

HOW TO PREPARE A GENDER
ACTION PLAN FOR A
REDD+ STRATEGY:

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM THE PROCESS
IN COSTA RICA



Acknowledgments

This document was prepared by a team consisting of Andrea Quesada-Aguilar, Thais Aguilar, staff from the REDD+ Secretariat of Costa Rica (María Elena Herrera, Elena Florian, and Héctor Arce), and World Bank staff (Stavros Papageorgiou). The graphic design was done by Estudio Relativo. The team would like to thank the REDD+ Secretariat for its logistical and financial support in conducting the field visits, and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and its donor countries for financing this report.

This publication is a component of the Gender Action Plan of Costa Rica's National REDD+ Strategy, and the activities are part of the efforts the REDD+ Secretariat has undertaken since 2011 to adequately address gender issues in REDD+ related processes. These processes are based on the Gender and REDD+ Roadmap developed by the REDD+ Secretariat in 2016. Thanks to these efforts, the REDD+ Secretariat conducted the first analysis of the country's current situation with regard to forests, gender, and climate change mitigation, including the present publication.

To gather information for this publication, several field visits were arranged and performed in 2018, during which interviews were conducted with government officials, local community members, and other relevant stakeholders. All of the interviews and photographs contained in this report were obtained with the informed consent of the persons involved, granted during the field visits.

The team would like to extend a special thanks for their contributions to the men and women from the local communities who shared their experiences as part of this publication.

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ACRONYMS

EN-REDD+	National REDD+ Strategy
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FONAFIFO	Costa Rica Forest Financing Fund
GAP	Gender Action Plan of the National REDD+ Strategy
INAMU	National Women's Institute
IOP	Institutional Operating Plan
MINAE	Ministry of Environment and Energy
PAM	Policies, Actions, and Measures of the REDD+ Strategy
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
PROFOR	Program on Forests (World Bank)
SINAC	National Conservation Areas System

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Government of Costa Rica has acknowledged the importance of adequately addressing gender issues in REDD+ related processes. As the executing unit of the Readiness funds provided by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the REDD+ Secretariat, comprised by FONAFIFO and SINAC, has been working to integrate the issue of gender into different processes linked to the preparation of the National REDD+ Strategy (EN-REDD+), in collaboration with gender experts, civil society organizations, and different groups of indigenous women and rural smallholder forest producers.

The REDD+ Secretariat has recognized that working with a gender approach involves not only identifying the issue as a priority or a principle; it is also necessary to identify the relevant gender considerations and propose concrete actions for the promotion of gender equality as part of the implementation of the EN-REDD+. In this vein, the REDD+ Secretariat suggested preparing a Gender Action Plan (GAP) through a multi-stakeholder participatory process, based on the reality and proposals of Costa Rican women.

To prepare the GAP, the REDD+ Secretariat proposed to carry out the first analysis of the country's current situation with regard to forests, gender, and climate change mitigation; and to set forth concrete, detailed actions based on the Policies, Actions, and Measures (PAM) included in the National REDD+ Strategy. The GAP preparation process analyzed the relevant gender considerations so as to ensure that the expected results are not only concrete and feasible, but that they also recognize gender roles and address the gaps faced by Costa Rican women and their priorities, along with the ways in which these women contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of forests.

During this process, Costa Rica also recognized that in order to design and implement a Gender Action Plan, the country required institutional capacities, political will and support platforms, and gender experts with the technical abilities needed to support the design, implementation, and monitoring of gender-responsive activities. To guarantee that these enabling conditions were met, Costa Rica prepared the training module "Learning from Gender and Forests: A Training Module to Integrate Gender into Forestry Initiatives in Costa Rica." The objective of this module is to develop a practical, participatory process that provides guidance to environmental and forestry officials in the design, implementation, and monitoring of initiatives that include a gender perspective.

This process for the preparation of the GAP and the Training Module led to valuable lessons learned that may be useful to other REDD+ countries seeking to address gender equality on a comprehensive, concrete basis in their national REDD+ processes. The objective of this factsheet therefore is to share these lessons learned and the necessary steps for implementing a national Gender Action Plan linked to a REDD+ Strategy, based on the experience of Costa Rica, thus contributing to the pool of experiences and lessons that are being accumulated on this matter in other countries that are developing their GAPs.¹ The REDD+ Secretariat hopes that this publication is useful to other countries in promoting gender equality while also conserving and sustainably managing their forests.

¹ See Patricia Kristjanson, Tamara Bah, Anne Kuriakose, Meerim Shakirova, Gerardo Segura, Katharina Siegmann, Margaux Granat, 2019. "Taking Action on Gender Gaps in Forest Landscapes." Program on Forests (PROFOR). Washington DC.



LESSONS LEARNED: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GAP PREPARATION PROCESS IN COSTA RICA

THE REDD+ SECRETARIAT LED THE GAP PREPARATION PROCESS

Lesson Learned: The active involvement of the REDD+ Secretariat made it possible to build the capacities of country officials during the process and establish alliances with other governmental institutions. It also promoted greater ownership of the GAP at the institutional level, which in turn helped make

the objectives and actions proposed in the GAP more concrete and more closely aligned with the PAMs of the EN-REDD+ and the institutional operating plans (IOPs) of the institutions responsible for implementing the EN-REDD+.

THE GAP WAS PREPARED BASED ON STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Lesson Learned: For the development and implementation of the GAP, a strategic alliance was formed with the National Women's Institute (INAMU), the national agency that leads the promotion and protection of women's human rights, together with the Costa Rican government and civil society. Through this

alliance, the issue of gender was once again included as part of MINAE's actions and the INAMU successfully incorporated environmental matters into the women's agenda and the 2018-2030 National Policy for Effective Equality between Men and Women.

A THEORY OF CHANGE WAS PROPOSED TO GUIDE THE PREPARATION OF THE GAP

Lesson Learned: By identifying gaps and proposing three interrelated lines of action, it became possible to articulate the entire GAP design process. As a result, the actions proposed for the first lines of action—gender analysis and capacity building—were implemented progressively, as necessary

before designing the action plan to address national gender and forests gaps. This means that the expected results and the concrete actions of the first two lines of action were the enabling conditions needed to design the GAP and implement its actions.

THE GAP PREPARATION PROCESS WAS BASED ON AN ACTION-RESEARCH THAT INCLUDED A MIX OF METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACHES

Lesson Learned: Thanks to this action-research approach, a very diverse dataset was gathered that made it possible to propose actions in the GAP that not only had national and local impacts, but which also contributed to addressing gaps and promoting opportunities in different environmental

sectors. Supplementing the desk research with focus groups and workshops made it possible to highlight the importance of visiting and listening to different stakeholders around the country, especially local communities.

THE GAP PREPARATION WAS BASED ON A “BOTTOM UP” PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Lesson Learned: This approach made it possible to propose concrete actions in the GAP that reflect the country’s reality and to validate women’s ideas and contributions, thus allowing

for greater ownership of the GAP preparation process among the women and groups consulted.

THE GAP PREPARATION WAS COMBINED WITH A NATIONAL AND LOCAL SENSITIZATION PROCESS ON ISSUES RELATED TO GENDER AND FORESTS

Lesson Learned: The activities implemented as part of the gender analysis helped successfully raise awareness and share information among the country officials interviewed and

the communities visited. By holding two national sensitization workshops, information was provided to a wide range of stakeholders in the country.



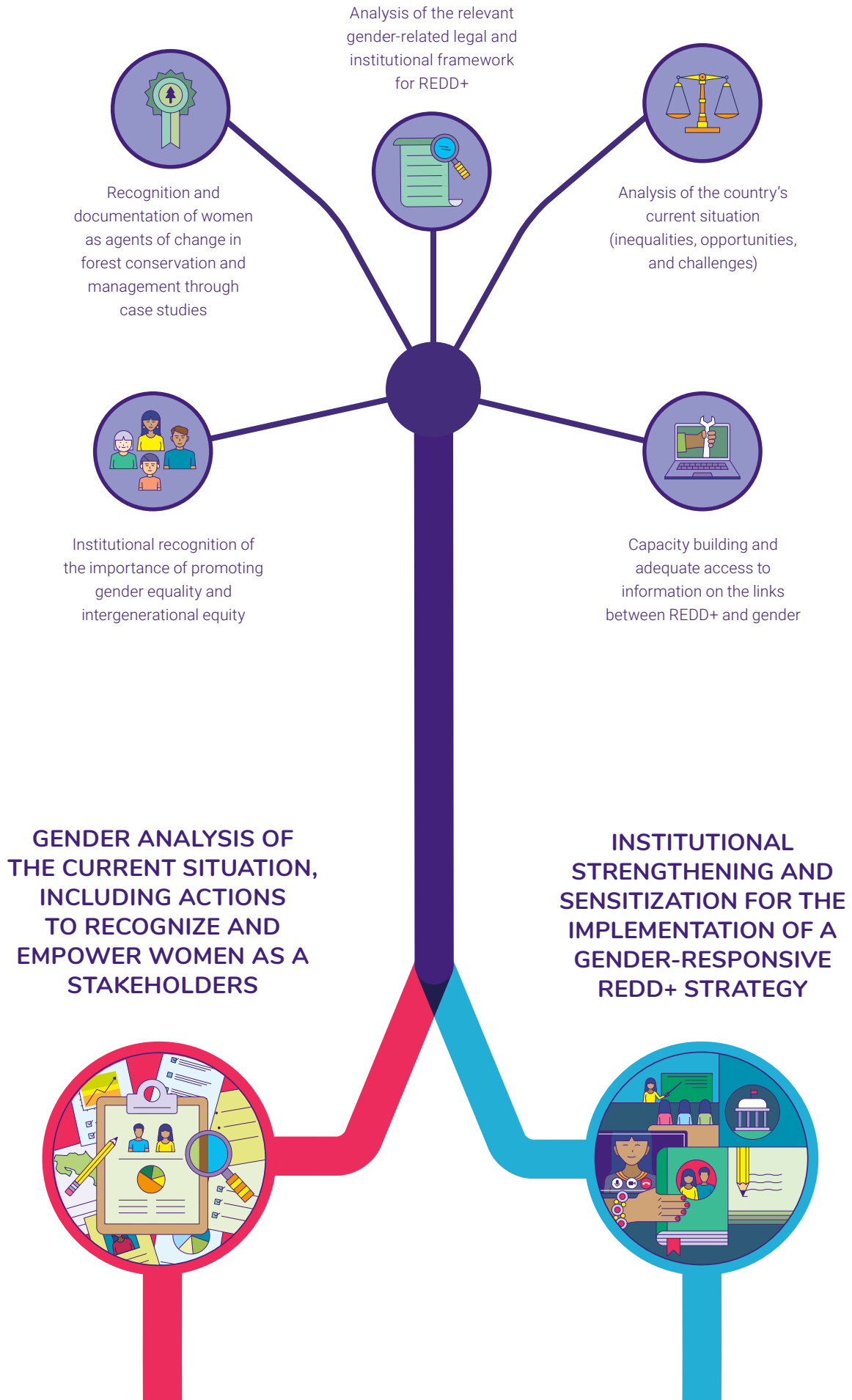
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF GENDER ACTION PLANS FOR NATIONAL REDD+ STRATEGIES

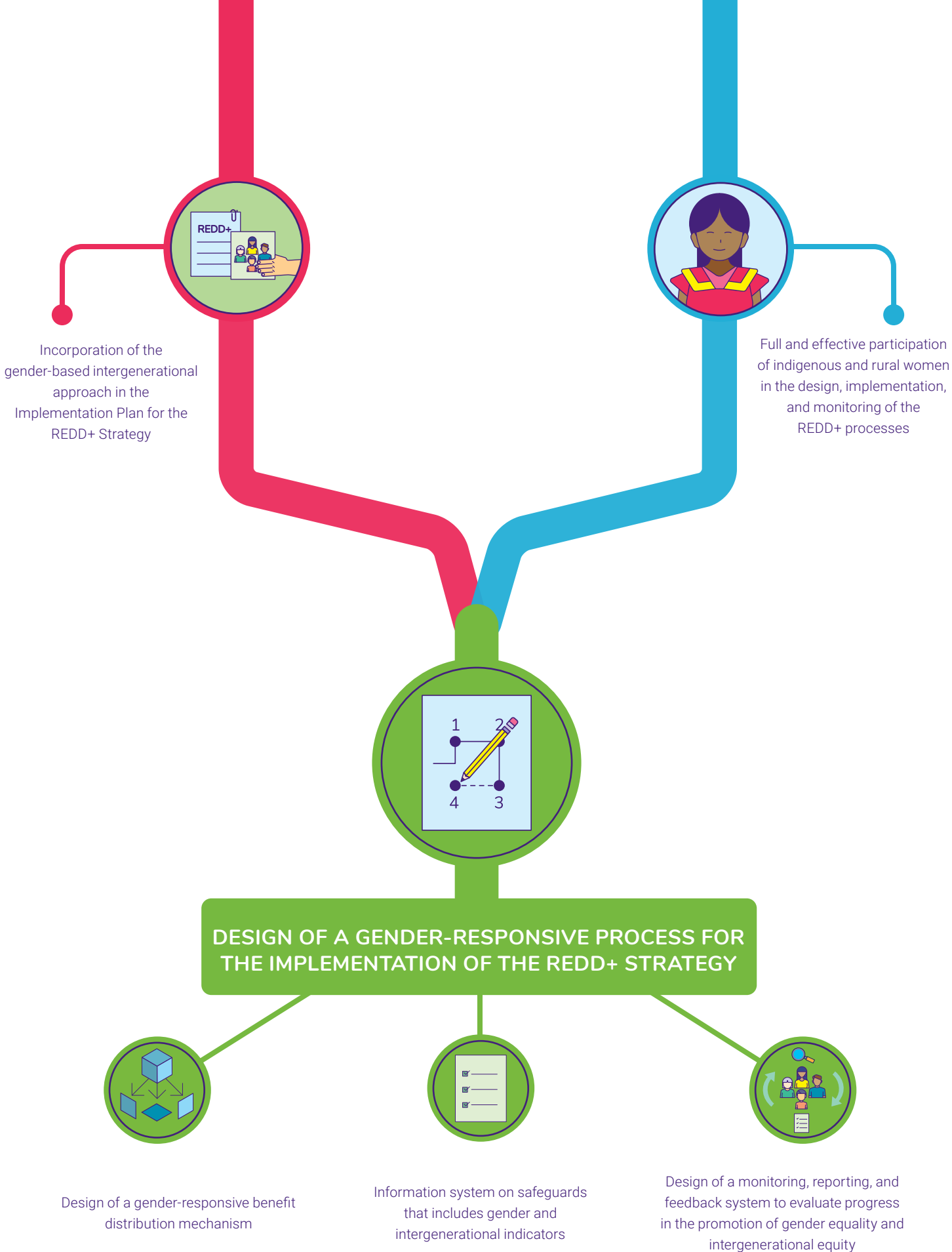
RECOMMENDATION 1: IDENTIFY GENDER CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO REDD+ AND PROPOSE A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK THAT INCLUDES THEM

The GAP preparation process proposed a conceptual framework with three lines of action that encompass the key gender considerations relevant to the country. This approach was selected due to the fact that the country exhibited three major gaps in gender issues that needed to be taken into account before proposing specific actions linked to the EN-REDD+: a) a lack of recognition of women

as forest conservation agents; b) a lack of information on gender and forests; c) the need to build capacities and raise awareness of gender issues so that government environmental institutions could prepare a strategic document; and d) a lack of opportunities to involve and promote women as forest conservation agents.

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EN-REDD+ GAP PREPARATION







RECOMMENDATION 2: CARRY OUT ACTION-RESEARCH BASED ON A “BOTTOM UP” APPROACH

To define specific actions for the preparation of the GAP, it is recommended to implement an action-research approach.²

The research methodology should combine traditional theoretical studies and data analysis with interviews, field visits, national sensitization workshops, and a national multi-stakeholder participatory validation process. By combining

these types of activities, it becomes possible to obtain quantitative and qualitative data; identify undocumented information, including case studies around the country; and obtain a range of different recommendations that cover both local and institutional aspects.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ARTICULATE INFORMATION TO PROPOSE THE ACTION PLAN'S EXPECTED RESULTS, ACTIONS, AND INDICATORS

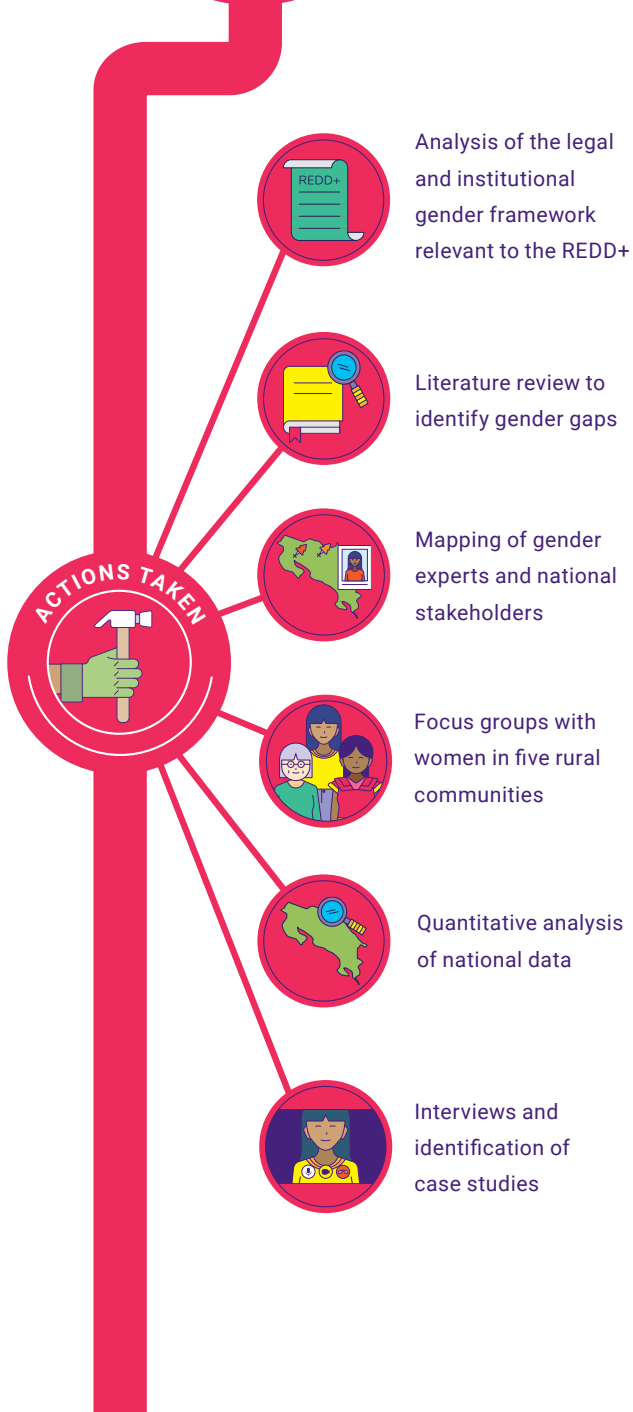
The gradual implementation of this process helps obtain and articulate the basic information required to put together the GAP. The actions and suggestions identified and proposed during the activities for the first two lines of action (Gender Analysis and Institutional Sensitization) defined the actions, indicators, and institutional partnerships proposed in the GAP

for each of the PAMs of the EN-REDD+ (see Figure 2). One important activity for the development of the GAP were the field visits conducted to help understand the reality of rural women and men.

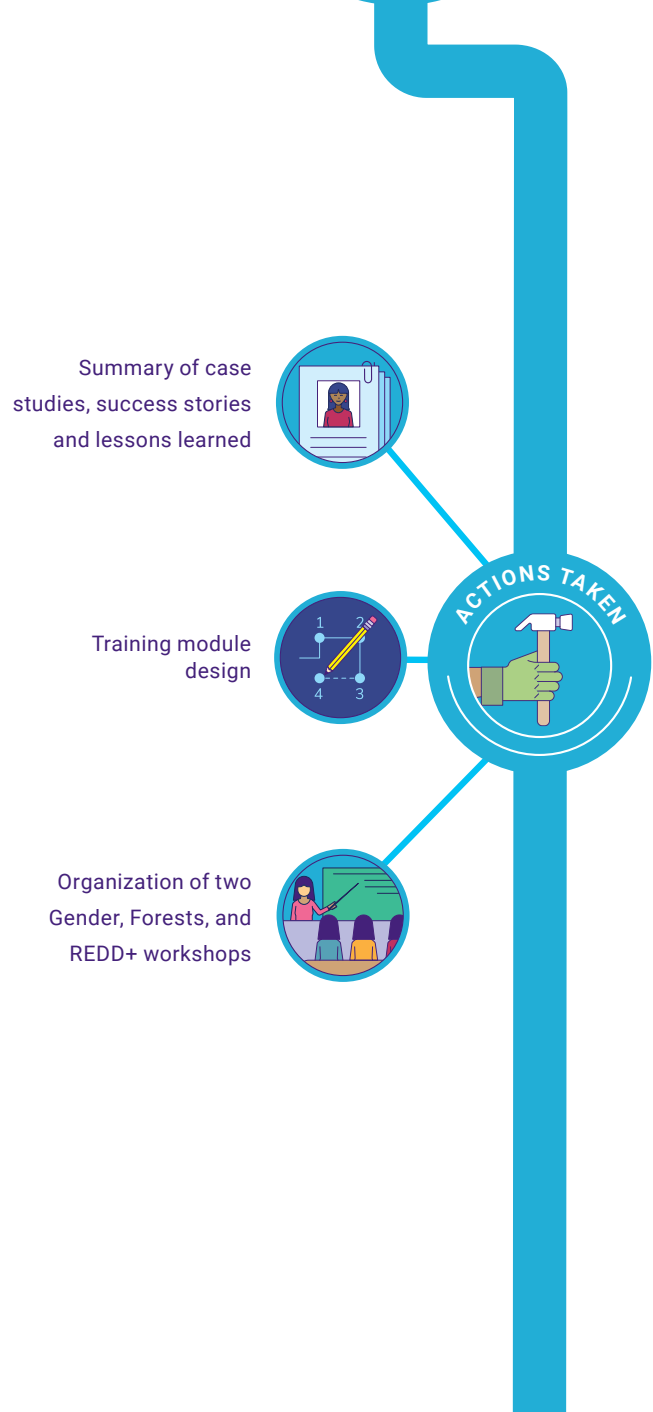
² Participatory action research (PAR) is an approach to research in communities that emphasizes participation and action. It seeks to understand the world, attempting to change it through collaboration based on a process of reflection. This method stresses collective investigation and experimentation based on experience and social history.

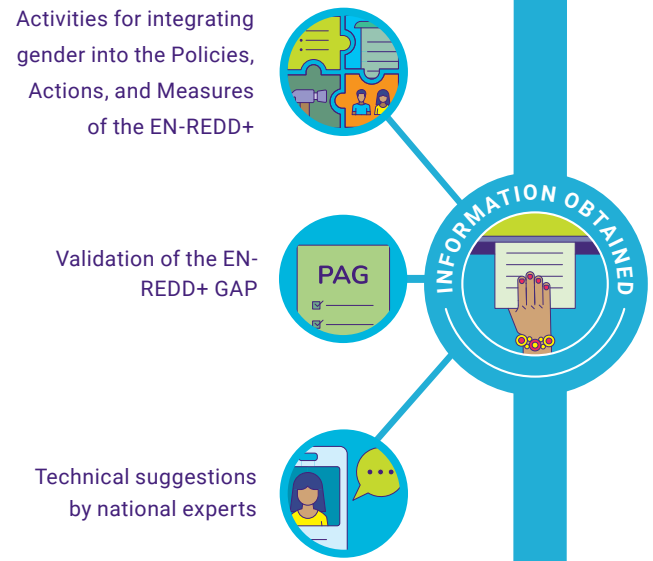
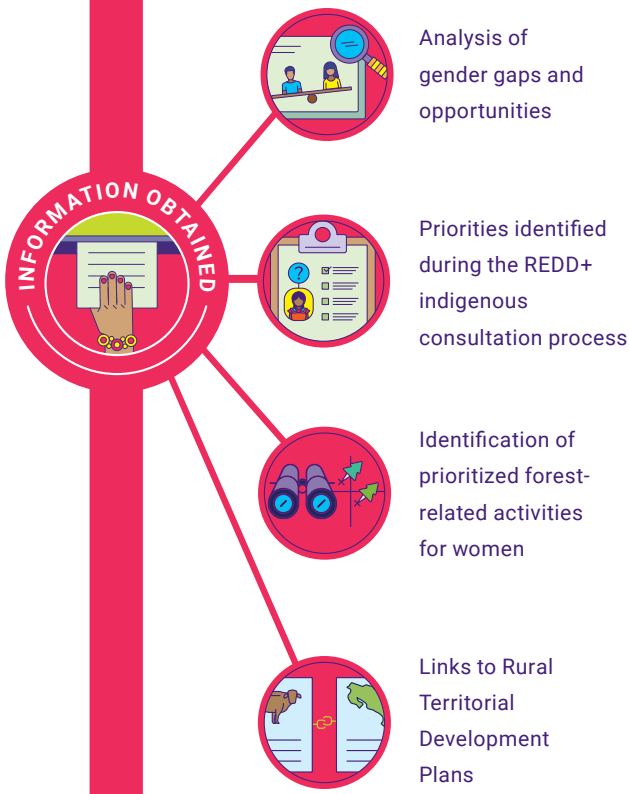
FIGURE 2: GAP PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE EN-REDD+

GENDER ANALYSIS



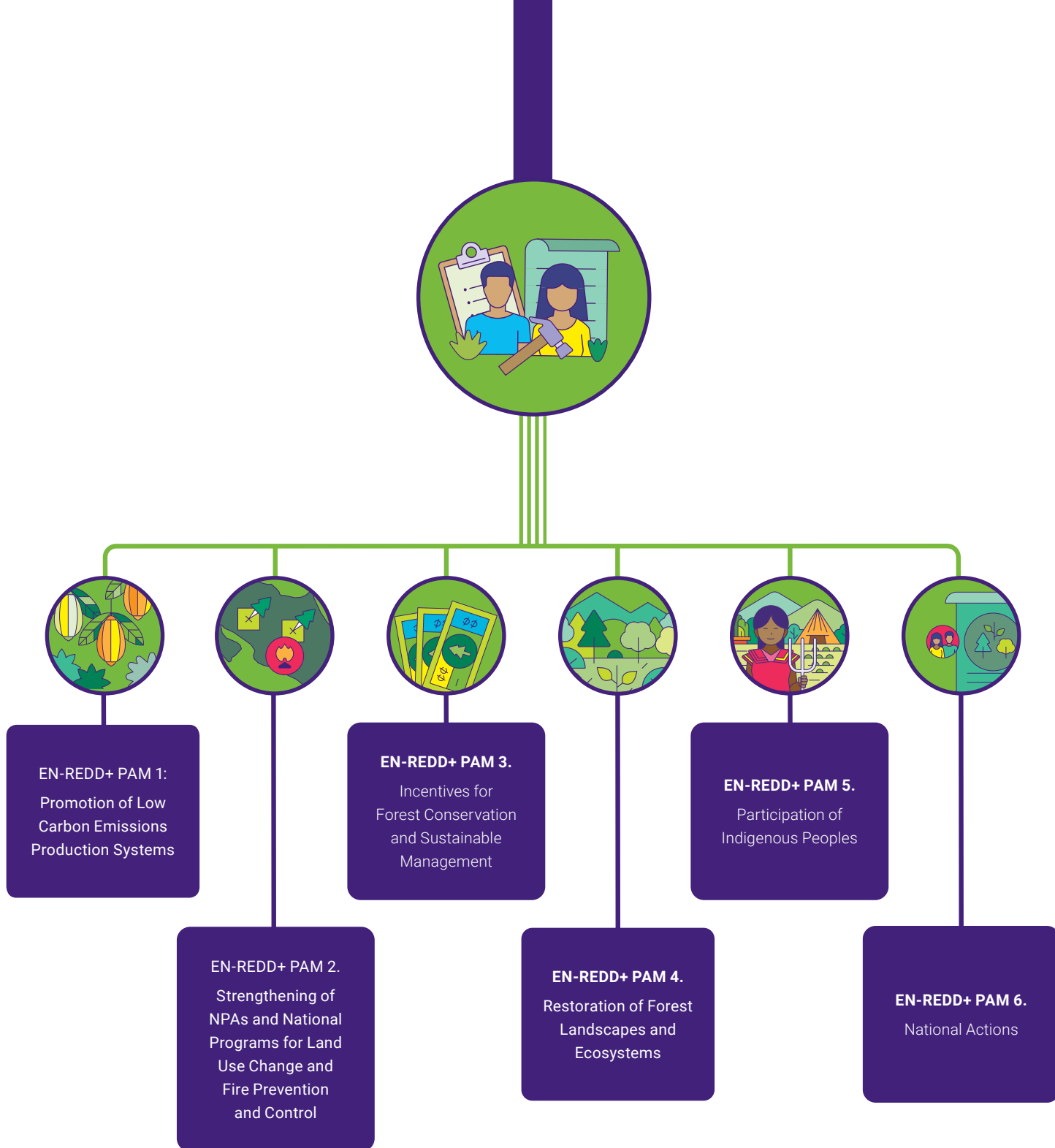
INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND SENSITIZATION





EN-REDD+ GENDER ACTION PLAN





RECOMMENDATION 4: CONDUCT A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATORY VALIDATION

Once the draft GAP has been prepared, it is critical to perform a validation process with representatives of the government, civil society, rural communities, indigenous peoples, academia, and gender experts. This space not only allows for greater

ownership of the GAP, but also helps consolidate strategic alliances between government institutions, civil society, and women's groups for its subsequent implementation.

CONCLUSION

Costa Rica hopes that its lessons learned and recommendations can help guide other countries and encourage them to design and implement Gender Action Plans for their REDD+ strategies, given that these plans outline a clear pathway for furthering work on gender and the environment, and have the potential to exert a positive impact on different dimensions at both the national and local levels.

When these action plans are adequately designed, they can lead to: a) gender mainstreaming in national policies; b) build institutional capacities on gender issues; and c) changes at the local level through gender-responsive forests projects. Their implementation may also contribute to the social and environmental transformation that many countries aspire, and the achievement of many of the social and environmental goals that have been committed to internationally.

Costa Rica thus presents its lessons learned in the hope that they may contribute to the actions being taken worldwide to include the issue of gender in the development of REDD+ strategies. These Gender Action Plans represent a key step in making gender equality a reality for the thousands of women and men who live off, depend on, and conserve forests around the world.

The World Bank, through the FCPF and PROFOR, has supported a range of initiatives to incorporate the gender dimension in REDD+ processes in different countries. Costa Rica's experience is now added to these efforts, which offer a range of different lessons learned. For more information on the gender and REDD+ initiatives of the FCPF and PROFOR, please visit: <https://www.profor.info/knowledge/catalyzing-gender-forests-actions>. On the gender and REDD+ process in Costa Rica, visit <http://reddcr.go.cr/es/centro-de-documentacion/genero>.

