

Toward a gender- responsive CREAF project

**A toolkit for
project activities**



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Toward a gender-responsive CREAM project. A toolkit for project activities

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Authors

Isabel Díaz Reviriego and Irene Iniesta Arandia
Fractal Collective
Prepared for the Climate Resilient East Atlantic Flyway (CREAF) project.

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Contact: wsfi@waddensea-secretariat.org
Website: www.eastatlanticflyway.org

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About this toolkit

This toolkit has been developed for the **Climate Resilience for Migratory Birds and People along the East Atlantic Flyway (CREAF) project**. It supports the partners in implementing activities in line with the **IKI Gender Strategy** and in integrating gender and intersectional considerations into their work. It is tailored to the **CREAF project context, objectives, and work pillars**. The guidance is practical and relevant to the types of activities, geographies, and partnerships involved. The toolkit builds on an **intersectional gender analysis of the project's core implementation sites**—the Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania), the Saloum Delta (Senegal), and the Bijagós Archipelago (Guinea-Bissau)—as well as a **review of gender policies across partner institutions**. It is intended to be used alongside these other gender-related project documents, which together provide complementary entry points for exploring and supporting a gender-responsive approach across the project.

Coastal wetlands are complex social–ecological systems, shaped by tidal rhythms, seasonal livelihoods, and **long histories of human–environment interaction**. Climate change can increase existing inequalities in these areas. At the same time, conservation and adaptation activities can bring both opportunities and unintended impacts for different groups. To understand this, it is important to ask: who participates, who benefits, and how ecological and social processes intersect.

This toolkit adopts an **intersectional perspective**. This means that gender is considered together with other social factors—such as age, ethnicity, class, mobility, livelihood, and tenure—in ways that are highly context-specific. Instead of assuming which inequalities or priorities matter most, the toolkit encourages users to reflect on their own context and how these dynamics affect access to resources, exposure to climate risks, and participation in decision-making.

The guidance provided here is **intended to support reflection, dialogue, and adaptive practice**, rather than prescribe fixed rules. It **invites attention to power relations, positionality, and the historical and cultural contexts that shape knowledge, conservation priorities and climate resilience strategies**.

By valuing co-produced knowledge and multiple ways of knowing, the purpose of this toolkit is **to help practitioners, researchers, and decision-makers navigate complexity, remain reflexive, and engage thoughtfully with the social dimensions of coastal wetland conservation and climate resilience**. The sections that follow aim to offer support for partners to engage with these questions across the project's pillars through key principles and guidelines, while remaining attentive to context and inclusion.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be used flexibly across the different pillars of the CREAM project. Users may enter the toolkit through the section that is most relevant to their activities.

Each section is structured using principles or themes with guiding questions and potential tools.

Principles highlight key ideas for gender-responsive and inclusive practice

Themes and guiding questions encourage reflection on how gender and social dynamics shape project processes

Tools offer practical examples to help translate these reflections into action

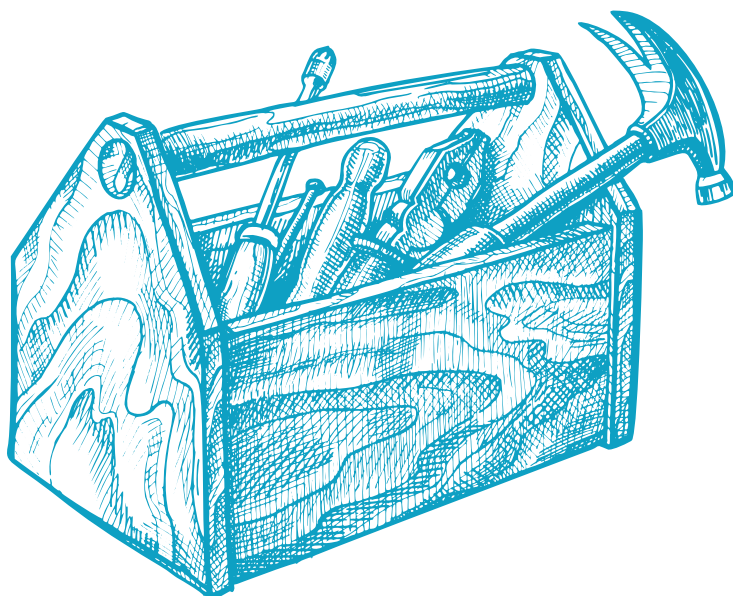
Additional elements throughout the toolkit offer further support.

Boxes provide examples or additional context

Tips highlight practical suggestions

Annexes contain expanded information on selected tools and project pillars

Users are encouraged to adapt these elements to their specific context and needs.



The “purple glasses”: A practical starting point

Adopting an intersectional perspective in conservation can be thought of as putting on “purple glasses”: a way of seeing that makes visible inequalities, power relations, and forms of exclusion that may otherwise remain unnoticed. These glasses do not provide immediate or fixed answers and solutions. Rather, they invite a gradual learning process—one that unfolds over time through reflection, dialogue, and practice.

In the context of coastal wetlands along the East Atlantic Flyway, looking through these purple glasses means paying attention to how conservation and climate resilience are shaped by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, class, livelihood, and by colonial and racialised histories. It involves noticing whose knowledge is recognised, whose labour is valued, who participates in decision-making, and who bears the costs or benefits of environmental change and conservation interventions.

This perspective also recognises that inequalities are not static. They are produced and reproduced through institutions, policies, norms, and everyday practices—including research methods, communication choices, and project implementation processes. Developing an intersectional lens therefore implies learning to ask different questions, listening to diverse voices, and remaining attentive to tensions, contradictions, and change over time.

Importantly, using these “purple glasses” also means recognising that change often takes time, and that it can be frustrating when the shifts we hope to see do not happen as quickly as expected. This perspective is not about achieving perfection or following a checklist. Instead, it encourages awareness, curiosity, and reflexivity in how activities are designed and facilitated.

For facilitators and project staff, this may involve reflecting on questions such as:

- 1. Who tends to speak, make decisions, or be most visible in meetings and activities—and who remains less visible?**
- 2. How might project timelines, formats, or communication choices enable or limit participation?**
- 3. How are different forms of knowledge—scientific, experiential, Indigenous, and local—recognised and valued?**
- 4. How might our own roles, assumptions, and institutional positions shape interactions and priorities?**
- 5. What small adjustments or actions could help shift some of these dynamics?**

Over time, these reflections can inform more inclusive facilitation, more equitable partnerships, and conservation practices that contribute not only to ecological resilience, but also to more just social relations across the Flyway.

Gender-responsive events in IKI projects

Participatory events are a major component of this toolkit and are an important part of many IKI initiatives — from knowledge sharing to policy dialogue — the **IKI checklist for Gender-Responsive Event Management (GREM)** offers simple, practical guidance to plan and deliver more gender-responsive events.

Gender-responsive event management goes beyond balanced participation. It focuses on creating inclusive spaces where diverse voices can contribute meaningfully. This means linking the event topic to gender aspects, ensuring diverse representation among speakers, and designing formats that consider the different needs of participants. Having a facilitation team familiar with gender and social justice issues can help ensure these topics are addressed thoughtfully during participatory events (Box 1). For example, within the IKI CREAM project gender training combined presentation with interactive group work to encourage all participants to contribute and materials were shared beforehand to support engagement from everyone. Facilitation aimed to create spaces for open discussion in smaller groups ensuring that those people that might not be comfortable speaking in the plenary can contribute to the discussion.

Applying a Gender-Responsive Approach Across Event Phases

Planning

Think early about how to include gender justice in the event topic — whether as a cross-cutting theme or a dedicated focus. This helps make the links between gender, climate and biodiversity more visible.

Implementation

Keep gender in mind during delivery. Check that facilitation, participation and space dynamics remain inclusive and responsive to different needs.

Follow-up

Reflect on what worked and what could improve. Evaluating gender aspects after the event helps strengthen future practice and deepen impact.

See the full GREM checklist here 

Box 1. Multiactor Dialogues: Learning from the Multiple Evidence Based (MEB) approach

Multi-actor dialogues are increasingly used in biodiversity and ecosystem governance to bring together policy actors, community representatives, researchers, practitioners, and Indigenous and local knowledge holders. Drawing on experiences from SwedBio's Multiple Evidence Base (MEB) approach, these dialogues can be understood as spaces where different knowledge systems coexist and inform decision-making without being merged or ranked.

A **dialogue differs from a discussion** when three elements are present simultaneously. First, there is an effort to create **conditions of relative equality**, where coercive influences—such as institutional hierarchy, technical dominance, or social norms—are minimised as much as possible. Second, participants engage through **listening with empathy**, seeking to understand perspectives rather than to persuade or defend positions. Third, **underlying assumptions**—about problems, solutions, evidence, or roles—**are made explicit and open to reflection**.

In the context of the East Atlantic Flyway, preparing such dialogues involves careful attention to who is invited, how participation is enabled, and how different forms of knowledge are recognised. This may include reflecting on power asymmetries between actors, acknowledging gendered and colonial dynamics, and creating spaces where experiential, Indigenous and local, scientific, and policy knowledge can be expressed on their own terms.

Practically, this can involve thoughtful choices around facilitation, language, timing, and formats that allow diverse actors—including women, youth, small-scale fishers, local authorities, and conservation practitioners—to engage meaningfully. From an MEB perspective, the **value of these dialogues lies not only in producing formal policy outputs, but also in building mutual understanding, trust, and legitimacy** across perspectives over time.

Learn more here 

Monitoring & Research

Biodiversity research is increasingly recognising the importance of **inclusivity, representation, and equitable, or fair, collaboration**¹. However, there are several common challenges, including linguistic barriers that limit participation in global research networks, the undervaluation of local knowledge, unequal research partnerships sometimes described as “parachute science”, and constraints related to capacity and accessibility. **Working closely with local researchers and communities can help address many of these challenges.** It can also improve the monitoring of bird populations, wetland health, and climate change impacts, and support better informed conservation, policy, and planning decisions. At the same time, **fieldwork can present specific safety challenges, particularly for women, people of colour, and LGBTQ* researchers, due to intersecting systems of discrimination and power**².



Key themes and tools

Gender-responsive researcher safety and fieldwork planning

Fieldwork planning can include considerations of safety, wellbeing, and inclusivity, considering how risks related to harassment, violence, and sexual assault may affect team members differently. Intersectional power dynamics—such as gender, race, age, sexual orientation, or nationality—can shape these experiences and planning approaches^{3,4}.

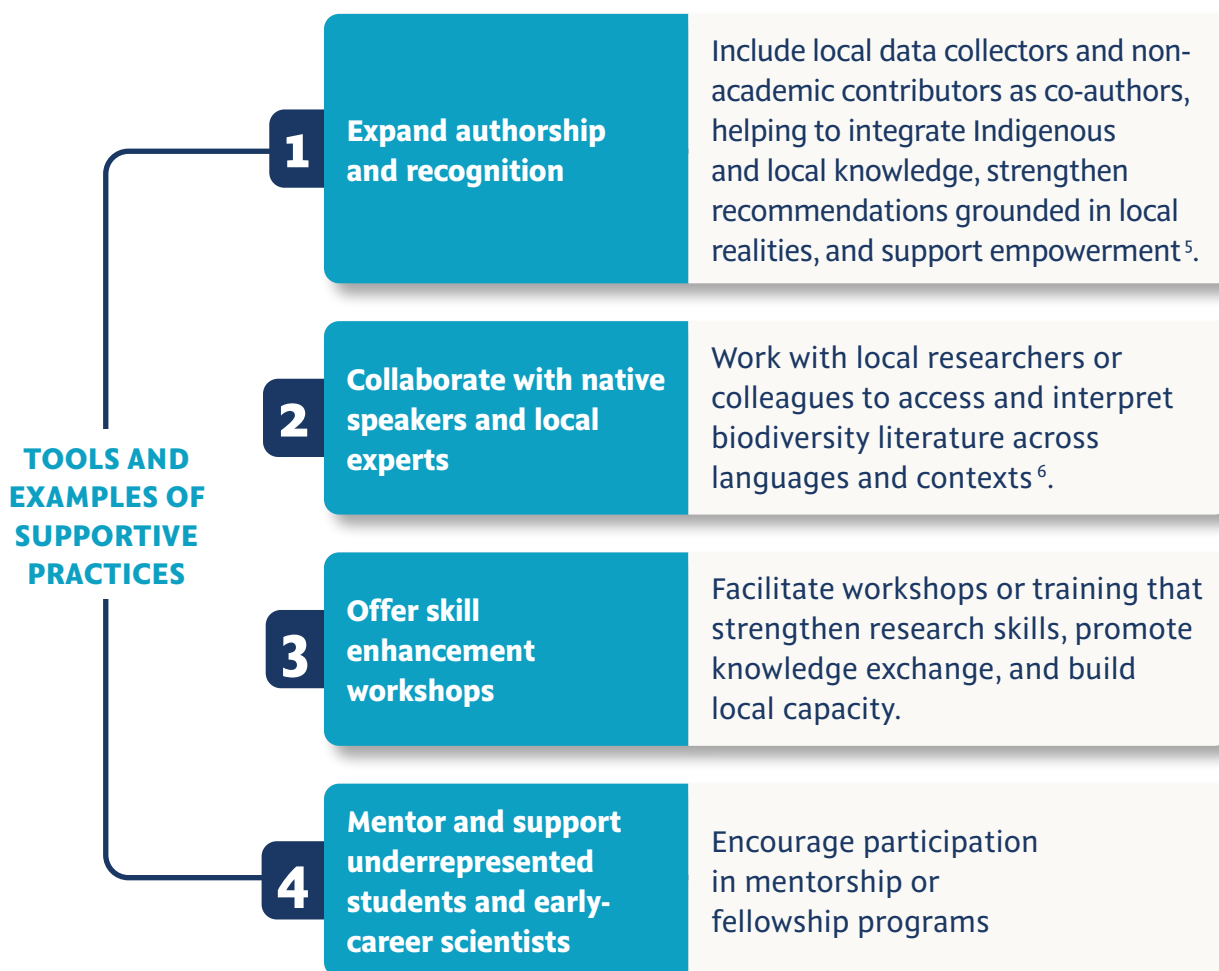


Collaborative research and inclusion of local knowledge

Fostering collaboration with local scientists and institutions can enhance the relevance, quality, and impact of research. Co-designing research and actively seeking existing local studies helps ensure that projects build on ongoing work and respect local priorities and knowledge systems.

Foster collaboration with local researchers, actively seek out ongoing research projects

Conducted by local scientists and institutions and codesign research with local partners to ensure that research questions are relevant, culturally sensitive, and are aligned with community needs



Foster citizen science approaches for research and monitoring⁷

Citizen science initiatives provide opportunities to engage local actors in research, monitoring, and rule compliance. Working alongside ILK (Indigenous and Local Knowledge) holders helps connect scientific methods with local practices, supporting research that is both contextually relevant and inclusive.



Box 2. Photovoice – Engaging local knowledge and gender perspectives in monitoring and research

Key points for researchers and practitioners:

1

Photovoice can uncover local and gendered knowledge that is often invisible in formal research.

2

Discussions around the photographs facilitate collective reflection and inclusive decision-making.

3

The method supports empowerment, visibility, and agency of participants, particularly women and other marginalised groups.

Example 1: Fisheries and aquaculture in gender research

Simmance et al. (2016) adapted Photovoice to explore gender roles in inland fisheries and aquaculture. Community members took photos of daily activities and challenges, which were then discussed collectively. This allowed researchers and communities to better understand how gender shapes work, responsibilities, and access to resources, and helped inform more inclusive management strategies.

Example 2: Participatory monitoring in Timor-Leste

House et al. (2024) used Photovoice with women engaged in small-scale fisheries monitoring. The method highlighted women's experiences, knowledge, and contributions to sustainable fisheries, while providing a space for their voices to be recognised in decision-making processes.

References:

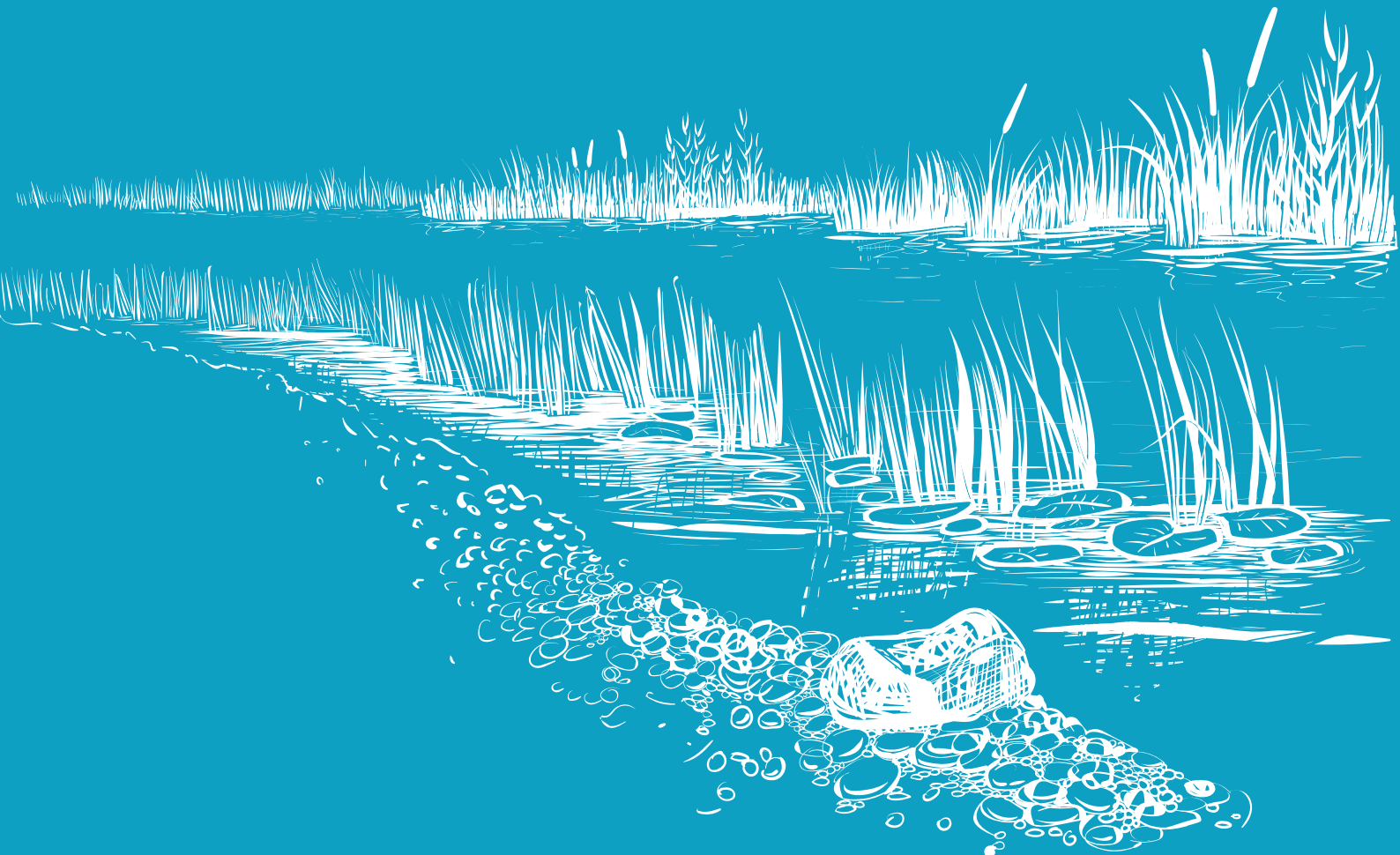
Simmance, Alison, et al. "In the frame: Modifying photovoice for improving understanding of gender in fisheries and aquaculture." *Global Conference on Inland Fisheries, UNFAO. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. 2016.

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- 1 Valdez, Jose, et al. "Strategies for advancing inclusive biodiversity research through equitable practices and collective responsibility." *Conservation Biology* 38.6 (2024): e14325.
- 2 Rinkus, Marisa A., et al. "Gendered considerations for safety in conservation fieldwork." *Society & Natural Resources* 31.12 (2018): 1419-1426.
- 3 Ibid, 2
- 4 Demery, Amelia-Juliette Claire, and Monique Avery Pipkin. "Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions." *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 5.1 (2021): 5-9.
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- 6 Droz, Lažna, Marcela Brugnach, and Unai Pascual. "Multilingualism for pluralising knowledge and decision making about people and nature relationships." *People and Nature* (2023).
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Wetland management

Wetland conservation and restoration along the East Atlantic Flyway aim to safeguard critical ecosystems for migratory birds, enhance biodiversity, and strengthen climate resilience for the communities that depend on these landscapes. Achieving these interconnected goals often involves **engaging with wetlands not only as ecological spaces, but as social–ecological systems** shaped by human practices, knowledge, values, and power relations.



Key themes, guiding questions and tools

Prompts to explore context-specific dynamics on how gender and other social dimensions intersect with wetland management, restoration, and climate resilience activities. They can support practical reflection on enabling inclusive management and on engaging key actors in ways that are relevant and feasible for project implementation.

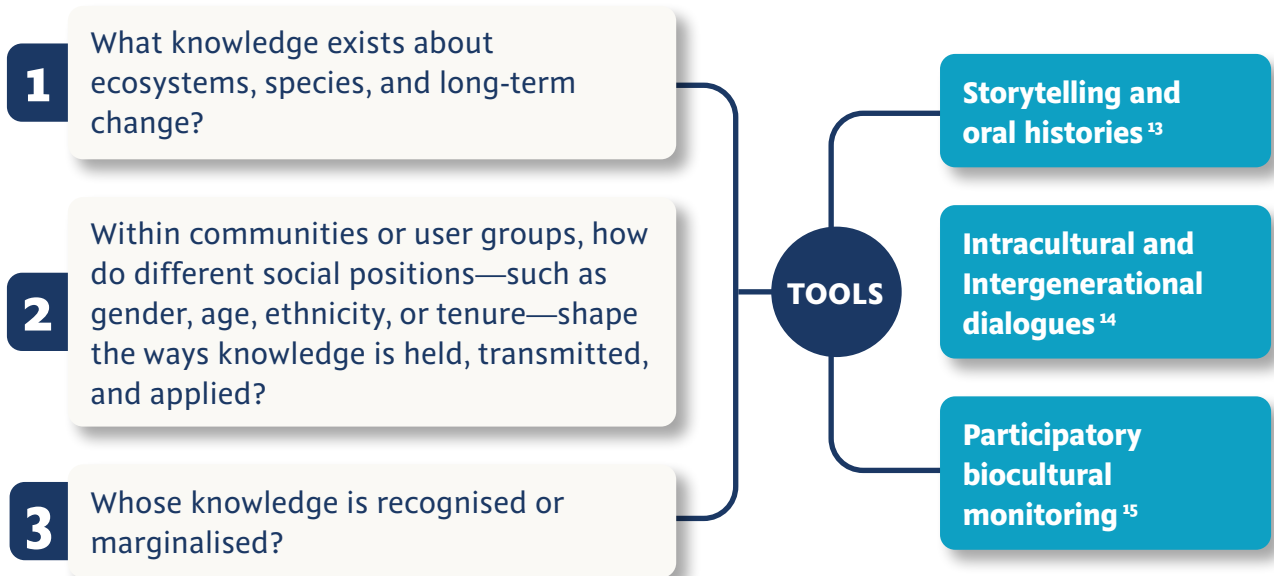
Everyday experiences and climate risks



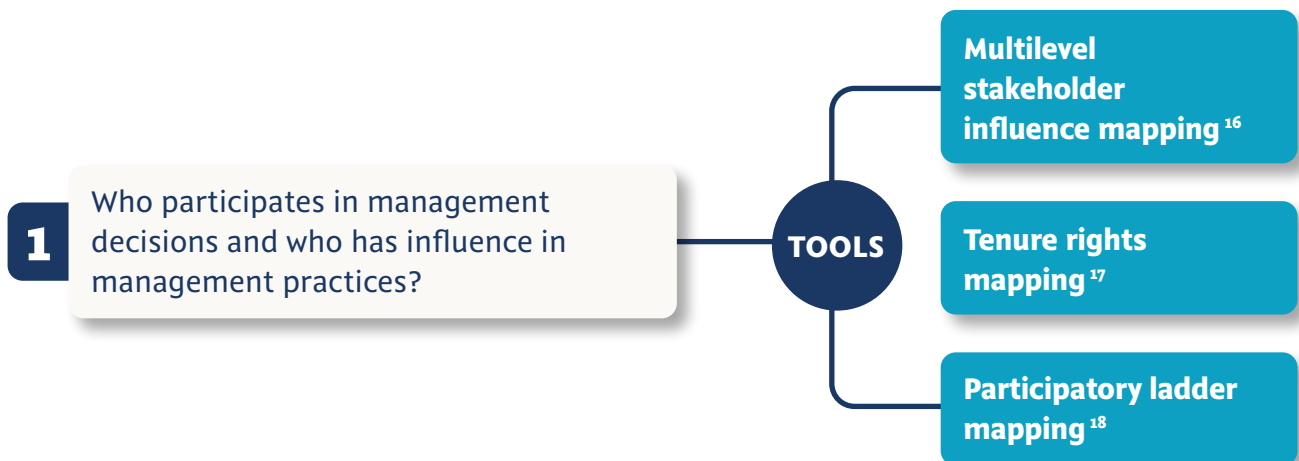
Collective use and management of wetlands



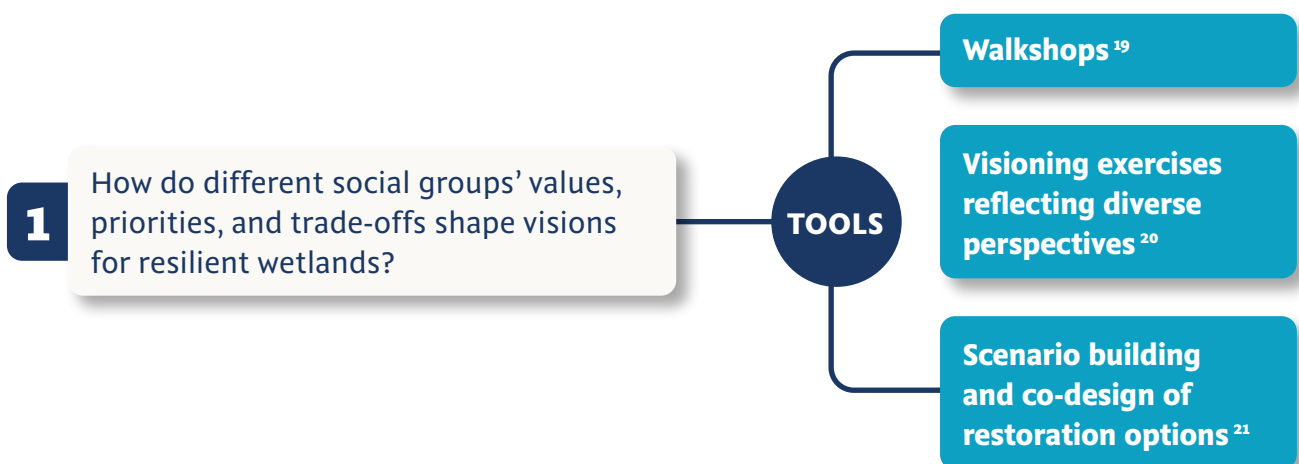
Indigenous and Local Knowledge



Participation and decision-making



Landscape visions and restoration planning



Project assumptions and reflective practice

1

How do project design, positionality, and institutional choices affect outcomes for different groups?

TOOLS

Reflexive learning workshops²²

Box 3. Indigenous-led monitoring and wildlife management in Canada

The **Kaska Land Guardians program** (Dane Nan Yě Dāh Network) demonstrates an **Indigenous-led, socially inclusive approach** to climate adaptation in the Kaska Dena Traditional Territory. Guardians combine **Traditional Knowledge and Western science** to monitor water, wildlife, and ecosystems, engaging elders, youth, and the wider community in fieldwork and education. The program supports **culturally embedded gender-equitable knowledge sharing** and highlights the leadership of Kaska women, strengthening resilience and environmental stewardship across ancestral lands.

Key lessons:

1

Build **strategic partnerships** to amplify impact and share knowledge.

2

Engage communities in **data collection and validation** for trust and relevance.

3

Work with **trusted liaisons** to enhance communication and legitimacy.

4

Ensure **inclusive participation across ages and social groups** for intergenerational learning.

Source: Jang, N., Caswell, C., McIvor, S., & Ball, T. (2025). *Advancing gender-responsive and socially inclusive practices in Nature-based Solutions for adaptation*. International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Tip on Local languages and Indigenous and Local Knowledge

In the Banc d'Arguin, Imraguen people seem to primarily speak Hassaniya Arabic, a local dialect that differs significantly from Standard Arabic. To ensure effective, inclusive, and gender-responsive engagement, it is essential to work with trained translators or facilitators fluent in Hassaniya.

This is particularly important for participatory processes, community consultations, and capacity-building activities, where women and elders may have limited proficiency in Standard Arabic or French. Using Hassaniya supports clearer communication, fosters trust, and enhances the integration of traditional ecological knowledge in wetland and coastal conservation efforts.

- 8 Franquesa-Soler, Montserrat, and M. Azahara Mesa-Jurado. "Photovoice: A Community-Based Research and Communication Tool for Wildlife Conservation and Coexistence." *Linking Arts with Biocultural Conservation, Restoration, and Communication*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2026. 397-415.
- 9 Berbés-Blázquez, Marta. "A participatory assessment of ecosystem services and human wellbeing in rural Costa Rica using photo-voice." *Environmental management* 49.4 (2012): 862-875
- 10 Fernández-Llamazares, Á., & Cabeza, M. (2018). Rediscovering the potential of indigenous storytelling for conservation practice. *Conservation Letters*, 11(3), e12398.
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- 17 Wengerd, Nicole, and Michael P. Gilmore. "A biocultural approach to navigating conservation trade-offs through participatory methods." *Ecology and Society* 27.3 (2022).
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- 20 Yamoah, S. E., & Nyantakyi-Frimpong, H. (2026). Participatory Ladder Mapping as a Research Tool in Intersectional Feminist Political Ecology. *The Professional Geographer*, 1-12.
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- 23 Martin, A., O'Farrell, P., Kumar, R., Eser, U., Faith, D.P., Gomez-Baggethun, E., Harmackova, Z., Horcea-Milcu, A.I., Merçon, J., Quaas, M., Rode, J., Rozzi, R., Sitas, N., Yoshida, Y., Ochieng, T.N., Koessler, A.K., Lutti, N., Mannetti, L., and Arroyo-Robles, G. (2022). Chapter 5: The role of diverse values of nature in visioning and transforming towards just and sustainable futures. In: *Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. Christie, M., Balvanera, P., Pascual, U., Baptiste, B., and González-Jiménez, D. (eds). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6522326>
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- 25 Facilitation tips and methods: <https://www.reimaginary.com/> and <https://www.sessionlab.com/library>

Policy & Governance

Effective governance is crucial for the positive results of conservation projects that aim at the preservation of social-ecological systems²³. Working at the interplay of formal and informal governance systems embedding wetlands and flyway conservation into national policies and regional frameworks but also customary norms and values is key to ensure coordinated, science-based action to protect the East Atlantic Flyway.



Key themes and tools

Promoting equity in conservation measures and policies

Taking into account equity in coastal and marine conservation initiatives, projects and policies means engaging meaningfully the multiple actors that use these areas that sometimes remain hidden under the term “community” and ensures sustainable conservation outcomes. To understand the equity dimensions of marine protected areas, mechanisms like the Ocean equity index²⁴ and the gender self-assessment tool (see Box 4) have been developed to support evidence-based decision making.

Box 4. Gender equity in Marine Protected Areas

Recent research on gender equity in Marine Protected Areas (MPA) proposes a **self-assessment tool** designed to support practitioners, managers, and institutions in reflecting on gender equity across different dimensions of MPA governance, including participation, leadership, decision-making, and benefit-sharing.

While developed specifically for marine protected areas, the self-assessment tool offers insights that may be relevant for wetland conservation and governance initiatives in similar socio-ecological contexts, such as those along the East Atlantic Flyway. Its reflective questions **can help project teams explore how gendered and intersectional dynamics shape governance processes**, and where there may be opportunities to strengthen more inclusive and equitable approaches.

Source: Anariba, S. E. B., Sanders, A., & Canty, S. W. (2025). Promoting gender equity in marine protected areas: A self-assessment tool. *Marine Policy*, 173, 106526.

Building institutional diversity

Resilient governance systems rely on a mix of connected strategies, rules and norms. This helps decision-makers respond more effectively to change, in contrast to one fixed approach or panaceas^{25, 26}. It is important to understand how informal systems like local customs and norms work alongside and interact with, rules and policies²⁷. Tools like biocultural community protocols (see Box 5) can help indigenous and local communities to actively seek recognition and ensure that external actors respect their customary laws, values, and decision-making processes and can also catalyse collaborative dialogue to support the community’s plans and priorities in locally appropriate ways.

Box 5. **Biocultural community protocols**

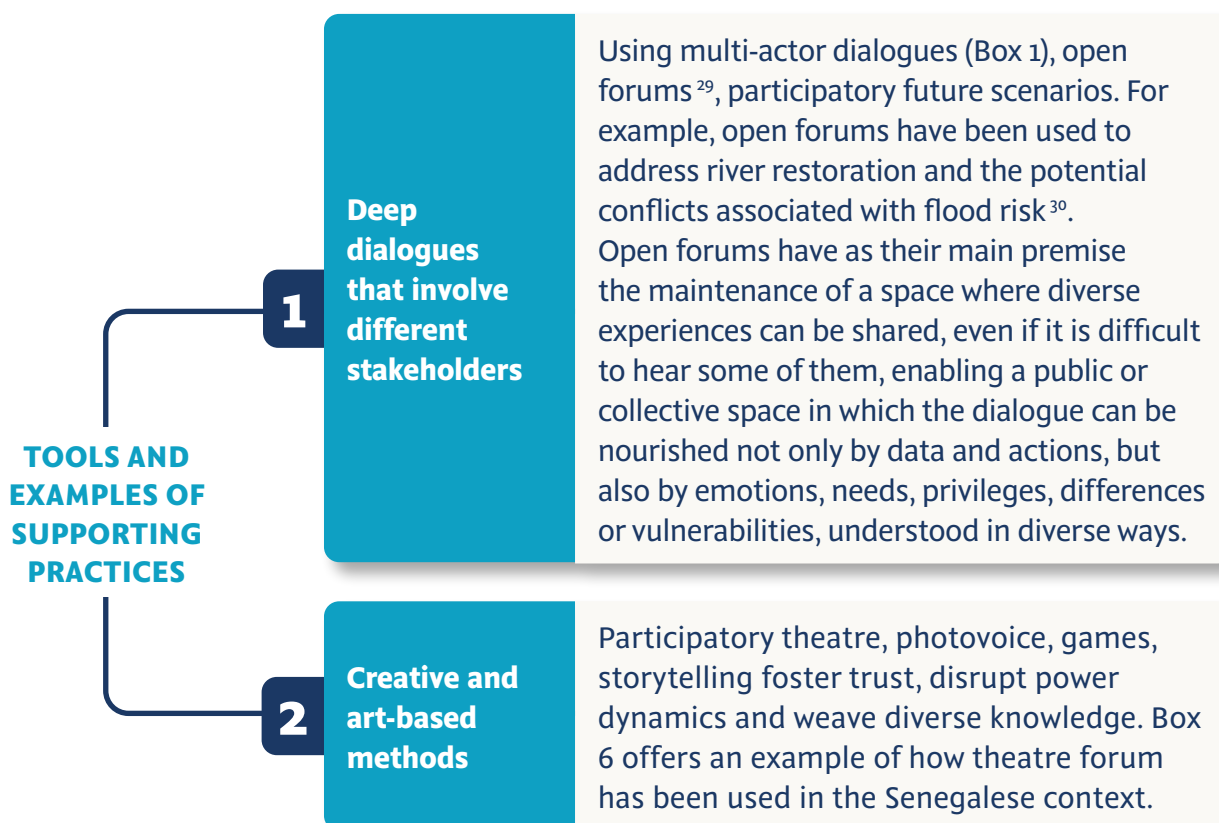
A biocultural community protocol can serve as a platform for asserting rights and affirming responsibilities under customary, national, and international law, particularly in response to opportunities and challenges posed by external actors. It can also contribute to the revitalisation of certain cultural practices or norms that affect their interactions with the environment. The process of developing and using a biocultural community protocol involves collective reflection and deliberation, participatory documentation and communication, legal empowerment, and social mobilisation.

In the core local sites of the CREAM project, customary governance and community tenure, particularly of mangrove ecosystems, have actively contributed to their conservation. However, there have been different pressures like reforestation and conservation policies and there are increasingly external actors and NGOs that have changed these governance systems. Biocultural protocols might help the dialogue between communities and external NGOs to move forward respecting customary norms.

See more info here 

Designing inclusive and responsive policy processes

Participatory policy processes are better able to centre on the lived experiences of diverse stakeholders and enhance the legitimacy of policies for users²⁸.



Box 6. Theatre-forum experiences in Senegal

Theatre-forum is a powerful dialogic and interactive tool that allows the “spect-actors” to intervene on stage and change the course of action.

Senegal hosts a yearly edition of the Senegalese Forum Theater Festival -in 2024 celebrated its 18th edition- and it is coordinated by Mamadou Diol, the director of Kaddu Yaraax. Kaddu Yaraax the “voice of Yarakh” in Wolof is a Senegalese theater-forum group situated in the Yarakh district of the municipality of Hann Bel-Air on the east coast of the Senegalese capital Dakar. It was created in November 1994 to support community mobilisation against the pollution of Hann Bay. With their travelling theatre, the group performs in public spaces, organises training and workshops on forum theatre techniques in urban and rural areas throughout Senegal and abroad. In their public street plays, taboos and unspeakable political and socio-cultural issues are brought up for discussion such as migration, mobility, climate change, food security, gender-based violence and human rights.

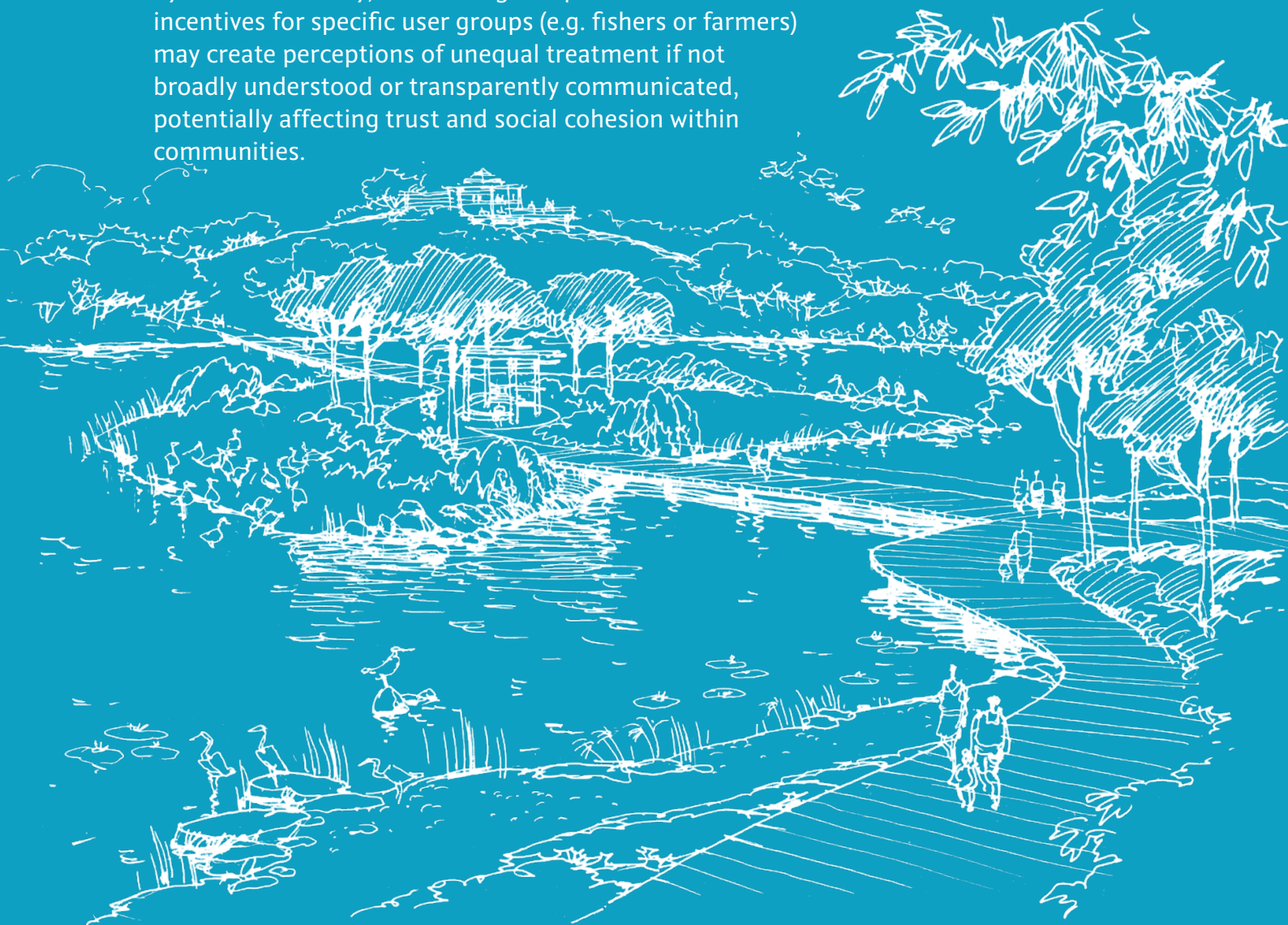
Another theatre company that has been working in Senegal is La Xixa - Creative Social Innovation, a Spanish NGO, that has worked on a project related to female empowerment “Improved empowerment of women and the fight against gender violence in the Ziguinchor region, Senegal”. La Xixa and Kaddu Yaraax together with the Ziguinchor company “Lii Théâtre” created a theatrical reinterpretation of the renowned “Don Quixote of La Mancha”, “Doña Quijota,” to explore the lessons of the classics to confront the adversities of our time, with a direct and intercultural focus on gender equality and European colonialism.

- 23 Ayambire, Raphael A., et al. “Challenges in assessing the effects of environmental governance systems on conservation outcomes.” *Conservation Biology* 39.1 (2025): e14392.
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Livelihoods

A gender-responsive approach to livelihoods can **strengthen people's ability to act, recognise diverse contributions, and build resilience for both communities and ecosystems.** It also helps ensure that conservation benefits are inclusive, adaptive, and lasting. Supporting women, youth, and local monitors in wetlands conservation along the East Atlantic Flyway involves equipping them with **tools, knowledge, and opportunities to lead initiatives, generate resilient income, and influence decisions in ways that prioritise local leadership and culturally grounded solutions.**

At the same time, attention to how different groups experience and respond to these processes can help **identify and navigate emerging tensions.** Targeting livelihood support or benefits exclusively to women may influence existing roles and relationships within households and communities, sometimes leading to increased workloads or shifts in intra-household dynamics. Similarly, introducing compensation or incentives for specific user groups (e.g. fishers or farmers) may create perceptions of unequal treatment if not broadly understood or transparently communicated, potentially affecting trust and social cohesion within communities.



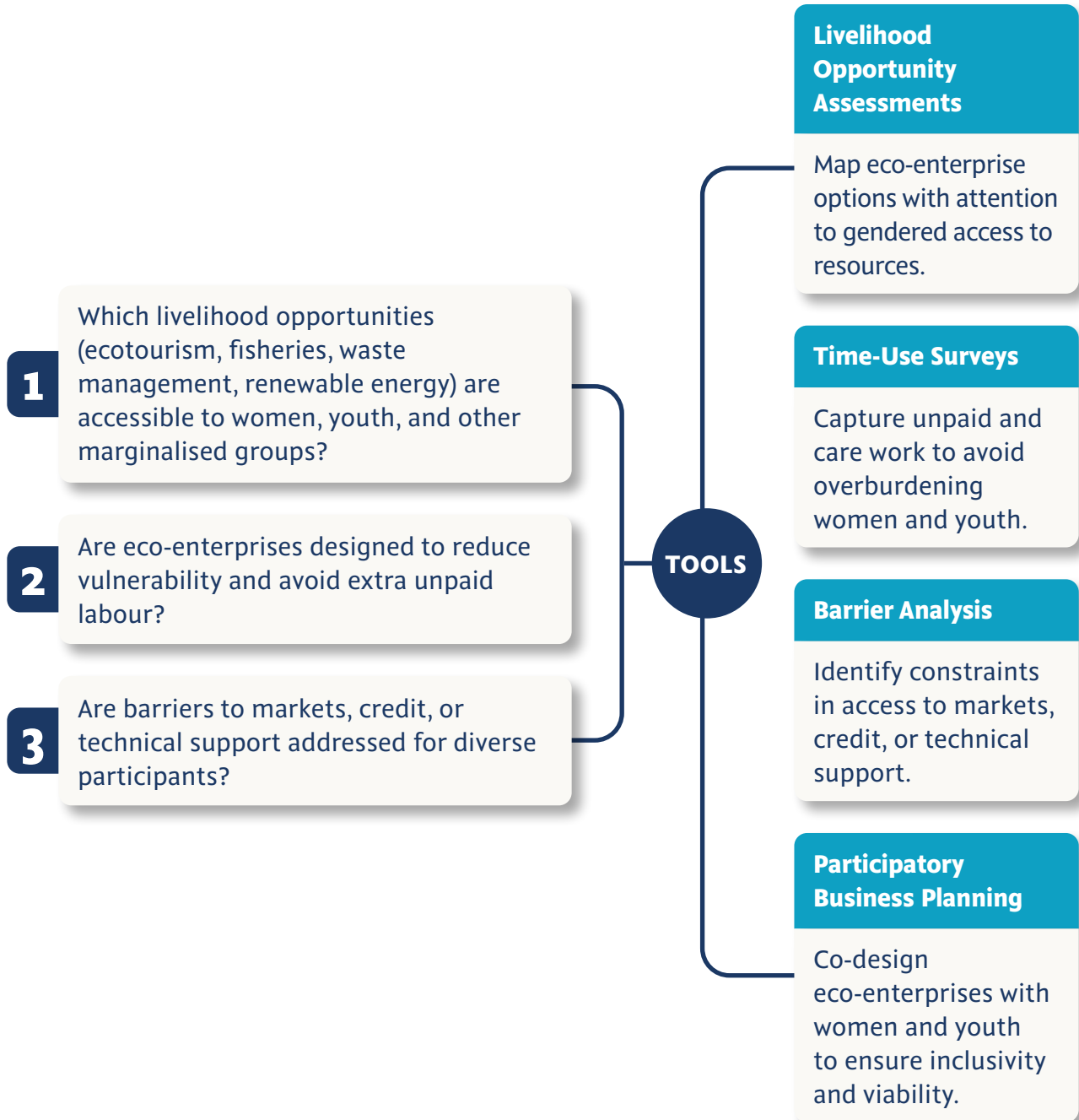
Key reflection themes, guiding questions and tools

Key themes and guiding questions to support the planning and development of activities that advance sustainable livelihoods.

Building capacity: for whom and for what?



Resilient livelihoods



Cooperative training and financial literacy

- 1** Do cooperative programs encourage inclusive participation across gender, age, ethnicity, and class?
- 2** Are women and youth gaining practical skills and agency in resource and income management?
- 3** How is decision-making power distributed within groups and enterprises?

Box 7. Gender-responsive sustainable livelihoods in Zanzibar

An initiative in Zanzibar applied gender equality and social inclusion principles to support **small-scale cooperatives**, actively involving women, youth, and marginalised groups in climate-resilient livelihoods. Using the **Pamoja Voices Climate-Resilience Planning Toolkit** (see Annex 2), participants engaged in participatory planning and income-generating activities.

Key Lessons:**1**

Empower communities to lead and adapt initiatives.

2

Hold separate focus groups to ensure diverse voices are heard.

3

Engage strong local facilitators for trust and cultural understanding.

4

Implement gender-responsive, inclusive MEL systems to strengthen livelihoods and accountability.

Source: Jang, N., Caswell, C., McIvor, S., & Ball, T. (2025). *Advancing gender-responsive and socially inclusive practices in Nature-based Solutions for adaptation*. International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Communication & outreach strategies

Communication is not neutral. The way a project shares knowledge, showcases results, or engages communities can reinforce—or challenge—existing inequalities and stereotypes. A gender-responsive approach aims to ensure that **women, marginalised groups, and diverse knowledge holders are visible, recognised, and able to contribute meaningfully to project activities and decision-making.** Incentives for specific user groups (e.g. fishers or farmers) may create perceptions of unequal treatment if not broadly understood or transparently communicated, potentially affecting trust and social cohesion within communities.



Key principles for intersectional gender-responsive communication

Include diverse voices

- 1 Make sure that women, youth, elders, and marginalised groups are included in messaging, images, and case studies.

Make communication accessible

- 2 Adapt timing, language, and delivery channels to reach different audiences.

Use inclusive language

- 3 Avoid gendered assumptions (e.g., “fishermen” → “fishers”; “expert advice” → “knowledge from diverse sources”; “beneficiaries” → “participants”).

Recognise multiple contributions

- 4 Show how different roles, knowledge systems, and perspectives complement each other in conservation and resilience.

Reflect on power and context

- 5 Question whose knowledge and voices are amplified and adjust communications to be equitable and participatory.

Support co-produced narratives

- 6 Where possible, develop messages, stories, and communication products collaboratively with communities and partners, allowing local actors to shape how their experiences, priorities, and knowledge are represented.

Reflection themes and guiding questions

Use the questions below to reflect on how communications can move beyond inclusion and towards challenging norms.

Reflection Focus	Questions	Examples
<p>Visual Multimedia</p>	<p>1 Who is visible? Who is missing?</p>	<p>Gender-responsive</p> <p>A photo shows women collecting shellfish and youth monitoring birds.</p>
	<p>2 How might images or visuals shape perceptions of who participates in wetland conservation?</p>	<p>Gender-transformative</p> <p>Images show women leading community management, youth organising restoration teams, and men participating in caregiving or monitoring roles, challenging traditional gender norms.</p>
<p>Workshops and Events</p>	<p>1 Who can attend, and what are the barriers?</p>	<p>Gender-responsive</p> <p>Workshop at flexible times, multilingual, childcare provided, diverse participants included.</p>
	<p>2 Are different schedules, languages, or formats influencing participation?</p>	<p>Gender-transformative</p> <p>Workshop actively addresses power dynamics, encourages women and marginalised youth to lead sessions, and discusses community norms to redistribute responsibilities and leadership.</p>
	<p>3 How might social roles, age, or mobility affect engagement?</p>	

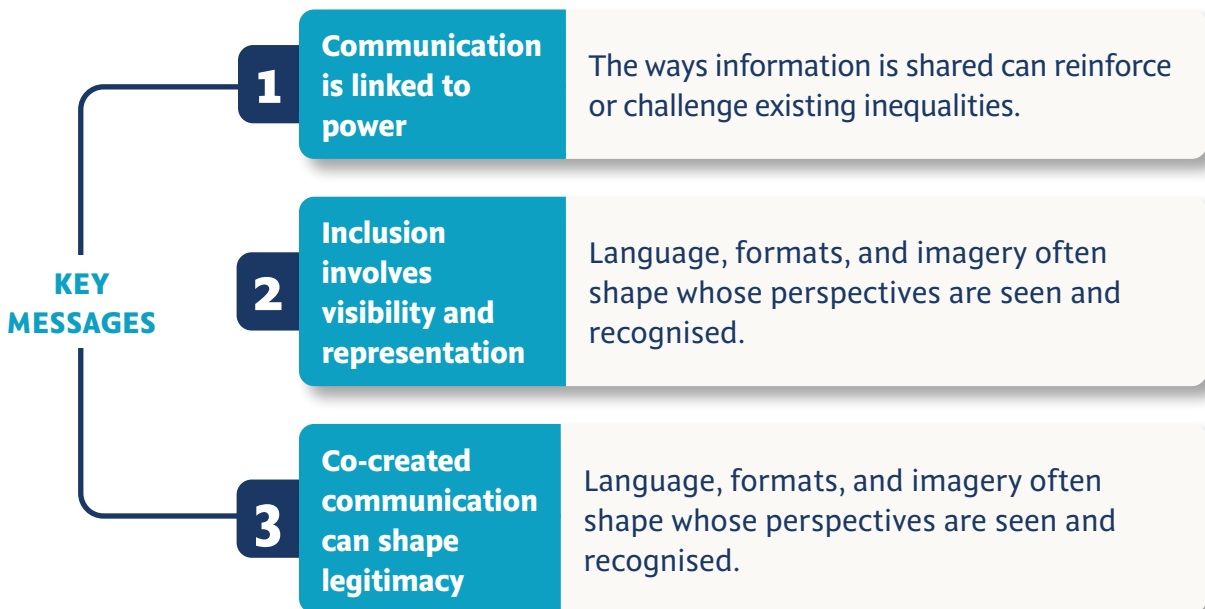
Reflection Focus	Questions	Examples
<p>Reports and Publications</p>	<p>1 Whose voices are highlighted?</p>	<p>Gender-responsive</p> <p>“Community leaders—including women, youth, and ethnic group representatives—contributed...”</p>
	<p>2 Are leadership and decision-making presented as homogenous or diverse?</p>	<p>Gender-transformative</p> <p>Reports highlight how women and youth lead decision-making, challenge traditional authority structures, and co-author findings alongside senior leaders.</p>
	<p>3 How might the framing of contributors affect perceptions of expertise and authority?</p>	

<p>Educational and Outreach Messages</p>	<p>1 Which groups are recognised as contributors to wetland conservation?</p>	<p>Gender-responsive</p> <p>“Wetland conservation is a shared responsibility: women, men, youth, and elders contribute.”</p>
	<p>2 Are stereotypes reinforced or challenged?</p>	<p>Gender-transformative</p> <p>Messages challenge assumptions of who can lead conservation, show men and women sharing leadership, and highlight youth as agents of change influencing norms.</p>
	<p>3 How might intersectional identities (gender, age, ethnicity, livelihood) influence understanding of responsibility and knowledge?</p>	

Reflection Focus	Questions	Examples
<p>Webinars or Online Events</p>	<p>1 Who can access the webinar, and who might face digital or connectivity barriers?</p>	<p>Gender-responsive</p> <p>Multilingual slides, interpreters, breakout rooms, moderated Q&A, timing considers different time zones.</p>
	<p>2 Are materials, language, and facilitation inclusive for all participants?</p>	
	<p>3 Are interactive opportunities designed to allow diverse voices and knowledge to be shared?</p>	<p>Gender-transformative</p> <p>Webinar actively redistributes speaking roles, highlights youth and women leaders, includes discussion on challenging norms in participation, and co-designs follow-up actions with participants to influence future practices.</p>
	<p>4 How might screen visibility, chat moderation, or speaking time favour certain groups?</p>	
	<p>5 Does the webinar timing consider different time zones of participants?</p>	

Checklist

- Check for inclusive representation in all outreach materials.
- Ensure equitable participation in events and training, considering gender, age, livelihood, and mobility.
- Reflect on language, imagery, and narratives: are they inclusive or reinforcing stereotypes?
- Document who is visible or absent in leadership and outreach activities.
- Include community feedback to adapt communication strategies over time.



Data, indicators, monitoring & learning

This section encourages partners to use data and indicators to understand how project activities contribute to climate resilience and biodiversity outcomes, and how these effects are experienced by different groups, including across gender and other intersecting social dimensions. The emphasis is on **using MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) as a tool to inform adaptive management throughout implementation and more inclusive project practice.**



Box 8. FPIC: Consent before collecting data

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is a governance principle that supports the ethical use and protection of Indigenous and local knowledge in monitoring, evaluation, and learning. FPIC ensures that communities have the right to consultation and can give or withhold consent **before any data or knowledge is collected**, as enshrined in the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** and the **Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169** (FAO 2016). FPIC can help teams align with gender-responsive and intersectional MEL approaches while respecting local and Indigenous governance systems.

Key principles for inclusive and equitable data practices

Data Feminism³¹ provides a framework for thinking about data collection, analysis, and use in ways that centre equity, inclusion, and power dynamics. Its principles are particularly relevant when working with Indigenous knowledge, local communities, and gendered data in conservation projects.

Examine power

- 1** ▶ Recognise how data practices reinforce or challenge existing inequalities (gender, age, ethnicity, class, colonial histories).
▶ Ask: Who controls the data? Who benefits from it? Who is left out?

Challenge hierarchical knowledge systems

- 2** ▶ Value multiple forms of knowledge (scientific, local, Indigenous).
▶ Avoid ranking knowledge systems; use them complementarily.

Elevate emotion and embodiment

- 3** ▶ Understand that lived experience, emotion, and context matter in data collection and interpretation.
▶ Include perspectives often overlooked in technical datasets.

Rethink binaries and categories

- 4**
 - ▶ Be critical of categories that oversimplify identities (male/female, user/non-user) or social realities.
 - ▶ Design data collection to capture diversity and intersectional experiences.

Make labour visible

- 5**
 - ▶ Recognise who produces, cleans, curates, and interprets data; much of this work is often unpaid or marginalised.
 - ▶ Ensure that community contributions are acknowledged and rewarded.

Examine context

- 6**
 - ▶ Situate data within social, cultural, and ecological realities.
 - ▶ Avoid assuming universal applicability of datasets or algorithms.

Think intersectionally

- 7**
 - ▶ Analyse how multiple axes of inequality interact in shaping access to resources, participation in governance, and exposure to risks. Use this lens to inform monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management.

Challenge power in design

- 8**
 - ▶ Co-design data systems with communities.
 - ▶ Make decisions about what data to collect, how to use it, and who can access it collaboratively.

Why it matters for wetland conservation and MEL

Applying Data Feminism principles helps ensure that MEL systems are inclusive, equitable, and context-sensitive, supporting gender-responsive governance, Indigenous and local knowledge recognition, and more just outcomes for communities along the East Atlantic Flyway.

Box 9. Lessons from gender-inclusive data systems in small-scale fisheries

A study on gender-inclusive data systems in small-scale fisheries provides useful insights for wetlands conservation and climate change adaptation along the East Atlantic Flyway. It shows that conventional monitoring often overlooks women's roles as it tends to focus on formal activities and production data.

Practical recommendations for wetlands conservation

- ▶ Collect gender-disaggregated data across livelihoods, governance, and well-being
- ▶ Capture informal and seasonal wetland uses, not only formal roles
- ▶ Include time-use and care work to understand hidden contributions and constraints
- ▶ Track decision-making power and leadership, not just participation
- ▶ Combine ecological monitoring with social indicators (income control, food security, safety)
- ▶ Co-design data systems with local stakeholders to reduce bias and improve relevance

Source: Harper, Sarah J., et al. "Designing gender-inclusive data systems in small-scale fisheries." *Ambio* 55.2 (2026): 245-259.

Tip on data justice and sovereignty

When designing MEL systems, consider not only how data is collected and shared, but also **who controls them and who benefits**. Combining FAIR data principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) with the CARE Principles (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics) can help ensure that Indigenous and local knowledge is used in ways that support learning, equity, and self-determination, rather than extractive reporting.

See more info here 

Making indicators gender-responsive/transformative

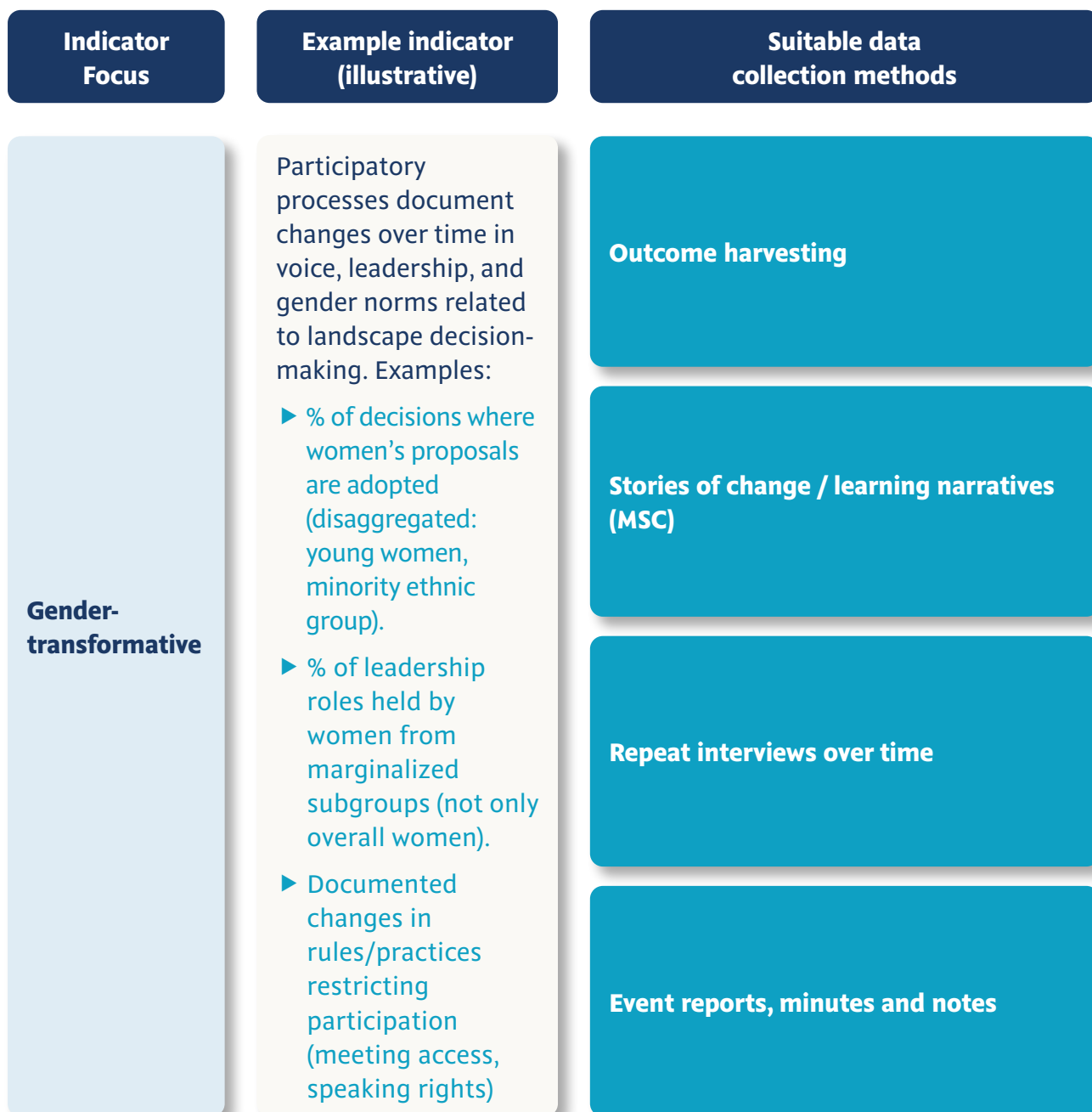
Many existing project indicators **focus on counting women’s participation or targeting women as a specific group**. While this can provide useful baseline information, it may not fully capture how gender relations, power dynamics, and intersecting factors shape access, participation, and conservation outcomes. This subsection offers reflections and practical options for revisiting selected indicators, where relevant, to explore ways of making them more gender-responsive, intersectional, or, in some cases, gender-transformative. The aim is not to replace existing indicators, but to support learning-oriented adjustments that can help better understand change processes within the project context.

Indicator Focus	Example indicator (illustrative)	Suitable data collection methods
<p>Women-focused (baseline)</p>	<p>% of participants in workshops and trainings on landscape visions who are women</p>	<p>Attendance lists disaggregated by gender</p> <p>Registration forms</p>
<p>Gender-responsive</p>	<p>Participation in workshops is monitored by gender and other relevant characteristics, alongside reflections on access, roles, and perceived influence</p>	<p>Disaggregated attendance data (gender, age, livelihood)</p> <p>Short participant feedback forms</p> <p>Facilitator observation notes</p> <p>Focus group discussions</p>



Evolving indicators: examples and data collection methods

Examples of **how participation indicators** can evolve toward gender-responsive and transformative learning.



Examples of how **gender equality engagement indicators** can evolve toward gender-responsive and transformative learning.

Indicator Focus	Example indicator (illustrative)	Suitable data collection methods
<p>Activity-focused (baseline)</p>	<p>Number of engagement events where gender equality is mentioned or addressed as an issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event reports Agendas and minutes Activity tracking sheets
<p>Gender-responsive (engagement quality)</p>	<p>Engagement events document how gender equality is discussed, by whom, and in what roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event reflection templates Disaggregated participant lists Facilitator observation notes Short post-event feedback forms
<p>Gender-responsive (partnerships)</p>	<p>Collaboration with local gender-focused CBOs/NGOs is tracked in terms of roles, influence, and continuity over time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership mapping Stakeholder interviews MoUs / collaboration records Learning logs/MSD

Indicator Focus	Example indicator (illustrative)	Suitable data collection methods
Gender-transformative	<p>Project activities document changes in how local actors engage with gender equality, including shifts in narratives, alliances, or power relations. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ % of engagement events where gender-related inputs lead to changes in management decisions. 	<p>Outcome harvesting</p> <p>Stories of change (MSC)</p> <p>Network mapping over time</p> <p>Participatory reflection workshops</p>

How indicators can evolve in practice

In practice, indicators can gradually evolve **from measuring participation and activities to capturing quality, influence, and change**. This often involves moving beyond simple counts (e.g., number of events, participants, or organisations) toward **understanding who participates, how, and with what effects**.

Indicators may shift:

- 1 From **what happened** to **how it happened and for whom**.
- 2 From **one-off engagement** to **continuity, relationships, and learning over time**.
- 3 From **visibility of gender equality as a topic** to **changes in roles, narratives, and decision-making processes**.

This evolution does not require replacing existing indicators, but can build on them by:

- 1** Complementing quantitative data with **qualitative insights**.
- 2** Using **reflection-based and participatory methods** to capture change.
- 3** Allowing space for **context-specific interpretation** and adaptive learning.

Such an approach supports gender-responsive—and potentially gender-transformative—monitoring by recognising that meaningful change often emerges gradually and unevenly, and is best understood through multiple forms of evidence rather than single metrics.

Tip on evolving indicators through learning

Indicators can be treated as **living tools for learning**. Beyond counting activities or participants, they can be progressively enriched to explore **who benefits, how change happens, and under what conditions**. Combining quantitative data with qualitative insights, reflection moments, and stakeholder perspectives allows projects to interpret results in context and adjust course over time—supporting adaptive management and pathways toward gender-responsive and transformative conservation outcomes.

Tools for strengthening participatory and localised learning

Outcome harvesting

Outcome Harvesting helps make visible who influences conservation decisions, how inclusive governance evolves, and how local and Indigenous knowledge moves across scales. Combined with quantitative data, qualitative methods allow MEL systems to capture changes in power, participation, and agency that numbers alone may miss. See Annex 4.

Most significant change

The Most Significant Change (MSC) method is a participatory evaluation approach that gathers stories from participants to understand what impacts matter most and why. Using qualitative narratives and collective reflection, it captures meaningful and sometimes unexpected outcomes. By collecting stories from diverse participants, MSC can reveal gendered experiences and hidden impacts that quantitative indicators often miss. This makes MSC particularly valuable for gender-responsive and gender-transformative conservation approaches, as it helps surface shifts in agency, inclusion, and social norms. See Annex 4.

31 D'ignazio, Catherine, and Lauren F. Klein. *Data feminism*. MIT press, 2023.

Annexes

Annex 1. Resources on gender-responsive wetland management and restoration

- 1. Gender Equality and the Sustainability of the World's Wetlands**
https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Gender_factsheet_e.pdf
- 2. Wetlands, Gender Equality & Climate Change - A Podcast with Martha Rojas of the Ramsar Convention**
<https://genderchampions.com/news/wetlands-gender-equality-climate-change-a-podcast-with-martha-rojas-of-the-ramsar-convention>
- 3. Women4Biodiversity gender and restoration reports**
<https://women4biodiversity.org/gender-restoration/reports/>
- 4. Restore Her Rights gender responsive approaches to ecosystem restoration: global summary**
https://women4biodiversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Executive-Summary_compressed.pdf

Annex 2. Resources on inclusive and gender-transformative livelihoods

- 1. Inclusive climate-resilient planning for cooperatives: a toolkit**
<https://www.iied.org/10205iied>
- 2. Inclusive climate-resilient planning for rural communities: a toolkit**
<https://www.iied.org/10204iied>
- 3. Gender transformative approach to livelihoods: toolkit**
<https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2024-en-gender-toolkit-for-livelihoods-ERADA.pdf>

Annex 3. Resources on gender-responsive communication

- 1. 10 Principles for gender-responsive communication, UNDP**
https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-12/10_principles_of_gender-responsive_communications.pdf

2. **Guideline for Gender-responsive media, Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority**
<https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Africa/Attachments/Publications/2020/Gender%20and%20Media%20Guideline%20-%20English.pdf>
3. **A gender-responsive communication guide, UNDP**
<https://bluesyemre.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/a-gender-responsive-communication-guide.pdf>
4. **On nonviolent communication in conservation science.**
<https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/csp2.540>

Annex 4. Resources on gender-responsive and gender-transformative indicators and MEL

1. **Learning Brief Outcome harvesting**
<https://globaltfokus.dk/images/Kapacitetsudvikling/Laeringsprodukter/Learning%20Brief%20Feminist%20MEL.pdf>
2. **Most Significant Change (MSC)**
<https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/methods/evaluation-methods/most-significant-change>
3. **Examples of feminist principles in MEL - including most significant change example**
<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/server/api/core/bitstreams/777c29a1-c49d-4cf8-9aed-19df9b786f24/content>
4. **Gender-responsive indicators, UNDP**
https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/iki-media/publication/gender-responsive_indicators_gender_and_ndc_planning_for_implementation/
5. **Guidelines for measuring gender transformative change in the context of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture**
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/o8dccbe0-4bfo-4bc5-bd96-94410b2eafc2>
6. **Examples of indicators and tools for reflection in gender transformative approaches**
<https://www.fauna-flora.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Fauna-Flora-Guidance-on-Gender-Transformative-Approaches-September-2025-C.pdf>
7. **MEL approaches, methods and tools to support locally-led adaptation, World Resources**
<https://publications.wri.org/reshaping-locally-led-adaptation/mel-approaches-methods-and-tools-to-support-lla>
8. **Gender, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Oxfam and Routledge**
<https://www.genderanddevelopment.org/issues/22-2-mel/resources-gender-mel/>

