

Measuring Women's Leadership for Sustainability in Landscape projects with the W+ Standard



Featured Speakers

Speakers



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For more info and gender, ag & forest landscape-related resources:

[Gender and Vulnerability Program | wb \(progreen.info\)](https://www.folur.org/gender-inclusion)
www.folur.org/gender-inclusion



Why women's leadership is important in landscape projects

Gender equality and women's empowerment in environmental work are linked to:

- higher agriculture production and profits, improved economic outcomes, and a fairer distribution of wealth
- better ecosystems conservation, protection and sustainability outcomes
- higher CO2 emissions reductions and better resilience outcomes

Gender-neutral programs undermine conservation goals & human rights

Making women's contributions visible and supporting their leadership is essential !

Emerging lessons on measuring results of women's leadership

Projects and experiences in 3 countries: Nepal, Mexico and India

Indicators of Leadership

Methodological challenges in measuring leadership

Nepal: Community Forestry Program and User Groups

- Since 1980, Nepal's Community Forest initiatives, supported by national policies, feature decentralized, community-based natural resource management, community forest monitoring and local leadership - widely seen as a successful model of local forest governance that addresses deforestation & degradation
- WOCAN's team applied the W+ Standard and its Leadership Domain to assess **the extent of changes in women's leadership initiatives within Nepal's Community Forest User Groups** (CFUGs) of the Community Forestry program in December 2023
- The leadership assessment was applied to three districts, selected to represent a microcosm of the social & geographic differences across Nepal. Results were measured for **7,750 women leaders and forest user group members**.
- *Case study: Women's Leadership Outcomes within Nepal's Community Forestry Program using the W+ Standard*

A photograph of a mountainous landscape in Nepal, showing a winding road through a valley with dense forest and terraced fields. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting sunrise or sunset.

Results: a 40% improvement in women leaders' personal transformations and the changes they led in their community forest user groups



Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Mexico

- Implemented by Rainforest Alliance Mexico, with support from PROGREEN in the State of Oaxaca, benefitting 128 indigenous women.
- Supporting IPLC subprojects aimed at conservation and integration of sustainable land management practices
- DGM-supported activities aimed to improve key gender equality outcomes, including:
 - Access to and control over productive assets
 - Voice and agency
 - Positive changes in women's leadership & participation
- Activities: Capacity building for the W+ Standard and application of the Standard to measure results for **Leadership** and **Income & Assets** in 4 subprojects

Results: 60% increase in Leadership domain, 125% increase in Income & Assets domain

Women-led community resilient local governance (wCOREL), India

- Implemented by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in Maharashtra
- Climate-resilient farming: organic cultivation of multiple indigenous food crops and livelihood diversification to ensure household health, nutrition and income security
- Transforming marginalized women farmers in climate-risk areas into resilient leaders by positioning them as agri-innovators and decision makers
- Resulting in sustainable livelihoods and well-being for 75,000 women and their families
- Activities: Applied the W+ Standard to measure results for Leadership and Income & Assets domains in October 2023

Results: 101% increase in Income & Assets domain, 127% increase in Leadership domain

Verification completed in Feb, 2024 for **778,286 W+ credits**



Indicators of Leadership

Definition:

Leadership is a relational practice –

Evidence of relational practice results from the structural changes affected by leaders and the individual transformations that they undergo.

2 aspects of evidence for leadership:

- Structural change
- Individual transformation

Structural change

OUTCOMES	Indicators
Affecting change in group structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in policy• Gender-responsive budgets• Gender-sensitive ToRs
Affecting behavioral change in others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidence bestowed by others on leader• Engaging others in group's decision-making process• Number of colleagues who are influenced

Individual Transformations

OUTCOME

Indicators

Recognizing resistance from peers and management

- Tokenism

Managing socio-cultural challenges and obstacles

- Number of hours women work
- Degree of mobility
- Norms and values

Dealing with emotional challenges

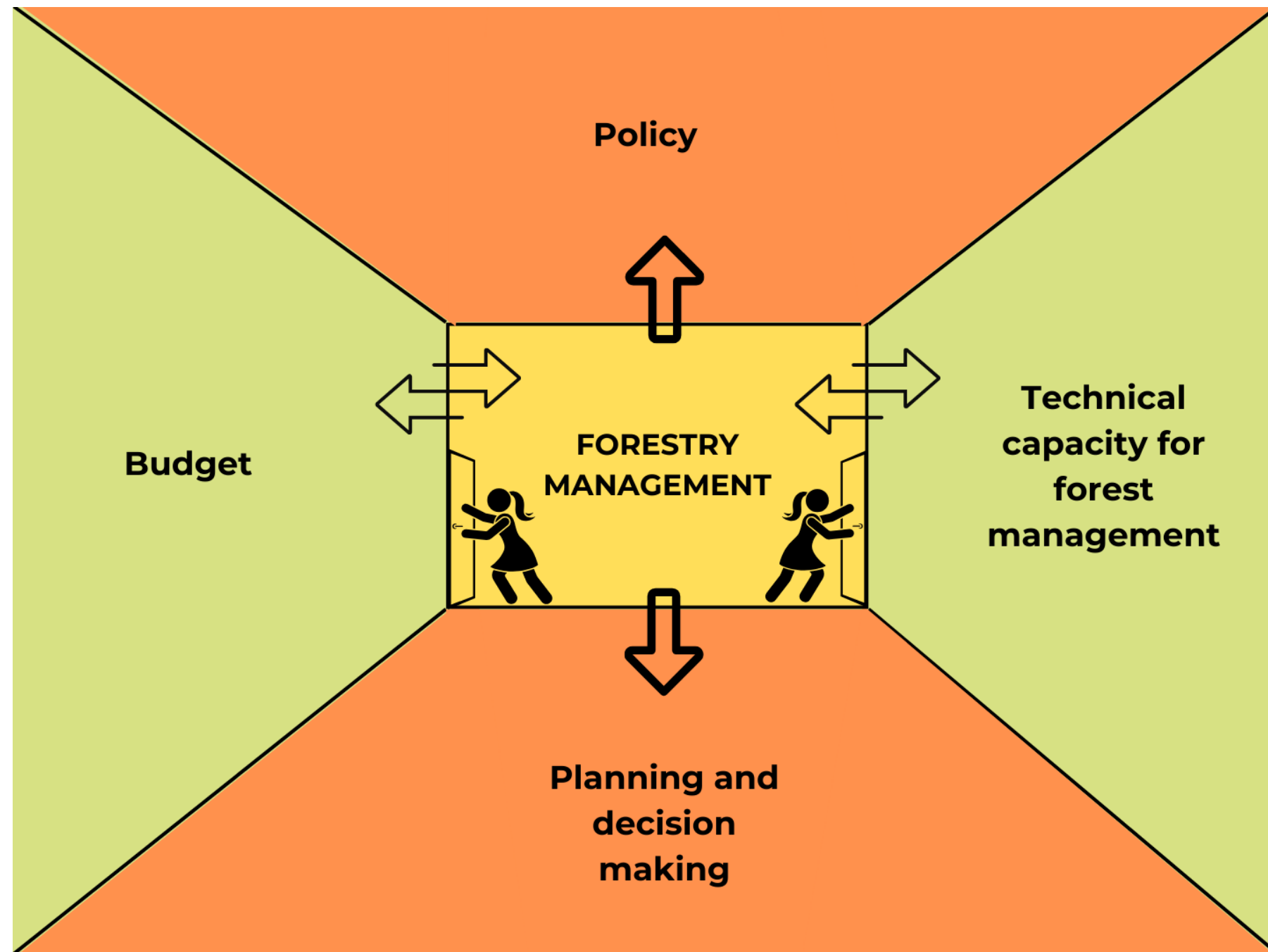
- Ability to articulate predicaments
- Strategies to deal with predicaments

Generating counter narratives

- Alternative stories about themselves

Engaging with obstacles


- Quality of decision making



**Women's
agency
within
structures**

Methodological challenges

The leadership domain, unlike other domains, requires the following:

- Fairly substantial training on leadership concepts and practices for enumerators prior to the data collection
 - Accurate means of verification to substantiate behavioral and psycho-social outcomes
 - Challenge to replicate by others
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Key Lessons

Nepal

Women leaders engage with opportunities, producing a significant increase in leadership results when compared to women members of CFUGs

Leadership produces shifting ideas of womanhood: from domestic to public-oriented ideas of themselves

The glass ceiling effect of CFUGs inhibits upward mobility

The 'tempered' nature of women's leadership is strategic and effective

Mexico

Importance of technical capacities and knowledge of the local context from the Project staff

Capacity building and access to resources has increased confidence and women's agency

Need further support to navigate challenges that come with leadership, especially to face social isolation challenges

Why India's leadership is so effective and a best practice



Organization is oriented towards grassroots collective action



Project created linkages between women's groups and government offices; women no longer depend on Project resources



Organization provides constant mentoring that goes beyond technical issues – women receive emotional support from their groups



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