled for the GA in consultation with the regional programme management and in-country officials. The universal coverage of samples from all of the programme areas within each country was ensured to enable the GA to capture the different and unique gender dynamics peculiar to each country and locality.

Overall, while the initial selection of interview participants sought to achieve the equal representation of women, it proved challenging to attain the desired level of participation of women in the interviews when compared with men. To respond to this challenge, the study team identified and interviewed six additional female bamboo value chain stakeholders with the support of INBAR's national programme representative.

The data collected were primarily qualitative data. As such, it were collated and verified by means of a content analysis to ensure that the inferences, judgments and conclusions derived were as accurate as possible. To ensure the high validity of the data, the study team applied triangulation. Reflection sessions were also conducted with INBAR's country programme officials concerning thematic areas of enquiry.

The present analysis looks at the individual country-specific gender policy and institutional frameworks within which the programme operates so as to provide a broad sense of the enabling environment for the programme's operations at the national level. The analysis then delves into examining the country-specific gender dimensions depicted in relation to the core areas of inquiry, namely gender roles, responsibilities and time use; household patterns of power and decision making; access to and control over assets and resources; meaningful participation in public decision-making and leadership; and gender and power relations.

### **3. Gender in the Ethiopian bamboo sector**

Ethiopia has the largest bamboo resource base in Africa, which provides a significant opportunity for the advancement of the livelihoods for the country's poor men and women through the activities of the bamboo sector. The annual economic contribution of bamboo to Ethiopia's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to be approximately Ethiopian Birr (ETB) 56,250,000, while close to 750,000 people depend on bamboo-related economic activities for their livelihoods (Ethiopia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, 2020). The Government of Ethiopia has developed the robust ten-year 2019–2030 Ethiopian Bamboo Development Strategy and Action Plan. The objective is to transform and sustainably manage the country's bamboo resources by developing green industries and implementing livelihood promotion to produce value-added products and cater for domestic, regional and global markets. Understanding the gender dimensions unique to Ethiopia is key to developing appropriate strategies for advancing the national gender targets within the programme.

#### **3.1 Policy environment and context**

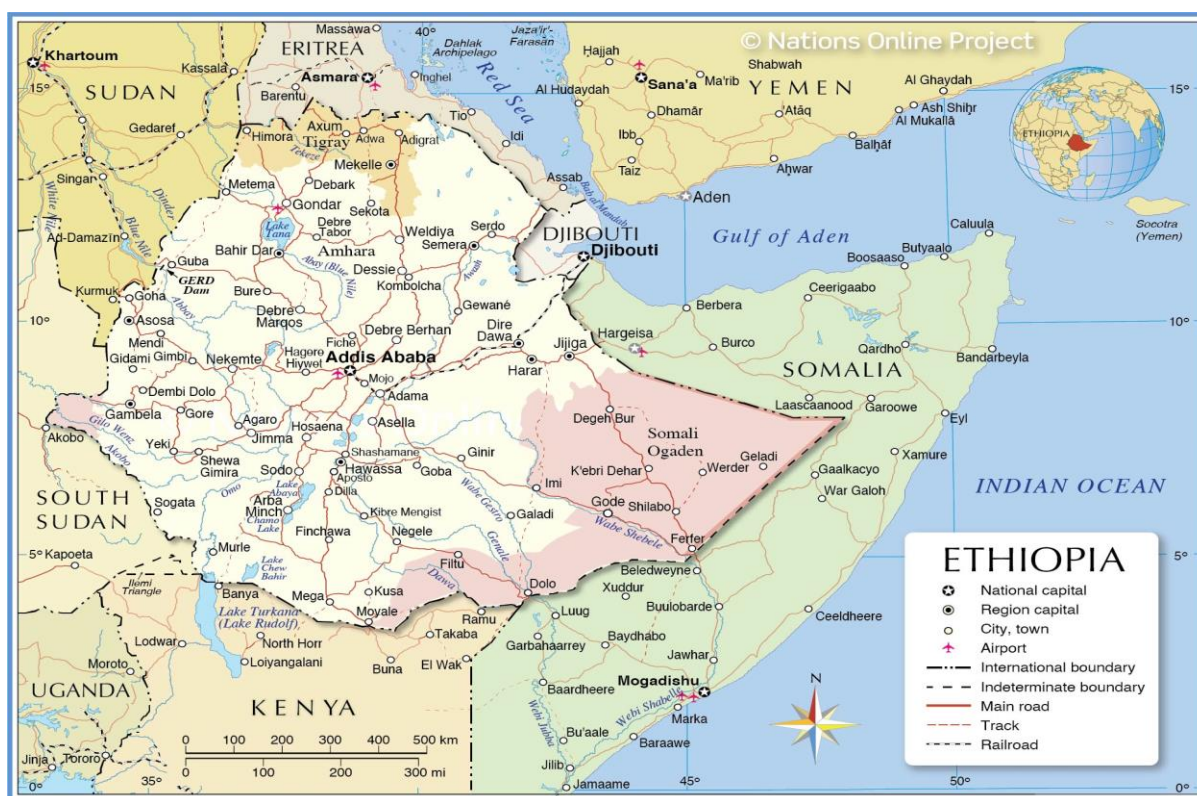
In 1995, following the promulgation of its new Constitution, the Government of Ethiopia renewed its commitment to the National Policy on Women (or Women's Policy), which was formulated in 1993 with the aim of creating appropriate structures within government offices and institutions to establish equitable and gender-sensitive public policies. To this end, Ethiopia has demonstrated gender equality in its political sphere, with half of the cabinet ministers being women. Moreover, the country is led by a female president, in addition to having a male prime minister.

Ethiopia's Forestry Law advances landscape restoration and livelihood promotion, which serve to promote the objectives of the bamboo sector. In 2018, Ethiopia enacted a new National Forest Law, thereby establishing that communities and associations can have forest ownership rights. These changes in the law fostered an enabling environment for the lifting of the barriers facing women in the bamboo sector and, therefore, promoted gender equity. This is especially important in terms of contributing to equitable livelihoods from forestry-related activities for rural women, as 80% of the country's population is rural.

Despite the progressive gender reflection at the national level, Ethiopian society remains largely patriarchal, with the average woman often taking a back seat in areas involving meaningful access to and/or ownership of resources and assets such as land, which

influences women’s participation and decision making, especially concerning finances, including at the household level.

In Ethiopia, a range of customary norms, religious beliefs and social practices limit the meaningful participation of women in the bamboo sector due to its heavy reliance on access to land. For example, the Semitic traditions and the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, which dominate the northern Tigray and Amhara regions, follow a custom that prohibits women from ploughing the land. In these areas, women are forced to rent their land and share only 30% of the products (Rapsomanikis, 2015). In the Oromia region, the prevailing patriarchal rules of both the Muslim and Protestant faiths also limit women’s access to land. In this region, it is reported that women can only gain access to land through marriage, which means that unmarried women are excluded from accessing land for the purpose of bamboo cultivation. The other barriers facing women include the low levels of education and literacy among women in both rural and urban settings.



**Figure 2.** Political map of Ethiopia

In 2017, Ethiopia had a general adult literacy rate of 51.77%, with the female literacy of 44.42% being lower than the male literacy rate of 59.24% (Table 1). While Ethiopia has comparatively lower literacy levels than other countries world wide, it has seen an increase in recent years.

Literacy is a key contributor to the ability of both men and women to learn the skills necessary to achieve greater success in the bamboo trade.

**Table 1.** Ethiopia's literacy rate disaggregated by gender

Year	Adult female literacy rate	Adult male literacy rate	Adult literacy rate (overall)
2017	44.42%	59.24%	51.77%
2007	28.92%	49.13%	39.00%
2005	17.98%	41.94%	29.82%
2004	22.80%	50.00%	35.90%
1994	18.51%	35.98%	27.01%

Source: [countryeconomy.com](http://countryeconomy.com)

Furthermore, Ethiopia's National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) highlights the gender issues and challenges faced by women in the country's agricultural and informal sectors, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Gender policy considerations in agriculture: Ethiopia

Plan/Policy	Gender issues identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE)</li> <li>Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women lack productive assets, particularly land.</li> <li>Women are underserved in terms of agricultural extension services, credit, labour, oxen and farm implements (time-saving technologies). Only 9% of women have access to agricultural extension services (Agricultural Census Study, 2001).</li> <li>Only 18.3% landowners are women (Agricultural Census Study, 2003).</li> <li>Women own smaller sized holdings than men.</li> <li>Access to extension services for women is limited by inability/challenges, with initial payment of 25% required for input purchase and the absence of protection against risks (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006).</li> <li>Access to credit is linked to land and asset ownership, which marginalises poor farmers, mainly women.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE)</li> <li>Informal Employment, Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of those employed in the informal sector are women (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006).</li> <li>Many women are involved in small businesses requiring small capital, less sophisticated management and less book-keeping skills.</li> <li>Women face constant police harassment as they often operate without licenses.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult literacy among women is 34%, while it is 49% among men (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2006).</li> </ul>
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The issues presented in Table 2 elucidate existing gender dimensions that have potentially significant implications for the bamboo development programme’s objectives and targets. The analysis of the interview findings discussed below demonstrates the extent to which the identified gender dynamics affect meaningful female participation in and benefits derived from Ethiopia’s agricultural sector, particularly the bamboo development sector/programme.

### **Analysis of Stakeholder Responses**

An analysis of the interview responses from stakeholders in Ethiopia generated the following reflections on the knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and practices of those involved in the bamboo sector. The interviews confirmed programme stakeholders’ knowledge of the existence of a national gender policy, which advocates for the equal participation of men and women in the agricultural sector. The following issues emerged with regard to the participation of women and men in the bamboo sector and the programme:

- Ethiopia is currently implementing gender policy reforms, which also apply to agriculture and land access:
  - Ethiopia is a highly patriarchal society where men own land and are often the decision makers within a household.
  - Women, especially in rural or traditional settings, are largely dependent on men/spouses when it comes to access to resources such as land and decisions regarding finances.
- The programme is designed based on the 2019–2030 Ethiopian Bamboo Development Strategy and Action Plan, with gender roles and norms being intrinsically woven into the day-to-day implementation of the programme.
- There is a 50% aspirational target for women’s involvement and benefit embedded within the programme’s objectives and target activities (e.g. women’s participation in training).
- Despite the gender-inclusive processes for the enrolment of candidates, women’s representation in most development programmes, including the bamboo development programme, is low. While women have been observed to be active in small (micro) businesses in Ethiopia, as well as being holders of licenses, there was only one female

employee at INBAR's Regional Office in Ethiopia during the period the study was conducted.

- Several perceptions and attitudes emerged that present hurdles to advancement of the programme's gender goals for men and women:
  - Women should not speak openly in public spaces or gatherings according to specific cultural or religious belief systems, for example, in Islamic and other conservative communities. In the Amhara region, women are generally more conservative due to the established social structures. This, coupled with the generally lower literacy levels among women when compared with men, presents a barrier to women learning skills and engaging in bamboo-related programmes and opportunities. This attitude (whereby women are less vocal in public) was experienced by one INBAR official while conducting training on sustainable bamboo management in a rural village over 165 km from the capital city, Addis Ababa.
  - One farmer expressed the belief that accessing credit is sin.

**Table 3.** Ethiopia's gender division in bamboo value chains

Bamboo value chain nodes	Participation of women	Participation of men	Remarks
Bamboo Nursery Development	High	High	Planting and nurseries
Plantation Management	Low and Medium	High	Land clearance, tillage, seed variety selection, day-to-day management
Bamboo Harvesting	Very Low	Very High	Harvesting, processing and treatment, storage
Bamboo Transportation	Medium	Very High	Transportation to storage/market, including storage
Bamboo Value Addition	Medium	High	Women are visible in household enterprises and crafts, whereas men dominate in furniture making, construction and trading
Industry	High	Low	Industry employs more women than men

As demonstrated in Table 3, there is a clear gender division in terms of labour in Ethiopia's bamboo sector. More specifically, while women and men are equally involved in nursery activities, women are significantly less involved than men in many of the other value chain nodes, including plantation activities, harvesting and transportation. Women dominate in relation to bamboo crafts and weaving-based activities and working in industry. However, it is

apparent that women are most significantly involved in plantation activities. The programme-level interviews generally indicated that women are more involved in household-based crafts and making enterprises, including weaving and mat making. Women's participation in industry is very high when compared with men, which represents a potential entry point.

### Access to, Use and Control of Resources

The knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and views expressed during the stakeholder interviews were analysed to generate an understanding of the gender dimensions related to the access to, use and control of resources in Ethiopia:

- The bamboo sector in Ethiopia has high potential to provide livelihoods for both men and women, given that Ethiopia has the largest bamboo resource base in Africa.
- Both men and women depend on bamboo for a range of purposes, including income generation from providing labour on bamboo plantations, in bamboo factories and in small businesses selling culms, seedlings, crafts and furniture; fuel (charcoal, briquettes, biomass); construction (shelter, flooring, fencing), and offcuts used as fodder for domestic animals.

**Table 4.** Level of engagement in activities by gender

Bamboo activity	Women: Level of involvement (high/medium/low)	Men: Level of involvement (high/medium/low)
Land clearance	High	High
Tillage (hand, oxen)	Medium	High
Planting/sowing	High	High
Manuring	Low	High
Weeding	High	High
Pruning	Medium	High
Plantation management	Medium	High
Harvesting	Low	High
Transport to storage site	Low	High
Storing	Medium	Medium
Transport to market	Low	High

- Land in Ethiopia is mostly owned by men, as dictated by traditional systems, which directs the proceeds from land activities such as bamboo farming towards the men within households.
- Where the Government of Ethiopia owns land in urban and rural areas:
  - Access to land for planting can be facilitated through applications to regional states, which provides a window of opportunity for those without land who wish to engage in agro-forestry through bamboo planting.

- The lack of collateral for men and women limits their access to financial credit for start-up purposes.
- Women are disadvantaged in terms of access to credit and finance when compared with men. The challenges in this regard are worse for rural women and men.
- The programme training staff reported observing more widows attending the bamboo value chain training sessions. Divorced women who had secured their share of the assets from the failed marriage were also seen to participate in programme activities and exhibit a tendency to be more independent in their decision making, including engaging in financial activities because they owned land and related assets.

### 3.2 Division of labour

The division of labour dynamics reflect the relative and comparative burdens of work within households as well as with regard to bamboo activities between men and women. The attitudes, perceptions and practices exercise (Table 5) highlighted the emerging issues with respect to gender dynamics in the division of labour within the bamboo sector and involvement in bamboo product verticals.

**Table 5.** Bamboo activities and characteristic responsibility by gender

S. No.	Bamboo line of activity	Responsibility (male/female)
1.	Bamboo furniture-making	Male-dominated
2.	Bamboo basketry and weaving, household lamp holders and kitchen items	Female-dominated
3.	Sale of bamboo poles in market	Male-dominated
4.	Bamboo construction (fencing poles, etc.)	Male-dominated
5.	Bamboo industry	Female-dominated workforce Male owner

As Table 5 shows, women largely participate in bamboo land preparation, planting activities and craft making, in addition to attending to household chores. Moreover, they are employed in bamboo processing factories in higher numbers than men. For their part, men participate in more areas across the bamboo value chains, especially in harvesting the bamboo (culms), transporting, selling and engaging in furniture making. The reasons for this gender diversity in terms of roles stem from existing socio-cultural arrangements and the perceived difficulty of the work, with men tending to perform the more challenging tasks. Notably, women are often not involved in the selling of bamboo culms or the handling of finances, as the selling is largely handled by men. This gender difference also relates to the ownership of the land on which the

bamboo is grown. However, female farmers actively participate in the selling of bamboo poles from homestead farming. Furthermore, widows and divorced women who have secured their share of the assets during their divorce proceedings are generally involved in decision making and financial aspects, including selling their own bamboo poles. Yet, women are notably absent from activities such as furniture making and construction, which are generally perceived as a man's activity. If properly trained, however, women are capable of making furniture and could benefit from the higher proceeds involved when compared with bamboo handicrafts and utility products. On a positive note, the modern technologies and techniques introduced through the programme training sessions have served to help reduce the workload for both men and women. In addition, bamboo culms are light in weight when compared with other wood, which helps to reduce the workload involved in handling and transporting the culms for both the men and women involved.

### 3.3 Equality and decision making

This section reflects on the important findings concerning the gender dynamics in the Ethiopian stakeholders' context that influence women's meaningful participation and decision making. Both men and women participate in bamboo farming activities, although men's involvement is linked to mechanised farming activities such as ploughing with oxen. They also tend to dominate decision making regarding seedling selection and purchase. Although some men and women reported working jointly, the handling of financial decisions, including the selling of bamboo culms, is generally reserved for the men in the household. SMEs are dominated by male owners, some of whom employ women in a range of activities. The majority of those employed in processing bamboo industrial products within bamboo factories in Ethiopia are women. In addition, more women form the workforce in relation to bamboo nursery operations, planting and material production. Notably, however, there is potential for women who have been empowered to take leading roles in SMEs and so increase their potential benefits. This is demonstrated by the case (Box A) of three women—returnees from the Middle East, where they provided domestic worker services—who embraced the opportunities offered by the bamboo sector and now employ others.

#### Box A: Case Study

Weyneshet, Fikirte and the Friends Bamboo Cooperative Society are three successful female small business owners in the bamboo sector in Ethiopia, who also offer employment to others. They were once returnees from the Middle East, where they had earned a living as domestic helpers. Upon returning to Ethiopia, they were introduced to INBAR and opted to receive four months' training on bamboo furniture making. In addition, with support from the Women and Children Affairs Office (Woreda 8, Kirkos Sub City, Addis Ababa) and a

development partner (CHADET Ethiopia), they established an enterprise. Upon the completion of their training, the Government of Ethiopia supported these women by providing an 80-square-meter working space. Here, they established their small business with a total capital of ETB 5100, having borrowed ETB 1200 each from Wise Women's Micro Finance and supplemented it with out-of-pocket contributions of ETB 500 each. They started their bamboo small business in 2017, mainly producing crafts such as vases, fruit trays, head lamps for bedrooms and weaving works. With the business booming, they employed two more trained women and expanded their product range to include bamboo furniture and other products. After becoming well established, INBAR Ethiopia provided more short and organised training for these women in 2019, which helped them to acquire more skills and knowledge of bamboo. Currently, Weyneshet, Fikirte and the Friends Bamboo Cooperative Society has a capital of ETB 100,000 and, based on the orders they receive, can hire up to ten part-time employees, which has helped in creating employment and training opportunities for locals.

However, women are constrained by cultural perceptions concerning the specific roles for men and women, which form barriers in terms of the degree to which they can benefit from the bamboo industry. For example, being responsible for household chores such that they are unable to leave the household to attend training or not being empowered to get involved in financial decisions. Conversely, the bamboo value chains provide opportunities whereby women can participate without leaving their homes. For instance, where crafts, mats and basketry products are involved, women can produce bamboo products sitting in their homes because such products do not require sophisticated or expensive tools. The women can do this work while taking care of family chores and their children. This provides them with part-time jobs and critical income, which they need for their family. More generally, there is limited awareness of the potential economic value of bamboo when it comes to improving the livelihoods of both men and women, especially in rural settings.

The workloads as well as the roles and responsibilities revealed by the GA are also depicted in Table 5. It can be seen that women have fewer moments of relaxation and are busier than their male counterparts. On average, women work five hours more than men in both the dry and rainy seasons. This is because women tend to wake up earlier than men and have little time to rest during the day, while men have rest breaks and more time for socialisation and relaxation throughout the day. This has significant implications with regard to the types of activities in which women participate in the bamboo value chains. It is unsurprising to note that women usually participate in planting, nursery activities and some crafts, while men are involved in different aspects along the value chains. As women have minimal rest time and are constrained by their various chores, they find it difficult to engage in downstream value chain activities that require them to be away from their homes. Notably, very few women participate in marketing, storage and industrial craft activities within the different regions of

Ethiopia, except in Addis Ababa. In the capital, women largely participate at the other end of the value chain, working in small-scale industries in which they make crafts and participate in marketing activities. This disjointed and seemingly ad hoc participation of women in certain segments of the value chains is largely determined by gender roles and responsibilities.

**Table 6.** Gender roles and responsibilities: Seasonal basis

Time	Men		Women	
	Rain Season	Dry Season	Rain Season	Dry season
<b>00 hrs</b>	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed
<b>0100</b>	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed
<b>0200</b>	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed
<b>0300</b>	Bed	Bed	Wake up, clean the house and plates, prepare food for school children	Bed
<b>0400</b>	Wake up	Bed	Prepare food for school children	Bed
<b>0500</b>	Fields	Bed	Bath and feed children, go to the fields	Wake up and prepare food for school children, sweep yard
<b>0600</b>	Fields	Wake up and release cattle for grazing, monitor bamboo fields	Fetch water, fields	Feeding and bathing children
<b>0700</b>	Fields	Odd jobs at home, for example fence repair, pruning of bamboo plants	Fields	Garden
<b>0800</b>	Fields	Odd jobs at home, for example, fence repair, bamboo plants pruning	Fields	Garden
<b>0900</b>	Fields	Odd jobs at home, for example, fence repair, milking cows	Fields	Garden
<b>1000</b>	Herding cattle, monitoring fields	Eating and relaxing	Fields	Garden/fetching firewood and water
<b>1100</b>	Herding cattle, monitoring fields	Relaxing and socialising, community meetings	Fields	Garden/fetching firewood and water
<b>1200</b>	Herding cattle, monitoring fields	Relaxing and socialising,	Fetch water and go home to prepare lunch	Washing clothes, preparing lunch
<b>1300</b>	Lunch and resting	Lunch, relaxing and socialising	Serving lunch and eating	Preparing lunch and feeding

<b>1400</b>	Lunch and resting	Relaxing and socialising	Clean plates and go back to fields	Relaxing
<b>1500</b>	Fields, herding cattle	Relaxing and socialising	Fields	Relaxing
<b>1600</b>	Fields, herding cattle	Drive cattle from grazing lands	Fields	Fetching water
<b>1700</b>	Fields, herding cattle	Drive cattle from grazing lands	Fetch water, look for relish, bathing, washing clothes	Bathing
<b>1800</b>	Bathing	Bathing	Cooking and bathing children	Preparing for supper and cleaning plates
<b>1900</b>	Relaxing	Socialising	Serve dinner and eat supper	Relaxing with family
<b>2000</b>	Relaxing and supper	Socialising	Relax with family and clean plates	Relaxing with family
<b>2100</b>	Relaxing and bed	Socialising	Bed	Bed
<b>2200</b>	Bed	Supper and bed	Bed	Bed
<b>2300</b>	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed
<b>Key</b>		Time spent resting, socialising, relaxing or in bed		
		Time spent working or performing household chores/work		

The respondents knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and views were analysed to capture the understanding of the gender dimensions related to the access to, use and control of resources in Ethiopia (Table 6). As mentioned above, the bamboo sector in Ethiopia has high potential to provide livelihoods for both men and women, given that Ethiopia has the largest bamboo resource base in Africa. Men and women depend on bamboo for a range of purposes, including income generation from providing labor on bamboo plantations, in bamboo factories and small businesses, selling culms, seedlings, crafts, and furniture; fuel (charcoal, briquettes, biomass); construction (shelter, flooring, fencing), and offcuts used as fodder for domestic animals.

Land in Ethiopia is mostly owned by men, as dictated by traditional systems, which funnels the proceeds from land activities, including bamboo farming, towards the men in households. Access to land for planting purposes can be facilitated through applications to regional states, which provides a window of opportunity for those without land who wish to engage in agro-forestry through bamboo planting. The lack of collateral for both men and women limits their access to the financial credit required for start-up purposes. Women are disadvantaged in terms of access to credit/finance when compared with men. Yet, divorced women who have secured their share of the assets from the failed marriage do participate in programme

activities and exhibit a tendency to be more independent with regard to decision making, including financial decisions, because they own land and the related assets.

### 3.4 Barriers and opportunities

Based on the understanding of the identified gender dimensions, the following barriers and opportunities emerged from the stakeholder engagements:

- Support women's access to land. Empower women to access land in order to enhance the benefits they derive from bamboo through farm investments. This could be achieved by supporting women's applications to regional states for land. This is envisaged to improve the power dynamics within households, including decision making concerning finances.
- Change agents. The women trained through the programme need to be empowered to act as agents of change within their households. Using the knowledge received, the women can share investment ideas with their spouses and work towards being part of decision-making processes, including financial decisions.
- Promote household-based activities. As many women are disadvantaged in that they are unable to venture far away from their home (housewives), the programme needs to advocate for and promote household-based income-generating activities such as bamboo mat, basketry and craft production, which do not require women to leave the household. This approach should reach and benefit a large number of women.
- Value addition. There exists a need for increased training in value-addition activities within bamboo businesses for rural farmers so as to boost their incomes, especially for women, who are generally disadvantaged by their lack of access to land, which propagates poverty in their households.
- Value of bamboo awareness campaign. There is a general lack of awareness among poor male and female farmers regarding the value of bamboo. The programme should continue to emphasise and demonstrate the value of bamboo through training as well as organise visits for farmers to observe what the bamboo they grow is used for, among other awareness-raising efforts.
- Treatment and processing training. It is necessary to offer training for men and women in the processing and treatment of bamboo in order to improve its value.
- Remove the banking and/or transportation related barriers that prevent women from accessing credit.

- Women’s involvement in planting, harvesting and transportation is invisible. These tend to be unpaid tasks, as they are often done as part of the unpaid work within the family context, which is often done by the women in the household.
- The reproduction rate is high in Ethiopia, which may be barrier to women participating in the planting and harvesting of bamboo.

The programme will focus on certain activities intended to benefit women and maintain the gender balance. Table 8 presents the considerations regarding the programme’s gender balance strengthening in Ethiopia.

**Table 7.** Considerations for the programme’s gender balance strengthening in Ethiopia

<b>CONTINUE: What is working well in the programme</b>	<b>START (opportunities): To strengthen the programme’s gender implementation and output realisation</b>	<b>STOP: What is not working well</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The technical/skill development training programme should be continued to provide long-term benefits</li> <li>• The programme’s 50/50 target for men and women needs to continue. However, the programme needs to reflect on how realistic or feasible the 50/50 target is for different settings and gender considerations. This means adjusting the ambitious target in areas where it is more realistic to reduce it, for example, to 30 females, 70 males (30/70)</li> <li>• Continue training women in commercial bamboo nursery activities and bamboo planting in households to improve their access to bamboo products such as fodder for their livestock, energy (biomass), materials for basketry as well as household items (e.g. lampshades)</li> <li>• Develop linkages between trained women and industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving technical support to create associations/groups</li> <li>• Lobbying the government to provide additional support and attention to the bamboo sector, as has occurred for the textile and leather industries in Ethiopia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a notable gender-based bias in the division of labour in the sector that sees men in control of financial decisions and women focusing on less valuable products; the programme needs to address this stereotype: sensitisation and awareness creation concerning the value of bamboo for men and women</li> </ul>

## 4. Gender in the Kenyan bamboo sector

The bamboo sector in Kenya is at a relatively nascent stage when compared with the situations in Ethiopia and Uganda. The country's bamboo industry faces barriers such as an inadequate bamboo resource base, which is exacerbated by the current ban on accessing bamboo in government reserves. Women have a recognisable presence in the bamboo sector, which is linked to a relatively high adult female literacy rate of 78.19% in 2018 (when compared with Ethiopia's rate of 44.42% and Uganda's rate of 71.5%). However, there remains room for improvement, especially with regard to the empowerment of women to further benefit from the sector, for example, through enabling access to assets such as land that should improve their chances of participating in financial and other important decisions.

There is a robust gender policy and legal framework in Kenya anchored to the Constitution and various policy documents, including in the field of agriculture. This enabling environment is vital to the survival and advancement of gender goals and inclusiveness in general within the national INBAR programme. Yet there exist a number of barriers as well as opportunities for the bamboo sector to sustainably benefit women and men. It should be noted, however, that the bamboo sector in Kenya is still in its nascency and so requires additional/continued support to ensure the programme intervention addresses objectives such as gender.



Figure 3. Political map of Kenya

### 4.1 Policy environment and context

Kenya has a Constitution and a policy environment that advocate the representation of women to be at least 30% in public offices, trickling down to all spheres of government bodies and sectors. More specifically, Kenya’s National Policy on Gender and Development (2019) recognises the right of all men, women, boys and girls to participate in and benefit from development and other initiatives. The 2010 Constitution introduced new requirements for natural resource management, such as public participation, community and gender rights, and the need to achieve 10% forest cover, thereby creating an environment that should advance the bamboo sector as an aspect of forestry. However, policy challenges that affect the bamboo sector in Kenya include the dwindling amount of public land, meaning that forestry development must expand into private and community land. The policy and legal environments are generally enabling when it comes to the advancement of the bamboo programme, as they seek to become gender-responsive in order to ensure more inclusive development for the men and women of Kenya. Moreover, Kenya has an overall adult literacy rate of 81.53%, with the male literacy rate being 84.99% and the female literacy rate being 78.19% (Table 9).

**Table 8.** Literacy level among males and females

Date	Adult female literacy rate	Adult male literacy rate	Adult literacy rate	Adult female literacy rate 15–24	Adult male literacy rate 15–24	Adult literacy rate 15–24
2018	78.19%	84.99%	81.53%	88.08%	87.59%	87.83%
2014	74.01%	83.78%	78.73%	86.14%	86.94%	86.53%
2007	66.86%	78.08%	72.16%	81.63%	83.21%	82.39%
2000	77.89%	87.49%	82.23%	91.94%	93.31%	92.53%

Source: [countryeconomy.com](http://countryeconomy.com)

### Analysis of Stakeholder Responses

There was consensus among the respondents that the Kenyan policy and legal environments are enabling in terms of gender mainstreaming programmes and activities within country. The responses reflected knowledge of key policy documents such as the following:

- The Progressive Constitution of 2010, which advocates for at least 1/3 female to 2/3 male gender representation.
- The Kenyan Procurement Law, which makes provision for the reservation of at least 30% of all public procurement for special groups, including women, men, youth and people with disabilities. This law also applies to county government tenders, presenting an opportunity and encouraging the participation of female-owned businesses in the tendering process.
- Kenya maintains gender desks for mainstreaming gender at all government levels.

With respect to the bamboo sector and gender, Kenya is currently in the process of finalising its National Bamboo Policy and ten-year implementation plan, which takes into consideration the following.

- Men are more involved in the commercial aspects of bamboo because they prioritise activities such as the purchasing of seedlings and transportation of poles to the market for selling, in addition to high-value product activities such as carpentry. By contrast, women tend to be more holistically involved in the bamboo value chains, including handicrafts (e.g. weaving, jewellery, furniture making) and the use of bamboo for fuel wood and fodder.
- There is a tax exemption intended to promote the bamboo industry in Kenya. This means that bamboo products would be exempt from tax otherwise applicable to similar products in the market. This approach would provide an incentive for buyers of lower-value products and encourage investors, thereby growing the bamboo sector.

- Poor access to bamboo raw material. The persistent difficulty in accessing bamboo from public forests remains a hindrance to the bamboo sector in Kenya, as the industry struggles to acquire the resources needed to sustain the related industries. The inadequate resource base creates a level of uncertainty for would-be investors due to the lack of assurance of a sufficient and assured supply of raw material from bamboo for long-term operations.
- Women's representation and leadership at INBAR. Women's involvement in leadership roles at INBAR is evident, as the National Programme Coordinator is a woman. In addition, the Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI)'s bamboo common production and training centre/workshop is also headed by a woman. KEFRI is the focal point of INBAR in Kenya as well as the lead partner in the implementation of Phase II of the programme. It has been noted that having the gender policy in place facilitated the hiring of a woman to head the workshop. The workshop offers free skills training to women through workshops intended to promote their involvement and ability to derive benefit from the bamboo trade in Kenya. In addition, bamboo skills training sessions are made available nationwide across all Kenya's counties. The national INBAR programme has a 50% average aspirational target for women's involvement and ability to benefit from programme activities. There is confidence that, collectively, the equal involvement of men and women across activities is achievable in Kenya's growing bamboo sector, which involves proactively splitting project beneficiaries equally by gender across activities. Where the 50% target is not achievable at the activity level, some activities, such as bamboo furniture and construction, are deliberately skewed towards a particular gender.
- Among the attitudes and perceptions affecting the bamboo programme are the following:
  - Forestry (including bamboo) is an area for men. The programme can improve the packaging training to address such perceptions, for example, by encouraging girls to participate in bamboo enterprise development through Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET).
  - Bamboo is a poor man's alternative to other commonly used timber. The programme should continue raising awareness as to the economic potential/value of bamboo.
  - Some jobs are reserved for/preferred by men (e.g. thatching, furniture making, selling, construction and/or handling finances). Training courses should be

designed to encourage female participation in these areas. For example, the training programme in Kenya could consider introducing course content concerning the making of bamboo floor tiles and children's furniture, as such activities have already gained traction with a female architect non-governmental organisation (NGO) called MIANZI and could potentially attract more women. This could be coupled with internships at existing female-owned businesses to encourage girl's appreciation of SMEs and industry.

- Women's participation being constrained to low-value activities/bamboo products such as crafts limits their ability to benefit from the bamboo sector. There is a need to upskill women and girls so that they can become involved in high-end products such as furniture and flooring.
  - The belief held by men and women that bamboo brings snakes discourages the planting of bamboo in homesteads and on farms. The programme should promote demonstration farms and management practices that change such perceptions and mindsets by highlighting the economic potential of the crop.
  - Bamboo is a weed that will colonise farms and hinder other planting activities. Here, it is important to demonstrate and promote appropriate farming and management activities such as agro-forestry, shelter belt planting and boundary planting.
- On a positive note, it was observed that a significant number of women are involved in bamboo planting and value-addition activities, for example, the MIANZI architects, Green Pot Enterprises and Eco Green Enterprises—all both female-led SMEs that are championing the increased involvement of women.
  - However, the Bamboo Association of Kenya appears to have encouraged more men to join the sector.

### **Access to, Use and Control of Resources**

The responses from the stakeholders in Kenya revealed the following:

- Women are disadvantaged with respect to their limited access to land. Women often do not own their own land due to the customary inheritance of family land by men.
- The dwindling availability of public land means that there is limited access to land for forestry development, including the growing of bamboo. The expansion of bamboo growing on private and community land requires forestry programmes to provide

incentives and clear methods of engagement to encourage investment in commercial forestry among landowners.

- Rural women are particularly disadvantaged because they lack awareness and exposure to commercialisation aspects that would help them to understand the bigger picture in terms of benefitting from bamboo beyond household uses of the crop.
- When compared with their male counterparts, women generally lack access to the information and resources needed to make independent decisions. This limits their meaningful involvement in the sector.
- Financial accessibility. There is a tendency for lending institutions to prioritise male-owned small businesses over female-owned businesses when issuing funds:
  - To this end, women/women-owned businesses require more support in terms of enabling access to financial support to provide the capital to invest and grow their businesses.
  - Women's support groups in Kenya provide an important avenue for improving women's access to credit.
- On a positive note, the leasing of land is possible and largely practiced by genders, as facilitated by agreements with landowners. This represents an opportunity that could be leveraged, especially by women who do not own land, given that bamboo is a fast-growing cash crop.

## 4.2 Division of labour

The division of labour relevant to the bamboo enterprise development observed in household settings in Kenya revealed that men are generally more involved in financial decision-making such as the selling and negotiation of prices for crop/culms. By contrast, women are generally more involved in bamboo nurseries and planting activities, although seedling selection and purchasing generally involve men. In terms of the planting of bamboo, it emerged that women are more involved in land clearance, weeding and pruning, which are labour-intensive activities, but less involved in activities associated with the management or handling of finances, such as selling the bamboo. Men also tend to be involved in the higher-value commercial activities, while women mostly tend to be involved in on-farm activities and weaving/basketry, and they generally play a more supportive role to their husbands/men, which generates only minimal financial benefits.

A positive finding observed in Kenya concerns the significant number of women involved in bamboo planting and value-addition activities, for example, the MIANZI architects, Green Pot Enterprises and Eco Green Enterprises—all female-led SMEs that champion women’s increased involvement. However, the Bamboo Association of Kenya appears to have encouraged more men to join the sector. In Kenya, there seems to be slightly more female participation in planting when compared with male participation. Yet, harvesting and the transportation of bamboo culms to storage or market appear to be dominated by men.

**Table 9.** Level of engagement in bamboo activities by gender in Kenya

Bamboo Activity	Women: Level of involvement (high/medium/low)	Men: Level of involvement (high/medium/low)
Land clearance	High	High
Tillage (hand, oxen)	Medium	High
Propagation of bamboo planting materials	High	Low
Fertiliser application	Low	Low
Manuring	Low	Low
Weeding	High	Low
Pruning	Low	High
Keeping the crop from animals and pests	Low	Medium
Day-to-day management	High	Medium
Harvesting	Low	High
Transport to storage site and storing	Low	High
Transport to market	Low	High

Source: FGD in 2020

### 4.3 Equality and decision making

In general, the women in households are disadvantaged when it comes to decision making, especially with regard to finances, when they do not contribute to the household income and/or do not have/own any assets. This dynamic represents a significant consideration for the bamboo development programme. Indeed, the programme activities need to embed a sustainability and exit strategy that allows start-ups to grow and become independent long after the exit of a given project. Eco Green Enterprises, one of the female-owned beneficiaries of the INBAR programme in Kenya, was found to be actively engaged in promoting awareness of the benefits of bamboo to both men and women in Busia. INBAR’s awareness campaign would significantly benefit from *demonstration sites* for nurseries/plantations as well as *value addition workshops* to help attract sceptical women and men through demonstrating the benefits of bamboo in terms of livelihood improvements. This will also help to overcome the existing negative perceptions surrounding bamboo, which prevent reluctant men and women

from engaging in the sector. It was observed that the programme has greatly influenced and supported Kenya's policy development concerning both the bamboo sector and gender mainstreaming in relation to bamboo activities. Kenya's bamboo gender policy will anchor gender strategies and opportunities for benefits on the part of women and men. Unlike Phase I, Phase II actively splits the programme participants equally by gender with regard to programme activities such as training session. This encourages female participation in non-traditional activities (activities ordinarily perceived as more appropriate for men) and allows cooperatives (groups) comprised of both men and women to be considered beneficiaries. Table 11 presents the participation and sense of ownership in relation to bamboo development activities in Kenya. The land ownership dynamics disadvantage women (favour men), hamper their advancement in bamboo enterprises at the farm level and affect their decision making, while their male counterparts generally view bamboo through a commercial lens and are advantaged with decision-making powers when compared with women. More specifically, men tend to target products/activities with the potential for higher commercial returns.

**Table 10.** Kenya's gender dynamics in bamboo value chains

Bamboo value chain nodes	Participation of women	Participation of men	Distribution of activity
Nursery development and management	Very high	Moderate	Nursery development and management
Plantation management	Moderate	High	Land clearance, tillage, seed variety selection, day-to-day management,
Harvesting	Poor	Very high	Harvesting, processing and treatment
Transportation	Poor	Very high	Transportation to storage/market, including storage

Source: FGD in 2020

Furthermore, the access to, use and control of resources are highly crucial when it comes to gender participation and decision making within the bamboo sector, particularly bamboo value chain promotion. Women are disadvantaged with respect to their limited access to land. In fact, women often do not own their own land due to the customary inheritance of family land by men. The dwindling availability of public land means that there is limited access to land for forestry development, including the growing of bamboo. The expansion of bamboo growing on private and community land requires forestry programmes to provide incentives and clear methods of engagement to encourage investment in commercial forestry among landowners. Rural women are particularly disadvantaged because they lack awareness of and exposure to commercialisation aspects that would help them to understand the bigger picture of

benefitting from bamboo beyond household uses of the crop. When compared with their male counterparts, women generally lack access to the information and resources necessary to make independent decisions. This limits their meaningful involvement in the sector. In addition, there is a tendency for lending institutions to prioritise male-owned small businesses over female-owned businesses when providing funds.

#### 4.4 Barriers and opportunities

In Kenya, the bamboo sector is still in its nascency and, while the environment for female participation is generally enabling, limitations persist due to the lack of access to bamboo from public forests and the existence of a market whose value is not well understood or appreciated due to limited awareness. Additional efforts are required to ensure that both women and men gain interest in the trade and advance the market for bamboo products so as to promote sustainable investment in the bamboo sector. Currently, there are socio-economic, cultural and technological barriers to the mainstreaming of gender equality in the bamboo sector. Yet, there are also enormous opportunities for women in the bamboo sector to achieve gender equality and equity through a feasible gender strategy within bamboo development initiatives. Creating market linkages with enterprises and factories would increase the demand for bamboo. Kenya's Procurement Law advocates for the procurement of products from women-led enterprises, while bamboo, as an eco-friendly product, may represent an advantageous venture for women in this regard. It is vital to design TVET to encourage girls to engage in non-traditional bamboo trades (i.e. high-value activities typically perceived as more suitable for men), foster early perception changes and ensure the programme promotes the involvement of women. It should also be possible to leverage the gender requirement of the Procurement Law for 30% of tenders to be women (and disadvantaged groups) in Kenya. This represents a window of opportunity for women to engage in bamboo procurement activities in cooperation with the counties (e.g. in seedling supply for catchment protection activities, furniture production). Business planning and entrepreneurship training intended to empower women will improve their access to finance from credit institutions. Building confidence through demonstration sites and female business champions in the bamboo sector could prove highly motivating for women. Moreover, women currently have an opportunity to *exploit niche bamboo areas* that have not yet been fully exploited (e.g., medicinal products, beauty products, fodder, etc.) in order to carve out an income that is not targeted by men. Such areas are potentially financially lucrative despite being less attractive to men. Table 12 details the enabling opportunities and needs that should be further strengthened in line with gender-

friendly bamboo programme development. Doing so will create an enabling environment for women in particular.

**Table 11.** High-level considerations for improving the programme’s gender strategies in Kenya

<b>CONTINUE: What is working well in the programme</b>	<b>START (opportunities): To strengthen the programme’s gender implementation and output realisation</b>	<b>STOP: What is not working well</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness creation regarding the value of the bamboo crop and trade</li> <li>• Training and capacity building on skills required in the trade</li> <li>• Exchange visits</li> <li>• Demonstration centres/centres of excellence</li> <li>• Linking programme components from nursery development to value addition and market access</li> <li>• Gender-sensitive resource allocation</li> <li>• Creating and communicating the business case for bamboo in Kenya</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framing both genders as complimentary and not competing (i.e. men and women as agents of change)</li> <li>• Including men in women’s empowerment activities</li> <li>• Commercialisation of bamboo activities</li> <li>• Spatial planning as a tool for promoting bamboo development</li> <li>• Media campaigns</li> <li>• Lobbying financial institutions to create bamboo credit facilities</li> <li>• Valuation of bamboo investment vs benefits to inform potential investors</li> <li>• Aggressively market bamboo as an equally competitive forest product</li> <li>• Develop standards to guide industry players and avoid poor-quality products</li> </ul>	<p>Blanket regional comparison of bamboo development across Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia</p>

Source: Field work and stakeholder interactions

## 5. Gender in the Ugandan bamboo sector

There are 67,000 hectares of bamboo in Uganda’s protected areas. The National Development Plan places forestry at the centre of Uganda’s development agenda by categorizing it as a primary growth sector (National Forestry Plan, 2013). The Government of Uganda plans to increase this resource base by an additional 375,000 hectares as part of its strategy to increase the forest cover countrywide. This approach is intended to restore degraded lands and increase the forest cover as an environmentally friendly strategy. It also has significant potential in terms of promoting environmentally sustainable livelihoods for poor men and women as well as bamboo SMEs. Bamboo livelihoods can be achieved through the sale of, for example, bamboo seedlings (bamboo nursery businesses), bamboo poles/culms and weaving and basketry products. In addition, bamboo provides both an alternative source of fodder and fuel for households.



Figure 4. Political map of Uganda

## 5.1 Policy environment and context

Uganda has an enabling policy and legal framework that advances inclusive development through the proactive involvement and equal representation of women in the public sphere and across development sectors. More specifically, the country's political sphere advances the representation of women through appointing female candidates in roles such as District Women Members of Parliament during the ongoing 2021–2025 political campaigns. In addition, the Constitution of Uganda advocates for gender representation across development sectors and is aligned with the provisions of the Land Act and national agricultural policy. Table 13 presents the gender considerations and strategies that exist in a range of policy and legal instruments for the advancement of gender equality in agriculture in particular and development in general. Understanding this framework is necessary in terms of exploring the contextual foundation upon which the advancement of gender objectives in the bamboo development programme in Uganda will be based.

**Table 12.** Gender policy considerations in agriculture: Uganda

Plan/Policy	Gender Issues identified	Strategies
National Agricultural Policy 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable households are less productive (including those headed by women and children)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender equity and affirmative action in the provision of agricultural services</li> <li>Agricultural interventions should be balanced across regions and between genders</li> </ul>
Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women produce most of the food but have limited control of food resources</li> <li>Malnutrition among children and women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitise men to appreciate women as partners in decision making</li> <li>Promote gender-sensitive technologies and programmes</li> <li>The needs of men, women and children addressed in all interventions</li> </ul>
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (Uganda) (MAAIF) Agriculture Sector Development Strategy (DSIP) 2010/11-2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher proportion of women in agriculture than men</li> <li>Low access to inputs and extension services by women and youth</li> <li>Limited participation of women in commercial agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting labour-saving technologies to save the time and reduce the burden of women</li> <li>Increased access to improved technologies by women and youth</li> <li>Sensitising men to the importance of women as partners in commercial agriculture</li> </ul>
The Constitution of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution advocates for gender equality in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The following instruments were revised to ensure alignment with this</li> </ul>

Republic of Uganda	political, social and cultural spheres of life	constitutional provision: the Land Act (Cap 227), the Land Acquisition Act (Cap 226) and the National Agricultural Advisory Services Act (NAADS)
The Uganda Gender Policy 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although 83% of women are engaged in agricultural production, only 25.5% control the land they cultivate</li> <li>This places a higher burden on women, as many have taken on the role of providing for the household</li> <li>Women bear the burden of domestic work (unpaid) and work longer hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitise men to the importance of women as partners in commercial agriculture</li> </ul>
National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not explicitly mention gender</li> <li>Provides for community forests, natural forests and forest reserves</li> <li>Speaks to ownership of trees on private land, but does not address gender issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific strategies</li> </ul>
National Energy Policy 2002-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides for the management of energy-related environmental impacts</li> </ul>	

The data in Table 13 demonstrate the existence of an enabling environment for women to equally participate in and benefit from development programmes, including the bamboo development programme. Table 14 presents the literacy rates of men and women in Uganda. The overall female literacy rate is relatively high at 89.95%, which has a positive impact on social and economic development in the country.

**Table 13.** Literacy level among males and females in Uganda

Year	Adult female literacy rate	Adult male literacy rate	Adult literacy rate	Adult female literacy rate 15–24	Adult male literacy rate 15–24	Adult literacy rate 15–24
2018	70.84%	82.66%	76.53%	89.95%	88.83%	89.40%
2012	61.97%	79.12%	70.20%	81.65%	85.76%	83.66%
2010	64.59%	82.63%	73.21%	85.47%	89.64%	87.41%
2006	62.08%	81.39%	71.37%	81.13%	87.27%	84.07%

<b>2002</b>	58.91%	78.30%	68.14%	76.18%	85.96%	80.79%
<b>1991</b>	44.83%	68.20%	56.11%	63.12%	77.22%	69.80%

Source: [countryeconomy.com](http://countryeconomy.com)

### Analysis of Stakeholder Responses

An analysis of the responses from Uganda's male and female participants in the bamboo sector generated the following insights concerning gender knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and practices, which represent important considerations for the bamboo programme when it comes to enhancing equitable development:

### Access to, Use and Control of Resources

- The uses of bamboo vary widely across Uganda, including food (bamboo shoots), fuel, medicinal and cosmetic purposes, crafts and furniture. These uses can also vary by gender in some instances:
  - *Fuel.* Women comprise the majority of users in Mukono District, where bamboo serves as a cheaper alternative fuel source. Bamboo helps to overcome the acute fuel shortage for cooking purposes, which mostly impacts women due to them bearing the responsibility for food preparation in the household.
  - *Edible shoots.* Due to the long distances involved and difficulty navigating the steep slopes of Mount Elgon in Eastern Uganda, men are generally involved in the collection/harvesting of bamboo shoots from the harsh forest environments, whereas women are involved in the preparation and trading of bamboo shoots.
  - *Medicinal and cosmetic uses.* This sector is generally dominated by women in Uganda, as women are typically more interested in beauty products. As they are also more likely to be the caregiver in the household, medicinal products are generally of interest to women too.
  - *Furniture and construction.* This sector is mainly dominated by men owing to established practices and perceptions that the trade is best suited to men.
  - *Crafts.* The production of these bamboo products is dominated by women. The women who participate in weaving and crafting with bamboo are empowered to sell their own products, either from their households or at market stalls. When women are unable to leave their households, there exists the possibility of selling to traders who collect the merchandise from them.
- Generally, fewer women own land than men. As a result, more men in Uganda engage in the buying and planting of bamboo seedlings than women.

- However, according to the National Forestry Authority (NFA), women are encouraged to participate in community forest management initiatives in the major forest reserves. These initiatives involve introducing alternative livelihood sources such as nursery tree planting to surrounding communities, including women, in an effort to reduce deforestation and protect the country's forest resources.
- Women can grow bamboo in their homesteads in order to provide fodder for domestic animals, poles for sale or materials for the crafting and weaving of bamboo crafts within the household.
- While the leasing of land from the permissible for tree planting, it has emerged that the financial requirements involved represent a deterrent to both men and women who cannot afford to take on leases. However, this presents a clear opportunity for women who do not own land to engage more profitably in Uganda's bamboo development industry.

## 5.2 Division of labour

In general, men are largely involved in clearing fields prior to planting, whether as household members or hired casual labourers, while women most commonly engage in bamboo nursery activities, sowing, weeding and harvesting. Although they are typically paid less than men, most women, especially the poor, work between 12 and 18 hours per day, with the average being 15 hours (when compared with the average of nine hours per day for men) (Women of Uganda Network, 2015). As a consequence, women end up working more than the national recommended normal working hours of 40–48 hours per week. Men generally take charge of perennial cash crops such as coffee and bananas. This is also linked to land ownership, which provides men with an advantage in terms of financial handling and decision making. Indeed, the involvement of men in financial decision-making is enabled by their access to land, which is often acquired through traditional family inheritance practices that favour men over women. Women mostly engage in domestic work (which is unpaid) and the collection of fuel wood for cooking, often assisted by their children. Some women engage in the growing of crops in the homestead for sale and home use. The training and equipment provided (e.g. a drier for a bamboo shoots business) by INBAR help both women and men to carve out niches for income generation from bamboo. More specifically, women are mainly involved in basketry (e.g. those used for marriage ceremonies) and the preparation of commercial edible bamboo shoots, while men are reported to mainly make bamboo furniture, for example, bamboo shelves, racks, poultry cages and baskets. This activity distribution in Uganda is shown in Table 14.

There are limitations stemming from perceptions of some activities being for men, for example, furniture making. These limitations prevent many women from engaging meaningfully and benefiting from involvement with higher-value bamboo products.

**Table 14.** Gender participation in bamboo value chains in Uganda

Bamboo Value Chain Nodes	Level of Participation: Females	Level of Participation: Males	Key Responsibility
Nursery development and management	High	Moderate	<b>Males:</b> bed preparation, collecting materials, protection. <b>Females:</b> watering, bed management, overall nursery management.
Selling of seedlings	Low	High	<b>Males:</b> dominant role, price negotiation and delivery. <b>Females:</b> packing and handling, loading and unloading.
Homestead farming	High	Poor	<b>Females:</b> deciding on the species as per own choice.
Selection of seedlings in homestead farming	High	Poor	<b>Females:</b> deciding on the species as per own choice.
Planting bamboo on private land and agro-farming	Moderate	High	<b>Males:</b> play primary role and make decisions in terms of the selection of species and area of plantation.
Plantation management	Moderate	High	<b>Males:</b> play an active role and have responsibilities.
Harvesting of bamboo	Poor	High	<b>Males:</b> play an active role and have responsibilities.
Primary processing	Moderate	High	<b>Males:</b> play an active role and have responsibilities.
Selling of bamboo	Moderate	High	<b>Males:</b> play an active role and have responsibilities.
Household enterprise	High	Poor	<b>Females:</b> play an active role and have responsibilities.
Micro enterprises	Moderate	Moderate	<b>Males:</b> play an active role and have responsibilities.
Bamboo industry	High	Moderate	<b>Males:</b> choice of the owner for heavy work. <b>Females:</b> choice of the owner for unskilled work.

Source: FGD and field observations in September 2020

### 5.3 Equality and decision making

The participation and decision making of men and women in Uganda's bamboo sector are largely dominated by men. In most cases, men tend to be attracted to higher-value products

such as furniture and construction materials, while women tend to be attracted to lower-value products such as lamp shades and basketry products. This influences the differential benefits derived from the bamboo value chains, as men tend to earn more income from the higher-value products. Youth (men) are generally disadvantaged because they are more attracted to investments with quick returns, such as those offered by the 'motorcycle trade' (also known as boda-boda), when compared with bamboo development. They are also less likely to participate in the decision-making processes of bamboo-based enterprises.

The Batwa community in South West Uganda emerged as a disadvantaged group in terms of the opportunities associated with bamboo development for a range of reasons. The community is heavily reliant on bamboo from forests for their livelihoods, including the sale of bamboo culms and handicraft products introduced through community-based organisations. However, their livelihoods are limited by their lack of value-addition skills, lack of land for planting bamboo and limited access to bamboo from the Echuya CFR due to the existing ban/restrictions on the commercial harvesting of bamboo. Members of the Batwa community are also disadvantaged in that they have limited access to land due to having been resettled on small plots of land or left without land. In addition, the area is densely populated, meaning that there is very little land available to support planting activities. The Batwa community's livelihoods are entirely dependent on forest resources, with bamboo serving as their main income commodity. However, there is currently a government-enforced ban on bamboo harvesting in the Echuya CFR. Finally, the Batwa lack knowledge concerning value addition, meaning that they are only benefitting from the sale of raw bamboo. There is an opportunity for the programme to target the Batwa people in terms of value addition in order to ensure that they can boost the potential financial benefits and livelihoods derived from bamboo. In light of the alarming rate of deforestation in the Echuya CFR due to unsustainable community livelihood activities, women from the indigenous Batwa community have been engaged in community-based forest management activities. This has been achieved through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund-supported project titled 'Community Restoration of Bamboo', which focuses on bamboo restoration, bamboo liberation, sustainable bamboo harvesting practices and value addition for men and women. There is also a women-led community-based organisation known as the Kigezi Initiative for Women and Children Empowerment and Development Uganda operating in and around Echuya forest (Twinomugisha, 2015). INBAR programmes can work with existing local groups in the Echuya area to facilitate further skills transfer so as to promote sustainable livelihoods through bamboo enterprise.

South West Uganda is characterised by high population density. Moreover, its soils and climate are suitable for highland bamboo cultivation. Men and women from this region have the opportunity to engage in bamboo agro-forestry by taking advantage of conditions suitable for highland bamboo and reaping potential commercial benefits. Western Uganda is situated within a high tourism circuit, meaning that there is potential to sell high-value, small-sized crafts made from bamboo to tourists as souvenirs. These crafts are niche items, which are preferable and advantageous for women. Bamboo sector development programmes can focus on improving the skills required to create high-quality crafts, targeting women and introducing non-traditional high-value crafts to both women and men in order to improve the extent to which they can tap into the tourism market. The region surrounding the Rwenzori Mountains in Western Uganda is suitable for bamboo cultivation, providing high potential for improved livelihoods for men and women as well as the potential for conservation outcomes through catchment protection using bamboo. As such, the area should be targeted for catchment protection activities involving men and women, including consideration of the potential to leverage partnerships with existing conservation agencies such as the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The slopes of Mount Elgon in Eastern Uganda are also home to highland bamboo. Traditionally, the crop has been used by local communities to generate income from a local dish made from edible bamboo shoots. AW Bamboo Enterprises Ltd is a female-owned small business enterprise located in the region that deals in edible bamboo shoots, both fresh and smoked. The enterprise prefers to employ women, especially for sorting the bamboo shoots received from a range of suppliers (both men and women). According to the female managing director, one of the reasons for the preference for women is that they are generally more thorough and exercise greater patience when sorting the bamboo shoots—qualities that men are felt to generally lack. The enterprise currently employs three women, whereas men are generally hired as casual labourers to carry loads on an as-needed basis.

There will be a real opportunity to increase the benefit flows from the bamboo sector for more women (and men) in local communities while sustaining the environment through the planting of more bamboo, which has high conservation values. Moreover, public-private partnerships can be leveraged to boost the livelihoods of men and women through the sustainable development of the bamboo sector. The Bamboo Training and Preservation Centre in Moyo represents a real opportunity in this regard. However, for the machinery to be optimally utilised, there exists a need for bamboo growing outside the CFR in order to create a sufficiently large

resource base. In addition, there is a need for serious capacity development for both men and women so as to shift from trading in raw bamboo to value addition and so increase the potential incomes from the crop. This would also require improved access to and/or training in the mechanisms for bamboo preservation by community members seeking to engage in bamboo-related value addition.

It can be observed that bamboo briquettes are used in Arua as an alternative source of fuel. Therefore, training women in value addition in this regard would present a significant commercial/economic opportunity.

## 5.4 Barriers and opportunities

The general barriers to men and women deriving equal benefits from the bamboo industry and associated enterprises include poor perceptions that create disadvantages due to gender (in favour of men), gendered limitations in access to land for planting bamboo, limited skills in terms of value addition, reluctance to engage with certain products by women, poor community-level access to bamboo treatment technologies and poor access to credit. Table 15 presents the gender-related barriers and opportunities in bamboo value chains in Uganda.

**Table 15.** Barriers and opportunities in bamboo value chains in Uganda

<b>Bamboo Activity</b>	<b>Male/Female</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Influencing Factors</b>
<b>Bamboo nurseries</b>	Female	Limitations of scale where women do not own land	Can be done in the homestead, advantage for women	Access to land, finances to buy initial seedlings, knowledge and skills concerning propagation
<b>Ploughing (oxen)</b>	Male/Female	Men tend to use oxen they own, whereas women often plough by hand	Women do not own land to make decisions on who does which activities	Labour intensive, mechanised farm management, male ownership of land where women as seen as labour providers
<b>Seedling selection</b>	Male	Involves finances/purchases	-	Access to finances, decision-making power
<b>Planting</b>	Female/Male	-	Planting in homesteads	

<b>Weeding</b>	Female	Perception that bamboo is a weed		
<b>Harvesting and Storage</b>	Male/Female	-		Lightweight culms, terrain and distance to storage may be challenges
<b>Transportation to market and selling</b>	Male	Women gain limited access to finances	Women accessing own land (leased) from CFRs	
<b>Crafts: weaving and basketry</b>	Female	Usually, crafts are lower-value products in bamboo value chains	Can be done by women in homesteads	Perception that crafts are for women
<b>Furniture and construction</b>	Male	-	High-value bamboo products	Perception that these trades are for men
<b>Industry</b>	Female	Very few industries in beneficiary countries	High-value bamboo products	Women are employed more in organised industry
<b>Sales and marketing</b>	Male/Female	Usually participate in lower-value activities within bamboo value chains, such as nurseries and crafts	Entry into downstream value chain activities such as marketing of culms and finished products	Due to the feminisation of agro-based labour as well as societal expectations and stereotypes, women have limited access to assets and capital

Source: FGD in September 2020

The opportunities that emerged can be broadly summed up as follows:

- The potential of the bamboo briquette-making market to advantage women in Arua and, more generally, across Uganda. Briquettes can be made at home, which is an advantage for women who are unable to leave their households.
- Leasing of land from CFRs is accessible to both men and women. This presents an opportunity, especially for women, who generally lack access to land for planting bamboo.
- Improve access to bamboo preservation technology on the part of poor community members (both men and women) who wish to engage in value addition. This will improve the quality of their products.

- Encourage intercropping to allow more women and people with less land to plant.
- Target disadvantaged communities, such as the Batwa in South West Uganda, through value-addition skills training, including bamboo crafts and basketry training, as well as training in bamboo nursery skills to enhance the benefits they can derive from harvested bamboo. The programme has the opportunity to benchmark and collaborate with existing like-minded community organisations, such as the Kigezi Initiative for Women and Children Empowerment and Development Uganda, which are already working with women and communities in general in the Echuya forest reserve.

Table 16 presents a summary of the aspects of the programme that can be strengthened to enhance its trajectory in terms of meeting gender-related objectives.

**Table 16.** Considerations for the programme’s gender strengthening in Uganda

<b>CONTINUE: What is working well in the programmed</b>	<b>START (opportunities): To strengthen the programme’s gender implementation and output realisation</b>	<b>STOP: What is not working well</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popularise bamboo growing, increase scale of production, encourage intercropping to allow more women and people with less land to plant<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Training and capacity building in plantation establishment, management and harvesting</li> <li>• Support for value chain activities such as bamboo nurseries, basketry and weaving skills and tools, as well as bamboo cultivation that can be easily combined with women’s domestic and household responsibilities, which do not require travel far from home and have a ready market</li> <li>• Skilling women’s groups in making modern bamboo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with investors in the bamboo sector to develop a project gender strategy with clear targets, beneficiary groups and enterprises also need to be ‘gender aware’ and have some gender targets in their business plans</li> <li>• Train all project resource staff in identifying hidden gender constraints affecting the industry<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Target training based on level of investment and aspired-for value chain involvement (i.e. train in both low-value and high-value product development), target both male and female investors</li> <li>• Train bamboo farmers in appropriate silviculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target government bureaucrats for cross-learning visits to make them aware of the potential of bamboo</li> <li>• Organise training and capacity development events far from the targeted communities</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> If industries have to be established, there has to be significant raw material available.

<sup>2</sup> For examples, constraints associated with the timing and location of training events (gender division of labour within households and communities, issues of men’s and women’s mobility, gender division of decision making within households and communities).

products such as high-quality lampshades, bread baskets and other bamboo-based household items that are not constrained by local gender role definitions	practices (through practical visits to countries with established bamboo farms and industries)	
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## 6. Gender dimensions in bamboo value chains

The GA study found that women are still largely excluded and under-represented in the social, economic, political and governance spheres and processes within the bamboo value chains in the three beneficiary countries. With regard to economic participation, women are still largely excluded from the mainstream bamboo value chain upstream activities, such as accessing key markets. Notably, women perform 53% of all economic activity across the three countries, although their work is rendered invisible because it is not measured and is poorly paid. As previously highlighted, the entry barriers for women include a lack of capital and a lack of exposure because the upstream activities and sectors are dominated by men who control the entry processes and resources in the value chains. The key takeaways of the implications for ensuring gender equality in the bamboo value chains are summarised in Table 18.

**Patterns of power and household decision-making:** Participation in decision making by both men and women is crucial in terms of promoting the objectives of the programme. It should be noted that the minimal participation of men in decision making deprives women of the support they require from their male counterparts when it comes to caring for members of the household and other household chores. The control of major household income streams from various income sources, including bamboo activities, by men implies that decisions concerning income use might not necessarily promote the interests of women and children. Some men spent the money on beer or alcohol, while households with female cash recipients used the cash pay-outs in a much more responsible manner and in the best interests of the entire household, including children. The fact that the female-headed households used the income from household activities in a more responsible manner than male-headed households is telling. Women across the three countries reported that their capacity to prepare for disasters is low and their ability to cope with disasters is curtailed due to the limited control they have over resources and their limited decision-making powers. Equal participation in household decision-making is, therefore, critical to empowering households.

**Table 17.** Productive roles of men and women

Task	Who is the Task Performed By?	What Tools Are Used?	Doing What?
Nursery and planting	Men and women	Hoes and watering cans	Men dig the holes, while women water the transplanted nursery seedlings

Livestock herding	Men and women		Grazing livestock
Guarding bamboo crops from domestic and wild animals	Men and women		Guarding crops during the day and, sometimes, during the night
Weeding	Women and children	Hoes	Weeding
Harvesting bamboo products	Women, men and children	Machetes, saws and axes	Men mostly cut the stalks using machetes (women also do it in Kenya), while women pile the culms
Transportation	Men and women	Ox-drawn carts, cattle, wheelbarrows	Women are largely responsible for loading the produce, while men ferry it
Drying, processing and measuring	Women		It is believed that, because women spend most of their time around the homestead, they keep an eye on the produce
Splitting	Men and women	Machetes, knives and other stripping tools	Although both men and women strip, women are also involved in further stripping into usable material for weaving
Cleaning and sorting	Women		Removing debris
Treatment and applying chemicals	Men	Gloves, etc.	Applying chemicals and colours
Marketing	Men and women		Men are responsible for the marketing of culms and large furniture, while women are largely responsible for marketing the wares and ornaments they make; men often travel long distances to urban markets, while women rely on local markets

**Access to and control over assets and resources:** The domination of control over high-value productive assets such as land, cattle, ploughs and markets by men implies that women are left vulnerable in households where the husbands have irresponsible tendencies. Without adequate control over and access to high-value assets, the capacity of women to respond and cope with household vulnerabilities and disasters is very limited. Accessing loans from financial institutions that require collateral security is also very difficult for women who do not have high-value assets to offer as security. Moreover, women realise less income when compared with men because they market low-value products from the bamboo value chains

and have limited access to high-value markets due to the distances involved and the cost of access. Within the bamboo value chains, men own land and other mechanised assets such as vehicles, carts and wheelbarrows. While land represents the biggest asset they hold, men also tend to have access to more financial resources when compared with their female counterparts. Due to not owning land and tangible assets, women across the three countries highlighted that they found it difficult to access micro-credit loans, unlike their male counterparts. This has limited their ability to scale up their micro-enterprises and -ventures. However, it was also noted that women are not homogenous, as in Kenya some women have managed to access finance to support their ventures while some poor men struggle with the same issue. Generally, men and women in urban areas tend to have better access to resources, assets and markets when compared with their rural counterparts. Aside from tangible assets, intangible asset creation in the household and gender play a great role in household prosperity.

**Meaningful participation in public decision-making:** Meaningful participation by women in public decision-making remains limited, particularly in Ethiopia. While gender parity could have been achieved in some community-based committees, there exists a need to further ensure that women influence decisions that affect their lives. Men in general and traditional leaders must embrace and acknowledge the importance of women's participation in public decision-making. Table 18 presents the specific gaps in the bamboo value chains and highlights the related opportunities and specific interventions.

**Table 18.** Factsheet: Gender interventions

Country	Specific Gaps	Opportunities in the Bamboo Sector	Interventions
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low participation of women in leadership and decision-making positions</li> <li>• Barriers for women to participate in downstream value activities such as marketing</li> <li>• Capital is a huge challenge for women, given that they lack assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bamboo sector has an opportunity to leverage the large numbers of women who participate in the value chains to identify role models and champions who could be elevated to decision-making positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify female role models to champion as community leaders and representatives in breaking some gender stereotypes</li> <li>• Additional training is required in crop management, harvesting and crop utilisation to ensure quality, competitiveness and maximum</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising and leveraging micro-finance and cooperative efforts where women can easily access low-cost capital</li> <li>• The bamboo industry has large potential to employ women</li> </ul>	<p>returns from high-quality bamboo culms for men and women engaged in bamboo agro-forestry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the promotion of bamboo industries and promote investment in the bamboo sector</li> </ul>
<b>Kenya</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the participation of women is better at the SME-level, asset ownership and the rural-urban divide prevent poor women from meaningfully benefiting from the bamboo value chains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given that Kenya is a signatory to key gender frameworks such as CEDAW, this should be leveraged to demand better participation and benefits from the bamboo value chains by women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here is an opportunity for Kenya to support female enterprise owners by connecting them to the markets within the bamboo sector</li> <li>• Additionally, rural women require specific support through the provision of appropriate technologies that will lessen the burden in the value chains so that they have time to meaningfully participate and earn better incomes</li> <li>• Working with TVET providers to supply bursaries to promote girls' enrolment in courses in bamboo enterprise that are predominantly seen as for men</li> </ul>
<b>Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased chores for women due to bamboo value chain activities being added to their household chores with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bamboo value chain is a growing niche in Uganda, yet the majority of women are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given that the bamboo sector is in the early phases, there is an opportunity for women and men to</li> </ul>

	<p>little to show in terms of income accrued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges for women in accessing downstream value chain segments due to capital and other resource constraints</li> </ul>	<p>involved in the nurseries and crafts aspects while their male counterparts dominate the SME segment</p>	<p>create their own niches in the market and scale up to micro- and SMEs</p>
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Source: FGD in 2020

## 7. Mainstreaming gender in bamboo development programmes

Based on the findings of the GA study, the programme has developed a gender mainstreaming strategy through which the identified challenges have been translated into key strategies, with associated key result areas, strategic actions and activities. These have all been strengthened with linkages to programme indicators, outcomes and lead individuals. The different aspects of this strategy are set out in Table 19.

**Table 19.** Gender mainstreaming strategy for bamboo-based development initiatives

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Results Areas</i>	<i>Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include components related to gender in training and capacity-building activities of the programme. Relationships will be maintained with gender-focused line ministries (women, forestry, agriculture) to collaborate and leverage their resources on gender. The existing gender platforms in Kenya and Uganda could be used as conduits through which gender mainstreaming activities in bamboo value chains are promoted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change societal perceptions and role of women in bamboo value-chains.</li> <li>• Women's empowerment and gender equality within bamboo value chains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network and liaise with local line ministries.</li> <li>• Ensure involvement during programme interventions (training, capacity building, workshop, seminar) with allocation of a dedicated slot for gender and women.</li> <li>• Radio and video programme development and delivery.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influential traditional, political and religious leaders will be used as entry points for gender mainstreaming/promotion. Male leaders will be targeted to act as champions for creating awareness amongst their male counterparts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacitate traditional, political and religious leaders on gender aspects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and train male champions on gender awareness and sensitisation within the bamboo value chains.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme will focus on capacity strengthening concerning gender among staff members, local partners or agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme implementers sensitised and capacitated on dealing with gender-responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and conduct training for programme staff members, partner agencies and line departments.</li> </ul>

<p>and, accordingly, incorporate activities in the annual work plan.</p>	<p>programme implementation,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated framework built for planning and implementing gender aspects of the programme while leveraging the support from mandated agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and conduct sensitisation and capacity-building training for the elected local representatives and community and religious leaders.</li> <li>Involve gender-mandated line department representatives in multi-stakeholder platforms and community of practice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement training courses and bamboo product lines with an emphasis on helping women to overcome social barriers and hindrances. The current programme has designed the Non-Profit, Community, Public, and Private (NCP) model of a bamboo charcoal briquette enterprise. Women will be the central focus of the industries and NCP charcoal and briquette enterprises. Moreover, homestead farming, bamboo eco-tourism and women-led micro-nurseries and craft enterprises will be prioritised for gender mainstreaming and model demonstration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women’s participation in the programme enhanced with female role models emerging and motivating other women to participate and benefit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work closely with industries to facilitate the employment of women in the industrial and SME sectors.</li> <li>Facilitate domestic and foreign investments to set up industries and promote apprenticeships in Common Production and Training Centres (CPTCs) for wage-based employment and self-employment.</li> <li>Collaborate with TVET providers to develop and engage women trainers so as to enhance their social status.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve leaders and participatory stewards in the identification of gender-balanced programme beneficiaries to avoid skewed participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender-balanced beneficiaries participating in the programme activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitisation and micro-planning activities organised prior to the training and capacity-building interventions.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender-friendly tools, cutters, and fixtures will be delivered to women and women’s groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced drudgery, enhanced efficiency and improved quality of products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of tools and equipment for women-led enterprises.</li> <li>Develop capacities of local fabricators for the</li> </ul>

		<p>design and development of women-friendly tools, jigs and fixtures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop posters and video modules for use.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rich media campaign using social media platforms and community radio will be used to showcase success stories, while news blogs will create awareness among women of participation in the bamboo sector. The programme has emphasised ‘bamboo community practices’ as an institution for dialogue and a discussion platform concerning bamboo-related activities. The programme team will promote exclusively women-led bamboo community practices for mainstreaming gender in bamboo value chains. In addition, the programme team is working with a knowledge management specialist to develop gender-sensitive and women’s empowerment knowledge products using mainstream media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks and capacity of local media built with enhanced publicity.</li> <li>• Women-led enterprise stories and learning widely disseminated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and capacity building of local media and advertisements during important Women’s Day events.</li> <li>• Develop women-led enterprise success stories and blogs on social media platforms.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the marketing and sales of bamboo products by women-led enterprise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market for women-led enterprises enhanced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated women-led sales outlets and market infrastructure supported.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme team will promote women’s saving and thrift activities in collaboration with microfinance institutions or self-motivated funds at the cluster level to initiate business enterprise activity. This will reduce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the use of credit and thrift micro-institutions for inter-lending among women-led bamboo producers groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct sensitisation work for bankers and microfinance institutions.</li> <li>• Organise meetings between women and bankers/microfinance institutions concerning</li> </ul>

<p>barriers and increase empowerment, including the mainstreaming of financing.</p>		<p>the schemes and options available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on bookkeeping, thrift and saving.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve women in leadership roles in associations, multi-stakeholder platforms, communities of practice, community forest management groups, associations and groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s role in decision making enhanced, creating space for women and access to services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and participation of female leaders in leadership positions.</li> <li>• Ensuring women’s participation in decision-making positions in NCPP model enterprises, CPTC and supply chains (association/groups).</li> <li>• Encourage the government regarding land allocation to women/women’s groups for planting and sustainable management.</li> </ul>

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

### 8.1 Conclusions

While the programme has generated interest from both men and women in the three beneficiary countries, the GA analysis has revealed gender dimensions that are context-specific and have implications in terms of the extent to which men and women can benefit meaningfully from existing opportunities to improve their livelihoods through the bamboo sector. Generally speaking, there is an enabling policy and legal framework with respect to gender equality and advancement in bamboo sector development across the three countries. However, the reported gender differences when it comes to benefiting from the bamboo sector are driven by a range of factors that are sometimes contextual and sometimes generalisable across the programme area. Gendered negative perceptions exist in the programme's target areas, which presents a challenge to advancing the programme's gender objectives. These perceptions include the perceived low value of bamboo (due to it being associated with breeding snakes or being a weed), the activities women can or cannot engage in, limited access to and/or ownership of land for planting (especially among women), decision-making dynamics concerning land and finances that favour men over women, as well as a lack of access to credit or substantial value-generating skills.

In general, the bamboo sector in Ethiopia is largely male-dominated across the value chains, with women's participation largely confined to low-value bamboo items such as crafts, while men target higher-value products. However, the organised industry employs more women than men and so offers an opportunity to mainstream women in the bamboo value chains. Ethiopian society, especially in rural settings, largely perceives the bamboo sector to be more suitable for men. However, through the INBAR programme, women have been targeted for various activities, including training. The programme in Ethiopia will largely benefit if activities are targeted towards changing perceptions regarding activities that women can engage in while continuing to raise awareness of the value of bamboo and its economic empowerment potential. In addition, it will benefit from enhancing women's access to land as well as offering technical and financial support to advance women's involvement and ability to benefit in Ethiopia. The involvement and encouragement of social and religious institutions in the bamboo programme in Ethiopia might have a positive impact on gender issues through helping to break common stereotypes.

In Kenya, where the bamboo sector is still in its nascence, access to existing bamboo resources within CFRs is limited by an existing ban and there is limited access to land for

forestry purposes (including private properties), the challenge of engaging men and women goes beyond dealing with negative perceptions of the crop. Creating a substantial resource base that warrants investment in bamboo SMEs and industries would require sizeable quantities of bamboo, meaning that men and women need to be encouraged to produce bamboo on private land and integrate bamboo into their farming system in order to generate additional income as well as on- and off-farm employment opportunities. The challenge here is that most land traditionally rests in the hands of men, while women have only very limited access to land. Demonstration sites and training that promotes female enrolment in forestry courses represent some of the key recommendations merging from the GA study as considerations for strengthening the gender aspect of the programme. In addition, there exists a need to increase the bamboo resource base by advocating for the planting of bamboo on privately owned land (in Kenya), ensuring the availability of planting materials and addressing the demand for preferred bamboo species by interested parties. Notably, the Government of Kenya has recently declared bamboo to be an agricultural crop. This creates an enabling environment for attracting more interest in the crop and encouraging further investment in the sector by both men and women.

In Uganda, while similar perception and resource access challenges exist and so limit men's and women's equal ability to derive benefits from the bamboo sector, there are a range of opportunities that can be utilised to enhance the attainment of gender targets:

Western Uganda:

- Targeting the Batwa people of South West Uganda by promoting tourism and bamboo agro-forestry and training both women and men in appropriate bamboo value-addition skills so as to enhance their livelihoods. Notably, there is opportunity for collaboration with existing like-minded organisations in working with women to promote sustainable bamboo enterprises in the Echuya forest area.
- More broadly, South West Uganda has high population density, although it is suitable for highland bamboo. Here, encouraging bamboo agro-forestry is key.
- Western Uganda is located in a high tourism circuit, which provides a potential market for high-value crafts that could especially benefit women. Emphasis needs to be placed on the skills and tools needed to improve the quality of traditional crafts and the introduction of non-traditional high-value crafts in order to benefit women, including those unable to leave their homesteads.

- The region surrounding the Rwenzori Mountains is suitable for bamboo cultivation, which would have significant outcomes in terms of livelihoods and conservation (catchment protection). Such cultivation needs to be targeted while partnering with conservation agencies that are active and like-minded in the area of forestry, environment and sustainable livelihoods, such as the UWA and the WWF.

#### Northern Uganda:

- The women of Arua District in Northern Uganda have an opportunity to engage in briquette making, which is attainable at the household level and offers significant benefits for women who are based at home.
- The Bamboo Training and Preservation Centre in Moyo represents a real opportunity. However, for the machinery to be optimally utilised, there is a need for bamboo to be grown outside of the CFR. In addition, there is a need for serious capacity development for both men and women in order to shift from trading in raw bamboo and towards value addition so as to increase incomes.

#### Central Uganda:

Promoting the use of bamboo as fuel, such as through briquette making in Mukono District, which lies in Central Uganda. Bamboo serves as a cheaper alternative source of fuel that has the potential to contribute to addressing the country's unmet need for household fuel. The key factor is that bamboo briquette production can be performed in the homestead and, therefore, is advantageous for women. This needs to be sustained by making use of small-scale equipment for briquette production by, for example, existing women's groups, in addition to promoting more bamboo nurseries among women so as to increase the resource base while and encourage the selling of seedlings for a decent income (noting the relatively high price of bamboo seedlings when compared with other tree seedlings). Given the role of the NFA in advancing forest management across Uganda, there is an opportunity for collaborating with the NFA and its partner organisations to advance women's involvement in bamboo-specific forest management activities.

#### Eastern Uganda:

- The soon-to-be-signed memorandum of understanding between AW Bamboo and the UWA represents a real opportunity to increase the benefit flows to local people while maintaining high conservation values. This should be prioritised for support by the programme. It has the potential to involve many local community members. Bamboo

shoots, as a product, exhibit high potential in the market. AW Bamboo, however, will require further support in terms of mechanisms for engaging other community members in a participatory manner based on sound governance principles.

- The Mount Elgon region in Eastern Uganda is known for the cultivation of edible bamboo shoots, which involves women and men in different value chain activities. While women engage in the preparation of the bamboo shoots, including sorting, drying and packaging, men generally provide the labour for gathering/harvesting and transporting the shoots over the rough terrain of the slopes of Mount Elgon to the processors (women) for a fee. There is an opportunity to scale up the production of edible shoots to meet the needs of a broader market, thereby helping to create more opportunities for unemployed women in the region.

Generally, the additional support needed to boost the potential benefits derived by men and women from value-addition activities includes increasing awareness concerning the value of bamboo, training in bamboo preservation/treatment technology and sustainable harvesting and management practices to ensure good-quality bamboo produce (equivalent to higher-value products), investing in machinery for drying edible bamboo shoots, targeting more women with awareness raising and training to increase their participation in male-dominated high-value products (e.g. furniture) and creating women champions in male-dominated trades. Having female champions who are supported by the programme to excel in relation to male-dominated high-value products will serve to change some negative perceptions and boost women's involvement with high-end bamboo products. The cluster-based micro-enterprise development approach might be a useful approach for maintaining a gender balance.

These recommendations further reflect the country-specific considerations for strengthening the programme's gender targets.

## 8.2 Lessons learned

The GA generated a number of lessons that should prove useful and inform the programme's trajectory in terms of gender mainstreaming:

- **Lack of role models:** Without women occupying key decision-making positions at the district and community levels, women lack role models to inspire and provide them with confidence to aspire to higher public office and participation in the high-value bamboo market in Ethiopia. In Kenya and Uganda, there are some exceptions involving women taking the lead and making significant progress in the bamboo value chains. The

examples of women-led bamboo enterprises in Ethiopia and Kenya may be helpful in terms of motivating others to join such enterprises as per local framed conditions.

- **Women's expanded gender roles and responsibilities:** Women participating in the programme's bamboo value chain project areas will continue to suffer from 'time poverty' if efforts are not made to engage men so that they share women's traditional roles and responsibilities. This time poverty limits women's meaningful participation in development projects such as the bamboo development programme due to their multiple gender roles and time-consuming and heavy work burden.
- **Village cooperatives and lending groups:** These are enabling women to meet basic household needs and serving as an entry point for women seeking to build assets. While this is commendable, more should be done by banks and other microfinance lenders to assist women, given their encumbrance due to lacking assets to serve as collateral. This may link with seed grants or social enterprise approaches if there any such cases or organisations working in other livelihood sectors. The OneAcre Fund in Kenya may provide a useful example in this regard.
- **Partnering and networking with community-based organisations and NGOs on gender issues within communities:** Focusing on women-centred activities in the bamboo sector, including bamboo nursery raising, crafts, furniture, mat production, apprenticeships and employment in bamboo industries.

## 8.3 Recommendations

### 8.3.1 Overall recommendations

- **Gender mainstreaming strategy:** The programme needs to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy that is informed by the results of this GA. Through this analysis, gaps have been identified that the strategy will need to address. The strategy should be developed through a participatory and consultative process involving all partners and stakeholders so as to ensure ownership of the strategy and its outcomes. The strategy must be communicated and disseminated at all levels of the programme.
- **Capacity strengthening:** Some gender mainstreaming gaps, such as the poor representation of women in decision-making positions within the bamboo value chains across the three countries (especially at the meso and micro levels), were identified during the GA among programme partners and district level stakeholders. Ongoing gender mainstreaming training is required for the partners. This gender mainstreaming

training could be conducted in collaboration with other government and civil society initiatives. Capacity-building training will enable project stakeholders to systematically mainstream gender and develop a common approach to tackling both gender inequality and female empowerment issues within the bamboo value chains. The programme already has capacity strengthening as one of its key indicators; however, there exists a need for gender-focused training.

- **Male engagement:** Continued male engagement through awareness raising campaigns needs to be pursued to ensure that men participate in the bamboo programme and appreciate the advantages of sharing tasks and responsibilities with their partners, including childcare and related roles. Discussions should also focus on asset ownership as well as the control and use of household income, highlighting the advantages of joint decision-making to the household. Male engagement should aim at sensitising men so that they speak out against and discourage harmful cultural and religious practices that perpetuate gender inequality. There exists a need for male involvement in programme activities such as income-generating activities so that men can better appreciate the importance of these activities for household livelihoods. Moreover, such participation can be used as a platform for reaching out to men with gender messages.
- **Traditional and religious leaders as entry points:** The programme needs to utilise traditional, religious and community leaders as entry points for the gender mainstreaming process. Community members see leaders as role models and take their cues from them. Hence, if leaders are empowered through training and awareness programmes, the new values they acquire will hopefully trickle down to the communities. Role models from among the traditional leaders should be identified and moulded into gender champions who will speak out against harmful traditional and cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality. A useful starting point might entail male staff members playing this role and leading by example.
- **Women-friendly bamboo technologies, tools and machines:** Craft-making tools, wheelbarrows and other tools should be made accessible to women in order to enable them to efficiently manage their multiple roles and responsibilities. The technologies need to be tested to ensure their applicability within the relevant context. In addition,

women's workloads could also be reduced significantly if men begin playing a greater role in household work.

- **Stepping stones approach:** There is a need for the programme to consider adopting a 'stepping stones' approach, which promotes the participatory and progressive engagement of communities in mainstreaming gender, rather than a prescriptive and 'hit-and-run' approach. The stepping stones approach does not use a prescriptive framework, instead allowing participants to identify gender and social exclusion issues within their communities and value chains through a number of sessions. It also facilitates discussion of how these factors affect the development and welfare of individuals and groups within the community, in addition to allowing the participants to come up with their own solutions to gender inequality and social exclusion. This approach recognises that changing attitudes takes time and requires participants to be exposed to a systematic and well-structured behaviour change programme for a set and agreed upon period. The model uses traditional, political and religious leaders as entry points because they are regarded as role models in their respective communities.

Some of the key takeaways that the programme can consider for the implementation and enhancement of gender mainstreaming within the bamboo value chain include the following:

- **Savings and thrift:** Lack of banking and microfinance facilities in remote villages mean that women lack financial support to initiate business enterprise activities. Linking savings and thrift among the small bamboo producers group (women) represents an opportunity to reduce barriers and empower women, including mainstreaming their financial decision-making.
- **Improving women's functional literacy and entrepreneurship:** There is a need for the programme to focus on educating women concerning micro-business management and budgeting. Doing so will equip women with basic skills such as bookkeeping, stocktaking and, hopefully, the ability to scale up their ventures. This could be linked to collaborative efforts involving TVET providers.
- **Bamboo cluster development initiatives:** This approach can provide women and men involved in the bamboo value chains with better partnership and sharing activities in a collaborative manner. It will help to empower both men and women to participate and gain skills and knowledge. For example, in terms of bamboo furniture, it is mostly men who are involved; however, the cluster development approach can ensure the sharing

of certain activities so that women make some of the products or components (e.g. slating, treatment, assembling), while men perform other tasks (e.g. harvesting, treatment).

- *Building leadership:* Women should be involved in leadership positions in community forestry management groups. This platform will provide an opportunity for women to be involved in activities, build ownership and share responsibility for managing the sustainable harvesting and management of the bamboo.
- *Peer group education:* It will likely prove beneficial for women from similar disadvantaged groups to understand the value of resource and knowledge sharing in order to capitalise on the traditional knowledge and wisdom within the industry.
- *Business development services:* Such services in the bamboo sector will provide an opportunity to mainstream and elevate the participation of women. They can avail themselves of central services and business solutions so as to participate in the local markets.
- *Networking and partnership:* Building partnerships and networking with like-minded community-based organisations and NGOs in terms of gender promotion may link with the programme leveraging and utilising resources and services from other agencies on the ground.
- *Digital literacy:* Enhancing digital literacy will provide an opportunity for women to share and exchange bamboo knowledge and skills in a way that should empower them.

### 8.3.2 Specific recommendations

- Gender cannot be properly mainstreamed without the engagement of men. Men often act as the gatekeepers of power and may feel threatened if they see women become economically empowered. Thus, there is a need to develop a planned approach to engaging men so that they are involved and participate in programming activities alongside their partners. Community-based male dialogues should be conducted with the aim of promoting the sharing of household tasks and childcare responsibilities, while male gender champions should be trained and supported to lead these dialogues within the bamboo value chains. Changing gender stereotypes and improving women's participation and empowerment within the bamboo value chains should not be viewed in isolation. This requires mechanisms to identify both males and females who will act as exemplary leaders or gender champions in relation to all programmes and processes within the respective communities. Having male allies as champions might

prove useful in changing male attitudes towards women and their participation within the sector.

- There exists a need to conduct sustained community dialogues with the aim of transforming the identified negative social norms through gender-transformative approaches such as social analyses and action or community change models. The programme should also target elderly and influential women who tend to uphold traditional gender roles, relations and responsibilities. Such mindset shifts can assist in giving women a voice and a choice within their households, the community and the bamboo value chains.
- Labour-saving technologies such as bamboo processing machines and wheelbarrows should be made accessible to women so as to enable them to efficiently manage their multiple roles and responsibilities. This will give women more time to participate in the value chains without compromising their social relations within their communities.
- Financial service providers require that those seeking loans present books of accounts for their businesses and provide collateral security. This discriminates against women, as the majority are unable to meet these requirements. There is, therefore, a need for the programme to engage financial service providers so that they offer financial packages that are friendly to the needs and contexts of women. For example, rather than asking for collateral, financial institutions could resort to group lending whereby community members are collectively responsible for loans and guarantee each other.
- Women realise less returns from their bamboo produce and products due to a lack of adequate marketing information. Market linkages between producer groups/agro-dealers and buyers should be further strengthened to enable farmers, especially women, to access high-value markets.
- To ensure meaningful participation in community organisations, committees and leadership positions by women, capacity-building training should immediately follow the selection of women for committees. Such training will provide them with confidence and assertiveness and so increase their capacity to lead effectively.
- The programme's gender mainstreaming efforts should go beyond the tracking of participation and examine the barriers that prevent women from meaningfully participating and benefiting from programme interventions. Such targeting will benefit from a gender strategy and action plan featuring specific and prioritised actions and responsibilities linked to outcomes and impact. Given the previously mentioned constraints, this might require the adjustment of targeted project indicators concerning gender. Indeed, there is a need to refine the indicators to reflect the realities on the

ground, where most communities are largely patriarchal and will require incremental gains rather than quantum leaps in terms of changing and challenging gender issues. It is, therefore, recommended that the programme management revise the programme indicators based on the findings in this GA report, which details the current status of gender issues across the three countries. Doing so will allow the programme to better leverage previous and ongoing activities as well as partnerships with others working within the same communities.

- It is important to promote bamboo industries and related investments. It is clear that women are employed in greater numbers in industries. The programme should focus on supporting existing industries and promote investments in all of the beneficiary countries, which will enable the higher participation of women as wage-earning labour. At the same time, the programme should promote apprenticeships in common production and attendance at training centres to build the capacities of women.

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# Appendix

## Tools Used for Stakeholder Consultations

The tools in Appendices A1–A5 were used for consultations with stakeholders.

### Appendix A1. Gender Analysis Questions Checklist for INBAR Steering Committee

#### Introduction

The study team is conducting this survey as part of INBAR’s gender analysis study. These questions are intended to help us gain insights into the specific considerations of men and women in the three East African countries, which will ensure that vital nuances are reflected in the implementation of Phase II of the INBAR Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme. If the gender goals are to be effectively tracked and meaningfully achieved, it is critical that the context-specific understanding of gender knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours be considered and utilised in relation to the programme design. It is important to note that the questionnaire does not seek to change gender perceptions or behaviours; rather, it aims to find practical approaches within existing contexts to ensure that men and women participate and benefit equally in the bamboo value chain.

Name	
Organisation	
Designation/Position	
Gender	Male: _____ Female: _____
Country	
Interviewer	
Gender Considerations for INBAR Programme Design	
1.	How important are gender considerations in the country? Is there a national gender policy?
2.	What does the policy say about men’s and women’s participation in sectors such as agriculture?
3.	How about the bamboo sector?
4.	Noting the status of the national gender policy, how relevant is the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme approach to the partner country’s gender needs?
5.	To what extent has the development of the policy and regulatory environment concerning gender and livelihoods in the target countries been informed by the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme?
6.	To what extent does the programme design take gender and national contexts/levels of development into account?
7.	Has the programme been designed with a clear gender strategy in mind, particularly with a view to contributing to the economic empowerment of women and youth?
8.	If yes, how? If no, why not?
9.	How about budgeting strategies and considerations regarding gender advancement in the programme?
10.	In the programme log frame for Phase I and Phase II, there is mention of at least 50% women as an indicator. What informed this aspirational 50% target?
11.	What strategies, activities and outcomes support the monitoring and reporting concerning this aspirational indicator?
12.	Practically speaking, what has been done to ensure this target is achieved?
13.	How much of the programme budget is focused on gender responsive indicators?
14.	Noting that the bamboo value chain is still in the early stages across the three programme countries, how does the programme leverage private sector players to support gender-inclusive practices within their business (purchasing raw materials, hiring employees, etc.)?
15.	What are the desirable outcomes envisaged following the implementation of gender-responsive strategies?
16.	To what extent does the leadership at INBAR consider gender during the enrolment of candidates in positions at the regional and national levels in East Africa?
17.	How would you describe success in terms of gender responsiveness and inclusiveness in the programme interventions across the three countries in Africa?

### Appendix A2: Questions Checklist for National Programme Coordinators and Implementers

## Introduction

The study team is conducting this survey as part of INBAR’s gender analysis study. These questions are intended to help us gain insights into the specific considerations of men and women in the three East African countries, which will ensure that vital nuances are reflected in the implementation of Phase II of the INBAR Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme. If the gender goals are to be effectively tracked and meaningfully achieved, it is critical that the context-specific understanding of gender knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours be considered and utilised in relation to the programme design. It is important to note that the questionnaire does not seek to change gender perceptions or behaviours; rather, it aims to find practical approaches within existing contexts to ensure that men and women participate and benefit equally in the bamboo value chain.

Name of Interviewee	
Male:	Female:
Organisation	
Designation/Position	
Date of Interview	
Place of Interview	
Name of Interviewer	
1.	How important are gender considerations in the country? Is there a national gender policy?
2.	What does the policy say about men’s and women’s participation in sectors such as agriculture?
3.	How about the bamboo sector?
4.	Noting the status of the national gender policy, how relevant is the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme approach to the partner country’s gender needs?
5.	To what extent has the development of the policy and regulatory environment concerning gender and livelihoods in your country been informed by the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme?
6.	To what extent does the programme design take gender and national contexts/levels of development into account?
7.	Has the programme been designed with a clear gender strategy in mind, particularly with a view to contributing to the economic empowerment of women and youth?
8.	If yes, how? If no, why not?
9.	How about budgeting strategies and considerations regarding gender advancement in the programme?
10.	In the programme log frame for Phase I and Phase II, there is mention of at least 50% women as an indicator. What informed this aspirational 50% target?
11.	What strategies, activities and outcomes support the monitoring and reporting concerning this aspirational indicator in this country?
12.	Practically speaking, what has the programme done to ensure this target is achieved?
13.	How much of the programme budget is focused on gender responsive indicators?
14.	Noting that the bamboo value chain is still in the early stages in the country, how does the programme leverage private sector players to support gender-inclusive practices within their business (purchasing raw materials, hiring employees, etc.)?
15.	How about government?
16.	What are the desirable outcomes envisaged following the implementation of gender-responsive strategies?
17.	To what extent does the programme leadership in the country consider gender during the enrolment of candidates at the national level?
18.	How would success in terms of gender responsiveness and inclusiveness in the programme interventions look in your country?

## Appendix A3: Gender Analysis Questions Template – District- and Project-Level Stakeholders

### Introduction

The study team is conducting this survey as part of INBAR’s gender analysis study. These questions are intended to help us gain insights into the specific considerations of men and women in the three East African countries, which will ensure that vital nuances are reflected in the implementation of Phase II of the INBAR Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme. If the gender goals are to be effectively tracked and meaningfully achieved, it is

critical that the context-specific understanding of gender knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours be considered and utilised in relation to the programme design. It is important to note that the questionnaire does not seek to change gender perceptions or behaviours; rather, it aims to find practical approaches within existing contexts to ensure that men and women participate and benefit equally in the bamboo value chain.

Name of interviewee
Organisation
Designation/Position
Date of Interview
Place of Interview
Name of Interviewer

### Access to, use and control of resources

1.	What is the level of dependence of women and men on various resources such as bamboo?
2.	Are there any groups of men and women that are more disadvantaged than others when it comes to benefitting from the bamboo resources? How?
3.	What can be done to improve their lives?
4.	For women and men who want to cultivate or farm bamboo, how would you describe the ownership of/access to land for this purpose? (Probe: Where land is not owned, discuss the ease of leasing/renting land by women and men.)
5.	Are there any locally organised support groups/structures that, for example, facilitate access to financial resources for small start-ups/businesses? How easily accessible are these groups/structures for poor women and men?

### Division of labour

6.	What are the main activities of men and women (paid and unpaid)?	Men's activities: Women's Activities:
7.	Please consider both home-based and income-generating activities: Which activities require maximum time and effort?	
8.	Is there any seasonal pattern in their (men/women) workloads?	
9.	In what ways are the bamboo projects and activities reducing the workloads of men and women?	
10.	Do the bamboo projects and value chain opportunities provide a sustainable livelihood option for both men and women in this community?	
11.	What would need to improve to allow more women and men to benefit from this bamboo opportunity?	
12.	What else can be done to get more women to meaningfully participate and benefit from the bamboo value chain?	

### Participation and decision making

13.	To what extent have men and women participated in the various project activities within the bamboo value chain?
14.	What are the differences (if any) between how men and women participate in the various aspects of the bamboo value chain?
15.	What other potential roles could women in the community play in the bamboo value chain?
16.	What barriers and constraints do women face within the bamboo value chain that prevent them from participating and benefiting equally from the programme and projects? How about men?
17.	What additional inputs would women need to do better for themselves and their families in terms of the bamboo value chain?
18.	Are there examples of other successful community livelihood projects involving many women in this community? If yes, what lessons can be learned from them so that the programme similarly benefits more women?

### Analytic questions

19.	Does any difference exist between men and women in terms of how they participate in and/or benefit from the bamboo value chain?
20.	If so, what explains the existence of this difference between men and women?
21.	What is significant about this difference?
22.	How do the gender relations, beliefs, perceptions, knowledge and social norms of and about women and men affect the distribution of burdens and benefits within the bamboo value chain?

## Appendix A4: Gender Analysis Questions Checklist for Owners of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Name		
Organisation		
Designation/Position		
Sex	Male:	Female:
Country		
Interviewer		
Gender Considerations for INBAR Programme Design		
1.	How important are gender considerations in your enterprise?	

2.	In your enterprise, do you have any gender preferences or policies when purchasing raw materials from farmers?
3.	If yes, how do you achieve them?
4.	If not, why not?
5.	How about hiring employees, do you have any gender preferences between women and men?
6.	If yes, please explain.
7.	How many men and women are currently working for your enterprise?
8.	What is the most senior position held by a woman in your organisation?
9.	What can be done to ensure that more women participate in the bamboo value chain?
10.	What are some of the challenges faced by enterprise owners like you when dealing with male farmers in the bamboo sector?
11.	What are some of the challenges faced by enterprise owners like you when dealing with female farmers in the bamboo sector?
12.	What can be done to address these challenges?
13.	What do you suggest should be done to ensure that women participate and benefit equally in the bamboo value chain?

## Appendix A5: Gender Analysis Questions Template – Community and Farmer Groups

### Introduction

The study team is conducting this survey as part of INBAR’s gender analysis study. These questions are intended to help us gain insights into the specific considerations of men and women in the three East African countries, which will ensure that vital nuances are reflected in the implementation of Phase II of the INBAR Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme. If the gender goals are to be effectively tracked and meaningfully achieved, it is critical that the context-specific understanding of gender knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours be considered and utilised in relation to the programme design. It is important to note that the questionnaire does not seek to change gender perceptions or behaviours; rather, it aims to find practical approaches within existing contexts to ensure that men and women participate and benefit equally in the bamboo value chain.

Name of Interviewee
Organisation
Designation/Position
Date of Interview
Place of Interview
Name of Interviewer

### A: ACTIVITY ANALYSIS FOR TARGET CROP – BAMBOO

Who is involved in the following land management and planting activities?  
(Mark with an X or a Tick where applicable.)

Activities	Women	Men	Children	Remarks
Land clearance				
Tillage – Hand				
Tillage – Oxen				
Seed variety selection				
Purchasing seed and fertiliser				
Planting/sowing				
Fertiliser application				
Manuring				
Pesticide spraying				
Weeding				
Pruning				
Watering (if irrigated)				
Keeping the crop safe from animals and pests				
Day-to-day management				
Harvesting				
Processing and treatment				
Transportation to storage site				
Storing				
Transport to market				
Means of transport				
Who sells?			Why?	
Where do you sell?				
When do you sell (e.g. big market days, month)?				
How do you sell (using length, width, other)?				

What is the most tedious/time-consuming task?	Why?
How do you manage labour during peak season?	
How do you manage if a key adult in household is sick or unavailable?	

## B: INPUT SUPPLY, TRAINING/EXTENSION/CREDIT SERVICES

Which varieties of bamboo do you plant or work with in this area?	
Why do you prefer these varieties?	
How do you intend to get the required seed in the future?	
Did you receive any training regarding these varieties?	If yes, please explain
Did you receive any other training/extension service other than the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme?	
What type of training would you benefit from?	
Do you have access to credit?	
If yes, what is it called? How does it work?	
For what purpose do you use the credit?	
Who makes the decision?	Woman: _____ Man: _____

## C: WHO IS INVOLVED IN MANAGEMENT? WHO HAS CONTROL/DECISION-MAKING POWER OVER RESOURCES?

Resources	Who is involved in management?			Who has control/decision-making power over resources?			Remarks
	Women	Men	Children	Women	Men	Children	
Planting and nurseries							
Land							
Cattle/dairy							
Equipment (vehicles, axes, cutters, etc.)							
Trades/tools for making furniture							
Market							
Income							

## D: GENDER ANALYSIS MATRIX (GAM)

Impact of the intervention (e.g. bamboo project/programme) on labour, resources and culture

Respondent	Labour	Resources	Time	Culture
Women				
Men				

**Labour:** For example, is it labour-demanding or an additional burden for women?

**Resource:** For example, is it input-demanding (e.g. fertiliser/seed)?

**Time:** For example, is it time-demanding?

**Culture:** For example, does it bring about a change in gender roles (e.g. it is easy to do it... so that men/women can do it interchangeably), new food taste, new working culture, etc.?



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