

**Mainstreaming Social/Gender Analysis in the Sustainable  
Use of Biodiversity Program Initiative**

**Mid-Term Evaluation**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBDC	Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program
DDS	Deccan Development Society
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resource Management
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
NDSDB	Non-Domesticated and Semi-Domesticated Biodiversity
NRM	Natural Resource Management
MBR	Mayan Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala)
OPM	Open Program Meeting (IDRC)
PAD	Project Approval Document
PI	Program Initiative
PO	Program Officer
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding
PRAS	Performance Review and Appraisal System
PVS	Participatory Varietal Selection
SA/GA	Social Analysis/Gender Analysis
SANFEC	South Asia Network for Food, Ecology, and Culture
SUB	Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

## **Mainstreaming Social/Gender Analysis in the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Program Initiative: Mid-Term Evaluation**

### **1. Introduction**

The Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (SUB) Program Initiative (PI) has recognized the importance of gender and other social issues to the equitable and sustainable use and management of biodiversity and has made a commitment to mainstream social analysis/gender analysis (SA/GA) in SUB-supported research. As a formative or learning evaluation, this exercise sought to review and analyze the approach used by SUB to mainstream gender and social issues and analyses into the work it supports through a review of selected SUB-supported projects and engagement with SUB team members to explore their experiences with, and suggestions for strengthening, the mainstreaming process. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. provide a overview of where the SUB program and SUB-supported projects are to date in the mainstreaming process;
2. identify salient gaps and/or obstacles in the mainstreaming process; and
3. propose a way forward by suggesting potential mid-course corrections to better ensure the program is well positioned to meet its progress markers by 2004.

The report is organized into six sections. The next section provides an introduction to SUB's gender mainstreaming strategy and approach at the program level. Section three outlines the process used to design the evaluation framework, the methodology used to implement the evaluation, and the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation approach. Section four provides an overview of the key findings of the evaluation and is divided into three sub-sections. Sub-section one explores issues of awareness raising and capacity building among SUB program staff - a necessary precursor for mainstreaming SA/GA at the project level. In sub-section two, the ways in which SUB Program Officers engage with partners to build gender and other social issues into SUB-supported research are examined. This sub-section draws on the diverse experiences of SUB staff in their approach with research partners and the strategies developed to engage partners in SA/GA in different project contexts. In highlighting the diverse experiences of POs, this section emphasizes that the approach used to engage partners is context-specific (and context-sensitive) and is shaped by a variety of political, cultural and institutional factors. Sub-section three explores what most team members identify as the single greatest challenge to SUB's mainstreaming approach - building the capacity of partners in SA/GA. This section highlights the main areas in which the capacity of partners requires strengthening and provides suggestions for improving SUB's approach to building capacity in a Southern-driven, culturally appropriate, and sustainable way. Section five offers several concrete recommendations, drawn from discussions with SUB team members, to strengthen SUB's mainstreaming approach to better ensure that the program

meets the objectives it has established for itself and the final section provides some concluding remarks from the evaluator.

## **2. Background: Gender Mainstreaming in the SUB Program**

Since 1997, the SUB program has emphasized the importance of gender and other social issues to research looking to support the equitable and sustainable use of biodiversity. In the 1997-1999 Prospectus, “gender analysis”, “local and indigenous knowledge”, and “informing policies with local perspectives and approaches” were identified as a crosscutting issues and programming principles for the SUB PI. During this period, all projects developed in the agro/aquatic biodiversity and medicinal plants and natural products research areas were expected to address at least one of the three crosscutting issues of the Program.

One of the first concrete steps taken by SUB to mainstream gender during this period involved the development of *Guidelines to Integrating Gender Analysis in Biodiversity Research* as a tool for partners and program staff to better ensure that SA/GA is incorporated into biodiversity research supported by SUB.

For the 2000-2004 programming cycle, the SUB program is working more systematically to mainstream gender at the program and project levels. Since the outset of this strategy, SUB has recognized that “mainstreaming” means different things for different people and should be viewed as a complex long-term process and that, given differences in the background, interests, and priorities of program staff and partners, no one single approach (training, guidelines, etc.) is feasible or desirable (Arnott 2000). In February 2000, using a team-based Outcome Mapping exercise, SUB began the process of developing a performance framework to monitor the mainstreaming process and evaluate its success. As a team, program staff developed a mainstreaming mission statement (to respond to the question: what would a perfectly mainstreamed program initiative look like in 3-5 years?):

*SUB has a clear, group consensus on what constitutes gender mainstreaming and a well-developed performance framework to measure its success. The SUB team has the capacity to integrate gender as a concept into all aspects of the research design, including the formulation of project ideas and goals, and the design and implementation of new skills, techniques and technologies. The capacity building needs of the research team to address gender issues are regularly assessed and researchers are provided with easy access to training workshops, relevant resources, networking opportunities and ongoing and timely support from SUB. The SUB team, in conjunction with its research partners, have developed a cadre of well-documented and tested research methodologies which are specifically relevant to biodiversity research, and are provided regular fora in which to explore and share these methodologies and research results. The team leader regularly analyses the progress of the mainstreaming efforts and provides regular feedback to the team. As a whole, the team reflects on their gender mainstreaming efforts, drawing lessons learned. This reflection is used to identify new priorities and potential partners, and to influence the larger research community, policy makers and donors” (Arnott 2000).*

The performance framework developed includes a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in SUB (See Appendix 1). The framework is broken down into a set of progress markers the Program would use to monitor the mainstreaming process and evaluate success. The five progress markers identified by the team included:

1. Program Officers who systematically reflect on and evaluate the social/gender implications of the work they support, integrate this reflections and share it with the team;
2. PI staff working in a fully gender friendly environment within IDRC;
3. PI staff working in a fully gender friendly environment within SUB;
4. Program Officers engaging with researchers in social/gender analysis;
5. PI staff linking researchers to the resources they need to complete their capacity for gender analysis.

SUB's first monitoring and evaluation exercise, held in January 2001, involved a series of interviews with SUB PI staff. Questions put to program staff were based on the progress markers (and their indicators) outlined in the performance framework. The mid-term evaluation constitutes the next stage in the monitoring and evaluation process.

More recently, as part of a program level exercise to highlight priority areas of work/concentration within the current prospectus and to draw out and build on synergies among the current and future projects of the PI, the program is in the process of developing a set of "Areas of Emphasis", of which one includes Building Capacity in Social/Gender Analysis. The areas of emphasis are meant to assist the program by providing criteria for project selection and organizing the development of a coherent set of outputs in a specific research area. The major thrusts of the Building Capacity in Social/Gender Analysis area of emphasis include developing innovative approaches to strengthening the capacity of partners and program staff and supporting the development of a new research theme on interrelationships between gender, biodiversity and tenure. The need for social and gender analysis to be integrated into all areas of emphasis has been expressed by several member of the SUB team.

The SUB program recognizes that the mainstreaming of a new set of ideas and approaches into a program or institution is often a slow, complex process. It has approached gender mainstreaming in a flexible, iterative manner in order to ensure that the different backgrounds, interests and priorities of program staff and partners are respected. Most importantly, mainstreaming is treated as a learning process. As such, this evaluation looks to examine SUB's mainstreaming initiative as a process – a process of raising the awareness, sensitivity and capacity of program staff in gender and other social issues and the experiences and innovative strategies of program staff to respond to and engage with partners in order to better ensure that gender and other social issues are integrated into SUB-supported biodiversity research.

### **3. Methodology**

In order to review and document SUB's progress in mainstreaming gender and social analysis into its programming, the evaluation sought to examine a selection of recent SUB-supported projects to assess the extent and ways in which gender and other social issues and approaches are being effectively integrated into research and to engage with Program staff to explore their experiences with and recommendations to strengthen SUB's mainstreaming approach.

To ensure that the evaluation was participatory and addressed the individual and collective needs and interests of PI staff, a meeting was organized between the evaluator and PI staff in the Ottawa office to develop the approach and focus the evaluation would take. The SUB team in Ottawa felt that the evaluation should first and foremost be formative in orientation (i.e. a learning evaluation through which recommendations are produced and are fed back into the mainstreaming process to strengthen SUB's approach) and should be organized around one or more of the mainstreaming progress markers as outlined in SUB's Gender Mainstreaming Performance Framework (Arnott, 2000). Based on this suggestion, a memo was circulated to all program staff in Ottawa and in the regional offices to solicit their input on the progress markers that staff members prioritized for the purposes of the mid-term evaluation. Six out of twelve SUB staff responded to the request. Program staff felt the following three progress markers deserved particular attention in the context of the mid-term evaluation:

1. Program staff who systematically reflect on and evaluate the gender/social implications of the work they support, integrate this reflection and share it with the team (3 votes);
2. Program Officers engaging with researchers in social/gender analysis (3 votes);
3. Program Initiative staff linking researchers to the resources they need to complete their capacity for gender analysis (2 votes).

Rather than assuming a tic-box evaluation approach (e.g. women involved in the research - tic, women on the research team - tic ...), this exercise looked to examine the mainstreaming approach by exploring the experiences of program staff and SUB-supported projects in relation to the three progress markers mentioned above. To achieve this, the evaluation included a review of selected SUB projects and program documentation and interviews with all SUB program staff. The process of each will be described in turn.

#### 3.1 Document Review

The evaluation began with a review of SUB program documentation including the Program's Prospectus for the periods of 1997-2000 and 2001-2004, SUB's Program Strategy and Workplan for the period 2000-2004, reports from strategic planning and other SUB team meetings, the Report of the External Review of the SUB PI for the period of 1997-2000, the review of SUB's research on agrobiodiversity, the review of

SUB's use of local and indigenous knowledge in selected projects, several concept papers drafted by partner organizations and concept papers commissioned by SUB, as well as selected documentation from IDRC's Gender Unit (GU) (see Appendix 2 for a list of all program documents reviewed). The purpose of this portion of the review was to explore any and all background information related to SUB's Gender Mainstreaming Initiative and its broader relation to the focus and activities of the SUB program, the GU and IDRC's Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM) Program Area (in which SUB is organizationally located).

The second part of the document review involved the selection and review of ten SUB-supported projects. The ten projects were selected in consultation with SUB's Research Officer (previous SUB intern working on gender mainstreaming) who has taken a leading role in the design and implementation of the program's mainstreaming efforts to date. The criteria for project selection included representation by year (1997-2001), region, SUB research area (medicinal plants, agrobiodiversity, policy) and responsible Program Officer (See Appendix 3 for a list of projects reviewed). Where useful and relevant, the report highlights specific examples from the projects reviewed to support and reinforce particular issues.

For each project reviewed several sources of information were examined. Proposals and Proposal Appraisals were reviewed to assess the extent to which gender and other relevant social concepts and analyses were integrated into a given project proposal in an effective and meaningful way. Project interim and/or final technical reports were reviewed to examine how projects are conceptualizing the relationships between gender and biodiversity, the process by which projects look to integrate SA/GA into their research, the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used by projects, and the areas in which project teams require further support from SUB. Correspondence between SUB staff and research partners and PO trip reports were reviewed to determine the extent and ways in which SUB POs and other staff are engaging with partners to strengthen the gender and broader social science components (conceptual, methodological and analytical) of the research supported.

### 3.2 Interviews with SUB Program Officers

Interviews were organized with all SUB Program Officers during the Open Program Meeting (OPM) held at IDRC in Ottawa in June 2002 as this afforded a unique opportunity to engage with POs from the regional offices in person. The interviews were semi-structured and flexible in format to allow POs to discuss those issues that they felt most relevant to their work. The interviews with POs served in part as a vehicle to discuss the ten projects reviewed in more detail than the project documentation tended to offer. However the main function of the interviews was to provide POs with an opportunity to share their experiences and insights related to the gender mainstreaming process and offer recommendations to strengthen this process in order to improve their ability to engage with partners in social and gender analysis in a more effective, efficient, and meaningful way.

### 3.3 Limitations of the Methodology

Project files were found to be an imperfect tool for analyzing the process of mainstreaming gender and social analysis in SUB-supported research. In many cases, project files are incomplete. In particular, documentation of correspondence among SUB staff and between POs and project partners is inconsistent and fails to capture dialogue related to the design and implementation of social and gender analysis at the project level. According to program staff this is due in part to inconsistent documentation and filing of these materials. Moreover, in some cases, interactions with partners (e.g. phone calls) are not and cannot be captured in project documentation. However in some cases limited correspondence in project files reflects more a lack of actual correspondence between SUB staff and their partners. Without such documented exchange an exploration of the extent and ways in which SUB is engaging with its partners in SA/GA, and the extent to which SUB is having an impact in mainstreaming gender and other social issues and approaches at the project level is severely undermined. As will be discussed later in this report, there is a need for more rigorous and consistent documentation of such exchanges between SUB POs and partners.

A meaningful examination of SUB-supported projects was also limited by the documentation or reporting styles of partners. Most interim and final technical reports reviewed did not discuss the research process in detail and did not elaborate sufficiently on the gender or social analysis approach used by research teams. Indeed, a description of what constituted SA/GA in a particular research context was often vague or missing altogether rendering an analysis of project experiences with integrating SA/GA into research a challenge.

Given the limited information that could be extracted and used from projects files for the purposes of this evaluation, direct consultation with partners (preferably in the field) would make a valuable contribution to an analysis of the gender mainstreaming process in SUB. While there was insufficient time to conduct such field visits at the time the evaluation was conducted, consultation with partners is being planned for during the second phase of the Mid-term Evaluation to commence in September 2002. During the initial consultation with SUB staff at the beginning of the evaluation process, it was suggested that the consultation with partners be conducted by, or in collaboration with, the POs responsible for the projects under review. During interviews with the SUB team, several POs expressed interest in such an exercise provided that a list of guiding questions could be provided to them to be used as discussion points with partners. This would provide an opportunity for valuable exchange between POs and partners regarding the progress of gender mainstreaming at the project level and give partners an active voice in the evaluation process.

The remainder of this report explores the findings from the first phase of the mid-term evaluation and provides recommendations to strengthen the mainstreaming process from this point forward.

#### **4. Experiences and Insights from the Mainstreaming Process: Findings from the Evaluation**

This section explores the key findings from the document review and interviews with SUB team members. The discussion is loosely organized around the three mainstreaming progress markers on which this evaluation was focused.

##### 4.1 Raising Awareness, Sensitivity and Capacity in Gender and Other Social Issues and Approaches in the Program

The mainstreaming of new ideas and approaches requires that they be “internalized” by the program and its members. Internalization of the gender mainstreaming process means, first and foremost, that program staff begin to “...*systematically reflect on and evaluate the social/gender implications of the work they support, integrate this reflection and share it with the team*”. This demands a certain level of sensitization and capacity, on the part of all SUB staff, in gender issues and social science concepts and approaches and an awareness of the relevance of such concepts to the equitable and sustainable use of biodiversity. Recognizing this, the SUB program has invested time and program resources towards enhancing the awareness and capacity of program staff in SA/GA to ensure that they are sufficiently equipped (and comfortable) to engage SUB partners in a process of integrating SA/GA at the project level.

Strengthening gender awareness and capacity in the SUB program is a complex task given that team members come from different academic and professional backgrounds and therefore have different levels experience and expertise in social science concepts and approaches. The SUB team is comprised of professional from the fields of chemistry, biology, ecology, engineering, policy studies, political science, economics, rural sociology, community forestry, and anthropology among others. This diversity of experience and expertise is one of SUB’s many strengths and requires that any capacity building strategy be flexible and dynamic in approach.

SUB has implemented a number of concrete measures to build capacity at the program level. The program developed its *Guidelines for Integrating Gender in Biodiversity Research* as a conceptual and methodological piece to sensitize program staff to the gender and social issues relevant to biodiversity research and introduce them to basic gender analysis tools and approaches that could then be shared with their partners. Professional development activities in the area of *Gender, Tenure and Biodiversity* (November 2001) have been initiated in the program to further expand the conceptual skills of team members. SUB program staff have also participated in capacity building exercises organized by other ENRM PIs (e.g. ENRM Gender Training workshop organized by MINGA and the GU, March 2001).

In tandem with such initiatives, program staff have raised their awareness of and capacity in the area of gender and biodiversity through less structured, more informal channels. Among program staff less familiar with gender and other social issues, opportunities to

discuss gender and biodiversity issues during SUB team meetings has stimulated their interest and appreciation for this research area. The proposal review process also provides opportunities for peer learning. POs reported that the proposal review process enabled them to draw on and learn from the experience and expertise of their fellow team members in the context of specific projects (putting abstract social concepts into practice).

Several Program Officers also indicated that they have learned a great deal about SA/GA from their partners. Through visits to SUB projects, Program Officers and staff have the unique opportunity to observe (and participate in) SA/GA in practice at the field level. Opportunities to “learn by doing” allow program staff to link abstract concepts to practice and to explore the ways in which gender and biodiversity concepts and issues are shaped by the social and cultural realities of different regions.

The value of learning by doing cannot be over-stated. It has been suggested that in conjunction with SUB’s next team meeting (to be held in one of the regions), the SUB team organize a field visit with a research partner actively engaging in SA/GA. This would provide all program staff with an opportunity to see the concepts and methods of SA/GA in practice and to engage with partners related to the process of integrating these issues and approaches into biodiversity research.

Similarly, it was suggested that POs be paired during visits to partners as this has the potential to encourage peer learning between POs through their engagement with partners. One Program Officer reported that working closely with another SUB PO actively engaging partners in SA/GA provided him with a unique opportunity to learn about how his colleagues conceptualize gender and social issues and their relationship to biodiversity research and to observe their approach with partners.

Several SUB Program Officers expressed an interest to learn more about the experiences of fellow team members in engaging with partners in SA/GA. Currently, the SUB program does not have a mechanism in place for the sharing of experience and insights among the team. In this case, SUB could benefit from the experience of other program initiatives. For more than a year, MINGA has been experimenting with an electronic questionnaire circulated quarterly to MINGA POs, aimed at encouraging systematic reflection on and monitoring of their gender mainstreaming process. The questionnaire serves to communicate and document the experiences program staff in the process of integrating SA/GA in the projects they support and to gauge progress over time (new ideas, new contacts made, update on project activities related to gender mainstreaming, what works and what has not). SUB could benefit from either adapting and incorporating such an approach into their program or encouraging the scaling-up of such a tool to the ENRM level. It would serve not only to encourage the sharing of experience and ideas between team members, but would also provide rich information for monitoring and evaluation of the mainstreaming process over time.

## 4.2 Approaching and Engaging with Partners in Social/Gender Analysis

*Program staff who systematically reflect on and evaluate the social/gender implications of the work they support, integrate this reflection and share it with the team (SUB Gender Mainstreaming Progress Marker)*

*Program Officers engaging with researchers in social/gender analysis (SUB Gender Mainstreaming Progress Marker)*

Strengthening the awareness and capacity of SUB program staff in SA/GA is the foundation on which the gender mainstreaming process rests. Mainstreaming SA/GA at the project level requires that Program Officers reflect on the social/gender dimensions and implications of the work they support and actively engage with their partners ensure that researchers have the conceptual, methodological and analytical capacity necessary to design and implement SA/GA at the project level.

Discussions with SUB Program Officers have revealed that there is (and can be) no single approach to engaging partners in SA/GA. SUB's partners live and work in diverse regional, cultural, political and institutional contexts. As such, the ways in which program staff engage with partners is (and indeed must be) shaped by these diverse realities. This section begins with an examination of the mechanisms through which SUB program staff work to build gender and other social issues and approaches into the research they support. The remainder of the section explores the process of "engaging with partners", drawing particular attention to the contextual factors that shape partners' perception of and attitude regarding gender concepts and analysis and the strategies Program Officers employ to approach and engage partners in dialogue about SA/GA and its relevance to biodiversity research.

### *Building Gender and other Social Issues and Approaches into SUB-Supported Research*

Throughout the project cycle, program staff are expected to communicate and engage with their partners to support the integration of SA/GA into research. The extent to which SUB program staff have engaged partners in this way has depended on the interest, priorities and capacity of individual POs and a diverse set of contextual factors shaping the interface between POs and partners.

**Proposal review process** A review of ten SUB-supported projects revealed that SUB engages its partners most actively and systematically at the proposal review stage of the project cycle. POs review proposals submitted to the program and consult with colleagues in SUB and other ENRM PIs to gather feedback and specific recommendations for improving the gender and social dimensions of a given proposal. Particularly among POs with less social science experience or expertise, this consultation process constitutes a valuable exercise both to ensure stronger proposals and to strengthen the capacity of POs in the proposal review process.

During proposal review, POs look to ensure that their partners consider the gender and other social dimensions and implications of their research and integrate SA/GA where relevant, appropriate, and feasible. POs report to work towards ensuring that research proposals do one or more of the following:

- Promote the integration of female researchers on project teams;
- Ensure the integration of social scientists on project teams;
- Encourage the participation of women in defining research priorities and in the design and implementation of research;
- Include the disaggregation of data by gender and other relevant social variables;
- Better ensure that research addresses women's technological needs;
- Promote the empowerment of women (e.g. through income-generating activities);
- Examine gender roles and divisions of labour and their relation to biodiversity use and conservation;
- Explore the gendered nature of local knowledge related to the use and management of biological diversity;
- Consider gender and other social relations of power that shape biodiversity use and conservation; and
- Incorporate a methodology appropriate to the issues under investigation.

Program Officers clearly make a genuine attempt to ensure that proposals include SA/GA, however, the proposal review process appears to lack sufficient depth to assess and provide feedback on the quality of gender analysis (both conceptually and methodologically) outlined in proposals. Among the projects reviewed, the "Social/Gender Considerations" and "Methodology" sections of the proposal appraisal often contained insufficient discussion of the social/gender issues and approach proposed by the partner. The appraisal commonly identified whether, for example, women's participation was encouraged in the proposed work and if data would be disaggregated by gender and/or other relevant social variables. Appraisals less consistently engaged in an analysis of the relevant social/gender issues that may have been overlooked by the proposal (i.e. are there gender issues/implications that have not been addressed), the strengths and weaknesses of the SA/GA methodology proposed, the capacity of the research partner to carry out the proposed SA/GA activities, and the potential capacity building needs of the partner (to ensure that the proposed SA/GA activities are implemented). A number of SUB POs indicated that a lack of high quality proposal assessment often results in the failure of project teams to implement sound gender analysis along the lines sought by the gender mainstreaming objectives of the SUB program.

Once the review team has assessed a proposal, the responsible PO is expected to communicate any and all relevant recommendations to the research partner. Based on the project documentation reviewed (and discussions with POs), the frequency and depth in which POs "engaged" with partners in the proposal development process was highly variable. In several cases, proposals were reviewed and accepted with little or no feedback from SUB program staff regarding how the project team could strengthen the gender and broader social dimensions of the proposed research. Some Program Officers

indicated that there is often insufficient time to provide feedback to and consult with partners before the final appraisal needs to be submitted to the Program. In some cases, the capacity of POs, while increasing, is not sufficient to provide adequate feedback to partners (although in such cases attempts should be made to ensure that at least one reviewer is well grounded in social science concepts and approaches). In still other cases, a proposal is accepted without partner consultation because the responsible PO feels that gender analysis is sufficiently addressed in the proposal or that the partner organization has sufficient experience in gender research and would not benefit feedback from the SUB team. While some proposals and partners are indeed stronger than others in SA/GA, among the ten projects reviewed, many proposals could have been strengthened in several ways through more intensive consultation with the SUB team.

From the projects reviewed, there are also examples of very rich engagement between SUB team members and project partners aimed at strengthening the focus given to gender and social issues in research, the methodology used to examine these issues and/or the gendered implications of the research supported. Box 1 illustrates one such example from a project on Indigenous Vegetables in Zimbabwe.

Box 1 Indigenous Vegetables in Zimbabwe, Phase II (Project No. 100371)

The Indigenous Vegetables Phase II project in Zimbabwe sought to improve food security at the household level by promoting the conservation, production, processing and utilization of uncultivated indigenous vegetables. In the initial proposal the low labour input required for the management of uncultivated indigenous vegetables was cited as an important advantage of these food crops given that they are managed principally by women with already extensive labour obligations. Nevertheless, one of the objectives of the project was the promotion of dry-season cultivation of these food crops on farm. Upon review of the initial proposal, two SUB team members expressed concern that the cultivation of previously uncultivated indigenous vegetables might place additional labour burdens on women in the project (who may need to walk further to collect water and fuel supplies in the dry months) and that the shift to on-farm production might have serious implications for their access to and control over these biological resources (e.g. if and when men perceive or observe an economic benefit in cultivating indigenous vegetables). The research team responded by indicating that it was women themselves who were interested in dry-season cultivation of indigenous vegetables as there is less demand on their labour at this time of year, although the team could not anticipate the potential impact of on-farm cultivation on women's access to indigenous vegetable resources. As a result, the project team agreed to monitor the potential gendered implications raised by SUB closely to ensure that women (the target beneficiary) are not negatively impacted by the project.

Engagement of this type between SUB team members and research partners serves to strengthen and enrich the quality of SA/GA at the project level and to better ensure that the project has a positive impact on the equitable and sustainable management of biodiversity.

**Project monitoring** Following the proposal review stage of the project cycle, there appears to be less consistent engagement between SUB Program Officers and their partners related to SA/GA in the project context. Project monitoring activities include the review of annual project reports and visits to partner organizations by Program Officers. Correspondence between SUB Program Officers and the trip reports of POs to projects sites revealed surprisingly little in terms of engagement with partners in SA/GA. This is due in part to inadequate documentation by program staff of their interactions with partners (e.g. trip reports not exhaustive in their overview of discussion and activities with partners). Discussions with SUB Program Officers demonstrated that most Program Officers make a genuine attempt to engage partners in consultation and dialogue regarding the integration of SA/GA during a project's lifespan. Their ability to engage partners is however shaped by a diversity of issues that include the experience and capacity of Program Officers in SA/GA, and the cultural context in which partners live and work. This context shapes the ways in which partners perceive and understand gender analysis concepts, principles and approaches, and in turn the strategies used by Program Officers to "reach" and engage partners in dialogue.

### *The Capacity to Engage with Partners*

While the interest and capacity of Program Officers to engage partners in SA/GA has indeed increased over time, some (especially those POs with less experience in SA/GA) indicate that they are often not able to independently advise or mentor partners in SA/GA and lack access to appropriate human and material resources in SA/GA to share with partners (where SA/GA resources would provide a platform for dialogue and interaction). Where possible, POs draw on the expertise of colleagues with experience in SA/GA for guidance and concrete suggestions to strengthen their projects. This approach is particularly effective at the proposal review stage of the project cycle, however, as one Program Officer indicated, drawing on the expertise of other POs (already busy with their own projects) throughout a project's lifespan is not sufficient (or realistic) to adequately engage partners in a meaningful way.

To address this obstacle, SUB Program Officers might consider scouting out potential SA/GA resources (human and material) in their countries and regions of work and putting partners into contact with regional resource people and institutions (e.g. research organizations, local NGOs, university programs etc.) with expertise in social/gender research (in fact a small number of POs are already engaged in such activities). Regional resource people could potentially provide more consistent mentoring to project teams and could be integrated into project monitoring activities organized by SUB program staff. Identifying regional resource people and linking them to research partners can and should be systematically integrated into visits to SUB projects to better ensure that SUB is both engaging with its partners in SA/GA and addressing the capacity building needs of researchers. Networking of this type would of course require additional time commitments for POs during visits.

### *Gender in Different Political and Cultural Contexts*

The experience of SUB Program Officers, particularly those from the Asia, Middle East and West Africa regional offices, demonstrates that "gender" as a concept is not universal in its meaning and application. The term means different things to different people and is shaped by the political, cultural and social realities of a given region (country, province or community). Because "gender" can hold a diversity of meanings no single approach to engaging partners in SA/GA is universally appropriate in all contexts. With an appreciation of the cultural specificity of "gender", Program Officers increasingly explore new ways to engage partners in gender analysis that are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

In many of the places in which SUB-supported research is on going, the concept of "gender" carries several politically charged and culturally specific meanings. In parts of West Africa, for example, the concept of gender is strongly associated with western feminist political discourses that have become global in their reach and influence. According to SUB's Program Officer in the West Africa regional office, parts of West Africa are characterized by deeply held Muslim traditions and values. In this cultural context engaging partners in dialogue regarding "gender issues" can be extremely difficult. Researchers have expressed strong reservations regarding gender issues and analysis felt to be part of a hegemonic political agenda of the West, imported and imposed by foreign donor agencies on countries and communities of the South. In some cases, the concept of "gender" is equated with "women's empowerment" and an outright challenge to male-dominated power structures at all levels. As a result, encouraging partners to increase the representation of women on research teams and to integrate "gender research" into a project is often strongly resisted. The PO for SUB's West Africa program insists that approaching partners with a "gender agenda" often offends researchers, strains the relationship between a Program Officer and the partner organization, and pushes "gender issues" further to the margin. Although partners make certain that the jargon of gender analysis finds its way into proposals submitted to SUB/IDRC (to ensure that they are considered), SA/GA activities are rarely operationalized at the project level. To introduce partners to gender concepts and issues in a more culturally sensitive manner, the Program Officer modifies his approach with partners by using the concept of "family well-being" as an entry point. By drawing on notions of "improving family welfare", for example, the Program Officer is able to introduce and legitimate a rationale for increasing women's participation in research and exploring the gendered nature of social roles and responsibilities in biodiversity use (e.g. related to family health care) in a way that is acceptable to researchers.

Experience from South Asia similarly demonstrates that "gender" means different things to different people in different cultural and political contexts. In many parts of South Asia, the meaning ascribed to "gender" is conceptually linked to a very powerful "Women in Development" (WID) discourse that permeates all levels of social and political life. Social advocacy movements throughout the region have, over time, fostered a "gender equals women" conceptual approach (characterized by a focus on women's issues and empowerment) that today shapes the lens through which some researchers

view “gender analysis”. In one sense, this well-established social and political base provides a unique entry point for donors interested in fostering greater attention to gender and other social issues in the work they support. Many projects supported by SUB in the region have significant experience and capacity in women’s issues and focus on strengthening women’s participation in research and examining the gendered nature of social roles (e.g. divisions of labour) and agricultural and ecological knowledge. In addition, many look to encourage the empowerment of women both individually and collectively through research. However, WID language and approaches, so firmly entrenched in the development discourse of the region, also have the potential to challenge efforts by SUB POs to engage partners in discussion of more complex “gender” issues and research approaches. A SUB PO in South Asia reported that working with projects and researchers deeply grounded in WID development concepts and approaches can be a challenge in terms of encouraging them to move beyond the characterization of women’s and men’s roles and knowledge (who does what, who knows what) to examine, for example, how the social relations of gender shape biodiversity use and conservation. Box 2 illustrates an example from a SUB-supported project in India.

**Box 2 Gender Innovations and Biodiversity (India) (Project No. 100421)**

The Gender, Innovations and Biodiversity Phase III project in India, has successfully targeted support to women innovators and works with women and men to identify technologies or products to augment women’s working and living conditions. Through such activities, the project looks to validate women’s knowledge and innovations related to biodiversity use and conservation, scale-up these innovations (and the recognition of women as innovators), and encourage gender-sensitive mechanisms for benefit sharing. After reviewing one of the project’s interim reports, the responsible SUB PO contacted the project team to encourage them to consider “the gendered relations that lead to the selection and/or scaling-up of innovations. What are the power relations and decision-making processes at play that need to be addressed to promote gender sensitive technologies and innovations” (memo from SUB PO to partner organization, May 2002). The responsible PO continues to engage with the project team on these issues through phone conversations, project visits and interactions with the project leader.

This example demonstrates that the extent and ways in which research teams integrate SA/GA into their work is a reflection of the political and cultural context of the region in which they live and work. In South Asia, many SUB projects are strong in the integration and promotion of women’s issues in biodiversity research but, due in part to the power of WID discourse in the region, often fall short of integrating important issues associated with more complex gender relations of power and decision-making that shape the equitable and sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. In such cases, the role of the Program Officer is to, over time, engage partners in dialogue in order to expand the lens or paradigm through which researchers view gender issues (while maintaining a sensitivity to and respect for differing local perspectives).

Because gender is imbued with different meanings in different cultural contexts, not only must the approach of Program Officers be culturally sensitive but also the tools, methods, and other resources that POs bring to partners must be relevant to the context in which the research is situated. SUB's Program Officer in the Middle East regional office, for example, has explored the extent to which different gender analysis tools and other resources developed for African and Latin American contexts could be used to study biodiversity issues in the Middle East. She found that SA/GA tools developed in/for other regions, are not particularly useful for exploring gender and biodiversity themes in the Middle Eastern context as they operate on a different (and often inappropriate) set of assumptions (e.g. regarding the dynamics of land tenure systems) and so tend to ask the wrong questions. Given this, she intends to engage with researchers in the future by first interacting with partners and other organizations in the region to explore gender and biodiversity issues from a Middle East perspective and to support the development of tools and approaches that are sensitive and responsive to local realities.

The examples from West Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East demonstrate that “gender” as a concept carries multiple meanings depending on the social, cultural and political context in which SUB-supported research is situated. As such, no single approach to engaging researchers in gender analysis will be sensitive to the needs and interests of all partners. It is crucial that SUB staff engage partners in a flexible way to avoid imposing concepts and approaches that may not be culturally sensitive or responsive to the lived realities of the people with whom the program works. This is best achieved by viewing the interface between program staff and partners as a space for shared learning. Through their interactions with partners, program staff have the opportunity to explore the social, cultural and political context in which their partners are situated, to learn what gender means in these contexts, and to support the development of concepts, tools and approaches that are more culturally appropriate and therefore comprehensible to partners. The output of such learning opportunities (i.e. gender and biodiversity from diverse Southern perspectives) can then be fed back into and strengthen SUB's gender mainstreaming approach.

### *Positionality and Gender Politics*

Another issue which shapes the way in which some Program Officers engage with partners is their positionality, or relative position, vis-à-vis their partners in particular cultural contexts. Again, because gender analysis is so often associated with a focus on “women's issues” or “women's empowerment”, female Program Officers in the South Asia and Middle East regional offices indicated that, as female POs representing a Western donor, it is sometimes difficult to encourage partners (many of whom are older men trained in the natural sciences) to consider the gender implications of their work without being “branded a radical feminist” seen to be using gender analysis as a vehicle for pursuing a political rather than research agenda. When partners perceive POs in this manner it sometimes undermines their ability to get their message across – “to sell gender”. In such situations, one Program Officer modifies her approach by using “social analysis” rather than “gender analysis” as an entry point in her engagement with research

teams. “Social analysis” can be used as a platform for introducing gender concepts and analytical approaches as part of a broader, more holistic (and less politically charged) framework.

### *Social Analysis as an Entry Point*

For a diverse set of reasons (some of which are discussed above), several SUB Program Officers indicated that they are more comfortable engaging partners in discussion of the relevance of “social” issues and analytical approaches, and using this discussion as a vehicle for introducing the concept of gender analysis. First and foremost, “gender” does not mean the same thing to all people in all contexts. Given that the concept of gender in many Southern environments is both politically charged and culturally sensitive, the idea of social analysis is thought to be more politically neutral and culturally appropriate and therefore more suitable as an entry point for discussion with research partners.

Social analysis is also considered a sounder entry point among a number of SUB POs because its conceptual approach is more holistic in nature. Although gender analysis by definition looks at the interactions between gender and other axes of social differentiation such as wealth, age and ethnicity, for many it presupposes the importance and relevance of gender above and beyond other social issues. Social analysis takes as its starting point the notion that diverse axes of differentiation (gender, wealth, age, ethnicity) have the potential to shape social roles and relations that mediate, for example, access to, control over, and knowledge of biological resources, and in turn the sustainable management of biodiversity. Moreover, because “gender analysis” has in many cases been unfortunately reduced to a gender = women approach, social analysis provides a sounder platform on which to build a working conceptual, methodological analytical framework that reflects and is appropriate to the complex social realities in which a project is situated.

For other SUB program staff, there is a legitimate concern that shifting from a gender analysis to a social analysis approach may cause important gender issues to “fall off the agenda” of SUB’s partners. However, whether the program opts to use the concept of gender or social analysis as its entry point with partners will not “make or break” the success of SUB-supported research to encourage the equitable and sustainable use of biodiversity. What *is* critical at this stage in the mainstreaming process is that the program encourages a flexible, regionally based, and culturally appropriate approach to mainstreaming SA/GA at the project level that is defined with and for SUB’s partners and ensures they have access to the capacity building resources necessary to implement SA/GA in a meaningful way.

### 4.3 Building the Capacity of Partners in SA/GA

*SUB POs linking researchers to the resources they need to compete their capacity in social and gender analysis (SUB Gender Mainstreaming Progress Marker).*

The majority of SUB Program Officers identify the lack of adequate social science capacity at the project level as the single greatest challenge to mainstreaming gender in SUB-supported research across the regions. Further, SUB's most recent Strategic Planning exercise (November 2001) acknowledged that capacity building for integrating SA/GA into projects constitutes a gap or missed opportunity in the SUB program. Without adequate experience and skills in social and gender issues and analysis among its partners, SUB cannot ask or expect partner organizations to design and implement projects that integrate SA/GA in an effective and meaningful way to strengthen the quality, relevance and impact of biodiversity research. This section of the report begins by outlining where the capacity of SUB's partners remains weak and explores how SUB might better target its activities to ensure that partners are linked to the resources they need to strengthen their capacity in SA/GA.

### *Capacity Building Challenges in SUB-Supported Research*

One of SUB's Program Officers appropriately characterizes gender analysis as a continuum – a continuum of research approaches and levels of expertise and capacity. SUB works with diverse types of partner organizations (national and international research centres, universities, NGOs and grassroots organizations etc.) and the ability and interest of different partners to incorporate social science themes and approaches into their research depends on several broad factors including the social and political climate/environment of a country or region (e.g. are there strong and visible social movements that raise the awareness and sensitivity of people to critical social issues), the extent to which universities in the South have strong programming in the social sciences (related to rural development, agriculture and environmental studies), the extent to which trained social scientists are available to research organizations (or leave to work abroad), the research culture of partner organizations and their attitude and interest to encourage inter-disciplinary research, and the interest of researchers to strengthen their own capacity in SA/GA concepts and approaches.

Some of SUB's partners have considerable experience and capacity in biodiversity research that integrates gender and other social issues and analytical approaches. Box 3 highlights the capacity of one of SUB's partners in Asia to implement SA/GA in a way that has a powerful impact on the livelihoods of lower caste women in the Deccan region of India.

Box 3 The Deccan Development Society, member of the South Asia Network on Food Ecology, and Culture

The Deccan Development Society (DDS) is a grassroots organization in India that examines the interface between biodiversity and people's lives and seeks an anthropological understanding of biodiversity across gender, generation and social (caste) groups. DDS research supported by SUB through the South Asia Network for Food, Ecology, and Culture (SANFEC) project, explores the gendered nature of knowledge systems associated with biodiversity use and management and works with organisations of women farmers to support and enhance the sustainable management of biodiversity-based livelihood systems, raising the profile and position of women, as the managers of biodiversity, at the community level and in decision-making fora. In their research and advocacy activities, DDS also supports the development and use of innovative participatory methods and approaches such as capturing oral histories on video and supporting local seed displays and video shows organized by dalit (lower caste) women.

In many of the country and regional contexts in which SUB supports research, however, there lacks a critical mass of social science expertise (especially related to biodiversity and environment research themes) and so research teams are often composed principally of natural scientists with little or no training and experience in SA/GA. As a result, SUB team members report several areas where the capacity of partners needs strengthening to ensure that the gender and broader social dimensions of biodiversity issues are considered and incorporated into SUB-supported research.

**Research is gender-blind** SUB Program Officers reported that in some cases partner organizations continue to design and implement research that neglects the relevance, and often centrality, of gender issues to the development of equitable and sustainable options for biodiversity conservation and use. Project teams conduct research at the “household” and “community” level without problematizing and deconstructing these concepts to explore how differences by gender, age, wealth within and across households and communities shape, for example, access to, control over, and knowledge of biological resources. Sensitization is however an often-slow process. As partners become more comfortable and confident in household and community-based studies, examining gender and other social issues at the household and community level is a logical next step that should be encouraged.

**Conceptualizing “gender”** From a review of project documentation and discussions with SUB POs it is clear that many of SUBs research partners are struggling to understand what gender means both in general and in relation to biodiversity research more specifically. The most common misunderstanding among SUB's partners is that “gender” literally means “women” and “gender analysis” means “adding women” to the research agenda. In proposals and in project reporting gender analysis often refers to little more than ensuring women's participation in a research project and/or promoting the

participation of female researchers on project teams. While strengthening the visibility and participation of women in research is certainly an important precursor to gender analysis it does not constitute gender analysis in and of itself.

An example of this “gender = women” approach can be seen in the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) Phase II program (Project No. 100356). Under the CBDC program, the Mali national sub-project articulated their workplan activities in gender analysis solely in terms of “promoting gender participation” without any further elaboration or discussion of why women’s participation was sought, in what research areas their participation would be encouraged (and why), and how women’s participation would contribute to improved biodiversity management. In other words, what comes across in reading their proposal is that women are being added to the research agenda “for women’s sake” rather than out of recognition that their participation would enhance (or even be crucial to) the success of the project.

This would seem to reflect that SUB and indeed other donor programs are, at least in some cases, not adequately engaging partners in discussion regarding the relevance of gender and broader social issues to biodiversity research and the rationale for incorporating SA/GA into research projects – namely, that biodiversity conservation and use is shaped by gender and other social relations (e.g. access to and control over biological resources) and therefore if the outcomes of research are to be both equitable and sustainable partners need to be aware of and integrate such issues into the conceptual framework of their research and to design and implement methodologies to examine these issues on the ground.

**Implementing gender analysis** Among the majority of projects reviewed for this report, the actual implementation of gender analysis appears to be a significant challenge for partners. Many research proposals, for example, identify the gender issues the project looks to examine (e.g. gender divisions of labour related to the collection and/or cultivation of food crops, differences in women’s and men’s knowledge of medicinal plants, etc.), however few appear to have a well-developed methodology outlining how SA/GA will be implemented and integrated into the body of the research project. According to many POs, most partners now disaggregate data by gender - a review of SUB-supported agrobiodiversity research, for example, found that eighteen of the forty-four projects reviewed included analysis of gender-differentiation and eleven of these included analysis of differentiation by gender and another social variable (Vernooy, 2001). However, gender analysis in SUB-supported projects is often limited to the disaggregation of data and other diagnostic activities (seasonal activity profiles, labour profiles, etc.) that aim to characterize and better understand how gender roles shape the use and management of biological diversity.

Few SUB projects have yet engaged in an examination of, for example, how social relations govern access to and control over biological resources (and how these are renegotiated over time), intra-household decision-making related to resource management, how local knowledge is shared and conserved through gender-based social

relationships etc. According to one project leader, the reason for this appears to be that while researchers are becoming increasingly comfortable using straightforward diagnostic tools in gender analysis to describe gender roles they have difficulty applying the more abstract principles of gender analysis such as decision-making and social relations (Final Report, Project No. 003743). These more complex elements of gender analysis often cannot be examined using structured PRA-style tools but instead necessitate the use of more semi- or unstructured qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and personal narratives. Such methods require a different set of research skills and greater conceptual capacity on the part of researchers. Drawing on the experience of an active SUB-supported project, Box 4 illustrates how more qualitative gender analysis skills and methods could strengthen the research process and produce the kinds of gender-based information sought.

Box 4 Conservation of Embera and Kuna Medicinal Plants, Phase II (Project No 100568)

In the project entitled Conservation of Embera and Kuna Medicinal Plants Phase II, there is a clear focus on gender-specific knowledge of different types of medicinal plants and disease treatments and the mechanisms through which gendered medicinal knowledge is transmitted through social relationships of different kinds. In its first annual report, the project documented the use of several research methods including ethnobotanical questionnaires administered to women and men with knowledge of medicinal plants and their curative uses to examine the traditional patterns of transmission of medicinal plant knowledge by “culture” (comparison of Kuna and Embera communities) and by gender. At the end of the first year, the project leaders indicate that the questionnaires revealed information about the gender-specific nature of knowledge of plants and diseases but provided insufficient data to determine whether there is a pattern in the transmission of medicinal knowledge by gender. Moreover, the team reported that some of the data collected in the questionnaire contradicts observations made by the research team (that knowledge exchange may occur, for example, between mother and daughter).

To understand if and how knowledge is shared through gender-based social relationships (and to explore discrepancies between questionnaire data and field-based observation) more qualitative research methods may be called for. Semi-structured interviews and personal narratives for example could examine the types of intra- and extra-household relationships/networks to which women and men belong (at different stages of the life cycle); the types of obligations and benefits that characterize such relationships (e.g. do such relationships involve the sharing of different types of resources and/or knowledge), and the way in which knowledge is exchanged through different relationships. These methods also allow for the examination of discrepancies identified through other research methods.

Capacity building in gender analysis is a gradual, long-term process. The capacity to implement gender analysis is however recognized as a significant gap in the mainstreaming of gender analysis at the project level. While access to innovative and culturally appropriate methodological tools and research guidelines will strengthen the capacity of research teams, partners also need greater social science expertise on research teams and greater access to local/regional social science resource people (with expertise

in gender and biodiversity research) to mentor the methodological development of gender analysis at the project level.

**Isolating gender analysis from the body of research** In SUB-supported research gender analysis is often conceptually and methodologically isolated from the main body of the proposed research. What some SUB team members refer to as the “ghettoizing of gender research” is a part of a larger problem associated with a lack of integration of social science and natural science research components within multi-disciplinary research projects. This is a significant problem particularly when the gender components of a research project are not “re-integrated” into the research process and analysis of research findings at a later stage. Box 5 illustrates an example from the CBDC Phase II program.

**Box 5 The Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program, Phase II (Project No. 100356)**

The CBDC II program is broken down into national sub-projects across Asia, Africa and Latin America and six transversal lines, or research components, that reflect the major areas of interest among CBDC partners. The t-lines include participatory plant breeding and participatory varietal selection (PPB/PVS), seed supply systems and local markets, non-domesticated and semi-domesticated biodiversity (NDSDB), gender, mainstreaming the CBDC approach, and policies. Each national project developed its own research program within one or more of these t-lines. Certainly the rationale of devoting a t-line to gender is clear – to highlight and reinforce the importance of gender issues in the CBDC’s work. However, the isolation of “gender” from other t-lines serves to reinforce the idea of gender as an “add-on” to biodiversity research. In fact, each of the t-lines is treated as an independent research theme and little attention given to integrating these themes in order to address the broader, overarching questions related to community biodiversity development and conservation. As a result, the potential gender dimensions of research in the PPB, seed supply, NDSDB and policy t-lines are largely ignored. In the South East Asia national project, for example, the gender dimensions of the proposed research were compartmentalized into a “gender case study” which does not appear to be linked back to or integrated with the other components of the project’s proposed research.

The compartmentalization of gender research, and indeed the natural and social sciences more generally, inevitably leads to poor gender analysis with little impact on the development of appropriate interventions. While SUB strongly encourages interdisciplinary research, more needs to be done to foster greater interaction, understanding and appreciation of research and research approaches across disciplines and to build the analytical capacity of partners to bring the components of research together at some stage in the research process to analyse cross-cutting themes in order to understand the interface between ecological and livelihood systems.

**Analysis** Many of SUB’s partners have limited capacity to analyse data collected on gender issues. According to several Program Officers, it is common that projects collect

large amounts of gender-disaggregated data but “don’t know what to do with it”. Project teams are often unable to examine their data to identify important trends and relevant findings, to integrate these findings with those of other research components and to relate them back to the project’s main research questions. As a result, data collected during gender analysis is often under-utilized and findings are limited to the description or characterization of gender roles and knowledge (who does what, who knows what). Box 6 illustrates an example from a SUB-supported project in the Eastern Himalayas.

**Box 6 Gender, Genetic Resources and Indigenous Minorities (Project No. 003743)**

The main focus of the Gender, Genetic Resources and Indigenous Minorities project was to conduct research on agrobiodiversity management among three ethnic groups in the Eastern Himalayan region with particular emphasis on how ethnicity and gender shape biodiversity management. The project proposal, drafted by the project leader with considerable expertise in gender analysis, was well grounded conceptually and indicated that activities would be organized to enhance the capacity of indigenous, community-based researchers in gender research, analysis and scientific writing skills. Despite this effort, the project team struggled in the analysis of the findings from the gender components of the research and in relating and integrating these findings within the overall research project. According to the project leader, “most researchers conducted lengthy activity profiles of men and women, seasonal calendars, and Venn diagrams, but had little idea about their meaning in an overall context” (Final Report, Project No. 003743). As a result, while the proposal indicated that the project would explore very complex aspects of gender and ethnic relations (e.g. looking at how women’s role as custodians of seed systems can/has become a basis for improving their strategic position in society and its implications for development responses to agrobiodiversity management) and their bearing on the management of agrobiodiversity in the Eastern Himalayas, the project’s final report included little more than a characterization of crop diversity, food habits and rituals, and traditional seed management systems of the region.

According to the final report for this project, the long-term nature of developing conceptual and analytical clarity among local researchers was inconsistent with the short-term nature of the capacity building workshops implemented. Workshops can be valuable capacity building exercises to a degree (e.g. introducing researchers to gender concepts and simple SA/GA tools), however the experience of this project suggests that developing conceptual and analytical capacity requires long-term field-based interaction and mentoring through which “the abstractions of social science research become more relevant and therefore comprehensible in the context of field realities, especially when situated in the reality of researchers’ context” (Final Report, Project No. 003743).

**Documentation** Even among SUB-supported project teams with strong conceptual and methodological skills in SA/GA, discussion of the process of gender analysis and its relevant findings are often poorly captured in the majority of project documentation reviewed for this report. This is particularly unfortunate in cases where projects are

producing interesting results in the field that fail to be captured in project documentation and shared with others. Particularly among project teams lacking a social scientist, writing-up the results of social science research can be particularly challenging. Most natural scientists are unfamiliar with the language, format and style of social science writing, which often differs considerably from that of the natural sciences.

Poor documentation of gender analysis may also be due in part to poor targeting of reports for specific audiences. Project teams structure their reports to SUB in a variety of ways. Some are written in the form of a scientific report while others are structured along the lines of a popularized document (perhaps intended for broader circulation to different audiences). Different reporting styles may fail to capture different aspects of the research process and findings. For these and other reasons that are less clear (e.g. gender analysis was never carried out or was flawed and therefore not reported), many of the final reports produced by SUB projects engage in very limited discussion of findings drawn from gender research and some neglect to report on such findings altogether. Box 7 illustrates an example from a SUB-supported project in Guatemala.

Box 7 Sustainability of Green Forest Products (Guatemala), Phase II (Project No. 003747)

Upon review of the initial proposal for the project entitled Sustainability of Green Forest Products, Phase II, the responsible Program Officer identified that there was a lack of gender analysis in the proposed research and communicated this concern to the partner organization, ProPetén. ProPetén responded to SUB's concern by adding an Appendix to its proposal outlining in detail the type of gender analysis the project sought to incorporate into the proposed research designed to promote environmentally sound community management of biodiversity of the Mayan Biosphere Reserve (MBR) of Guatemala. The Appendix highlighted a diverse set of well-structured research questions meant to explore the gender dimensions and implications of strengthening traditional forest management systems, advancing policy and legislation for local resource access rights, and promoting the use of medicinal plants in the MBR. Despite this clear attention, commitment and capacity (gender specialist on team) for incorporating gender analysis into the research project, a discussion of the gender-related research findings was entirely absent from the final report and an explanation for this absence was not provided. The report was written in the style of a popularized document, perhaps intended for wider circulation to different audiences. The main focus of the report was to provide short profiles about each of the MBR communities involved in the study and their achievements in developing community-based management plans for each community forest concession and establishing sustainable production, harvesting and income-generating activities that reflect the principles of the management plans. The final report also lacked a detailed discussion of the research process (methods used, issues explored, etc.).

This example demonstrates the need for SUB to more clearly articulate to its partners the kinds of information and analysis sought in project reporting and, where needed, to strengthen capacity of researchers in social science writing. In particular, SUB needs to encourage partners to reflect on and document the research process within the broader

context of participatory monitoring and evaluation at the project level. Such reflection will strengthen process-based iterative learning among research teams and enable SUB to identify difficulties encountered by research teams in a more timely manner and target its support to projects (e.g. capacity building needs) more effectively.

**Transformative research approaches** Some team members expressed concern that there is currently little focus on transformative research in SUB-supported projects. Whereas traditional research approaches look to identify and address development problems within the context of existing social, political and economic structures (and assume that the right/appropriate technology can solve any development problem) transformative research challenges the underlying assumptions of these structures to create the conditions for more fundamental social and political change. Transformative research looks beyond the “practical needs” of marginalized people to include and address their “strategic interests” as marginalized people. POs would like to see SUB projects promoting a transformative research agenda that, for example, creates new spaces for the renegotiation of rights (e.g. property and tenure rights, control over the proceeds of one’s labour etc.) and new opportunities for improving social equity across gender, wealth, ethnicity and other social categories. To address this gap, capacity building initiatives should include developing/strengthening conceptual, methodological and analytical tools and approaches that are transformative in nature. Beyond this, SUB might also seek out new kinds of non-traditional partners (e.g. advocacy organizations) that are interested in and committed to a transformative research agenda.

### *Providing Capacity Building Opportunities and Resources*

To recall, the review of selected SUB-supported projects and discussions with SUB team members has revealed that capacity building constitutes the single greatest challenge to mainstreaming gender at the project level and that partners have very diverse capacity building needs and as such no single capacity building approach will ensure that these needs are met. The first step in addressing this challenge is to ensure that the capacity building needs of partners are adequately diagnosed during the proposal review stage of the project cycle. At present, such analysis does not appear to be incorporated into the proposal review process in a systematic and consistent manner in SUB.

Capacity building strategies must be well-developed and targeted to the needs of different partners and sensitive to:

- the existing level of capacity and experience in SA/GA and social sciences more generally in the partner organization (is the team composed of natural and/or social scientists);
- the type of ecosystem in which partners specialize (agricultural, aquatic, forest systems);

- the research theme of the project (agrobiodiversity, medicinal plants, policy research);
- the regional, social, cultural and linguistic context in which partners work; and
- the type (or level) of gender analysis proposed and/or relevant to the research focus.

Moreover, capacity building cannot be solely targeted at enhancing conceptual and methodological skills but must address capacity building needs at all stages of the project cycle (conceptual ↔ methodological ↔ analytical ↔ writing/documentation) in an integrated and iterative way.

Overall, program staff recognize that SUB's capacity building approach must be flexible, culturally appropriate, and regionally based. Program Officers provided several concrete suggestions for strengthening SUB's capacity building approach as a way to ensure that social analysis is effectively mainstreamed into the research it supports. These include more project level training in SA/GA, the development of more appropriate tools and guidelines, and networking and building partnerships with regional resource people and institutions engaged in SA/GA to promote south-south learning.

**Project level training** SUB's Gender Mainstreaming Performance Framework promotes the development of training workshops in SA/GA at the project level to ensure that the capacity building needs of partners are identified and addressed during project development. Despite this attention to the importance of project level training only two of the ten projects reviewed included training in SA/GA in their workplans. The possible reasons for this are several. First, as mentioned above, many POs do not consistently and systematically analyse and identify the capacity building needs of partners during the proposal review process and as such weaknesses in capacity often go unrecognized.

Second, the majority of POs expressed that "project level training" often amounts to the development of a 1-2 day workshop (at best) organized and facilitated by the donor or another international organization working in the region. Such workshops can be effective exercises to introduce researchers to gender and other social concepts and basic tools and approaches. They are not however an effective means for developing conceptual and analytical clarity (a long-term process) and qualitative methodological skills. Also, when organized by foreign organizations, the content and approach of workshops are sometimes not appropriate, relevant or comprehensible given the regional, cultural and social realities of research in a specific context.

Finally, such workshops can be expensive to organize and implement. Including training workshops in all SUB projects is not financially feasible or sustainable and often amounts to "reinventing the wheel" – replicating the same learning processes across projects.

Certainly in some situations short training workshops can be useful. Among SUB partners, for example, training workshops targeted at strengthening gender and biodiversity capacity (linking gender concepts and approaches to biodiversity research themes) and tying this to project development would be beneficial. However, training workshops should not be used to address all capacity building needs (as they will not). One Program Officer indicated that tapping into on-going training exercises at the regional level (e.g. NGO training activities, university courses etc.) may provide partners with training opportunities that are regionally focused and driven while simultaneously offering the occasion for networking with other researchers engaging in SA/GA in the region. This requires that Program Officers and partners invest time in scouting out such training opportunities in the region.

**Enhancing south-south mentoring in SA/GA** Understanding that short “one-off” workshops are not the panacea for addressing all the capacity building needs of SUB partners, most Program Officers would like to be able to more effectively link partners to skilled and experienced resource people (preferably from the same region as their partners) as a way to encourage more iterative training approaches. Ideally, resource people with relevant expertise in social science and biodiversity research could provide conceptual, methodological and analytical guidance or mentoring to research teams throughout the project cycle and in-so-doing strengthen the capacity of teams through practical, hands-on experience or “learning by doing”. Several POs reported, however, that most regions lack a critical mass of social science resource people well grounded in both gender and biodiversity issues and methodological approaches. Nevertheless, a small number of SUB Program Officers have begun actively networking in their regions of work to identify potential resource people/institutions with the intention of linking them to their partners. Identifying and networking with regional resource people could be more systematically integrated into the visits POs make to partners, while at the same time encouraging partners to scope out and follow-up on potential partnerships with resource people/institutions in their country and/or region.

According to one Program Officer, many of SUB’s partners are not only interested in establishing partnerships with social science resource people/institutions in their region, but feel they would benefit enormously from greater interaction with other researchers in their region working to integrate SA/GA into biodiversity and NRM research. Partners are interested to see what others are doing, to share experiences, and build partnerships to stimulate peer learning and institutional cooperation with colleagues working (and struggling) in similar regional and cultural contexts. From the author’s own experience in East Africa, encouraging such south-south interaction can also go along way towards overcoming feelings of professional isolation and self-consciousness often experienced by researchers experimenting with new ideas in an institutional environment that favours conventional research approaches<sup>1</sup>. Peer learning can be stimulated through electronic

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<sup>1</sup> Comments based on the authors experience working with CIAT’s Participatory Research for Improved Agro-Ecosystem Management (PRIAM) program in East Africa. This program organizes annual monitoring tours that bring together national researchers from PRIAM sites throughout East Africa to visit one or more PRIAM field sites as a group, share experiences, exchange new ideas and build partnerships.

networking, workshops designed to catalyze the exchange of experience and information, and exchange visits between projects teams within a region (to observe and participate in SA/GA activities and approaches of different project teams). Through these and other mechanisms, the SA/GA initiative is working towards building a network of researchers and institutions working in SA/GA in the region.

Supporting interactive south-south networking and mentoring relationships also constitutes a more culturally appropriate and sustainable approach to capacity building in SA/GA. Further, by supporting researchers and research centres to address their own capacity building needs at the country or regional level, such an approach has also the potential to be an enabling or empowering mechanism.

**Tools and guidelines** Research partners reportedly lack access to appropriate tools and methodological guidelines to design and implement sound gender analysis at the field level. Tools and guidelines that are accessible are rarely translated into local languages, nor are they appropriate to all regional, ecological, social and cultural contexts. For example, in 1998 SUB developed its *Guidelines for Integrating Gender Analysis into Biodiversity Research* yet, according to SUB POs it has not been a useful tool for many of SUB's partners as it fails to capture the diversity of regional, ecological, and socio-cultural realities of the countries/regions in which SUB's partners work (although some POs indicated that the guidelines are used to stimulate thinking with partners about SA/GA concepts and issues). Because SUB is a PI with a global mandate no one set of guidelines is likely to serve the diverse needs of all its partners.

The majority of SUB POs favour supporting the adaptation and/or development of SA/GA research methods, tools and guidelines to examine and analyse gender and other social issues in different social, cultural and ecological contexts. These cannot be developed by SUB "in-house". Rather, the program needs to facilitate their development/adaptation through support to their partners and resource people/institutions in the regions. Methods, tools and research guidelines adapted or developed at the regional level are more likely to be relevant and comprehensible to SUB's partners and useful in the field.

**Writing for change** In conjunction with approaches aimed to enhance the conceptual, methodological and analytical capacity of research partners, SUB's partners would also benefit from exercises designed to strengthen their capacity to reflect on and document the research process with particular attention on improving the skills needed to write-up the results of social science research activities in an effective way. This could be linked to IDRC's Writing for Change training program.

**Building Capacity in SA/GA in Asia: A Learning Case** IDRC's CBNRM program initiative (with support from SUB and the GU) has recently developed a SA/GA capacity building program in Asia that aims to support meaningful capacity building through a

diverse set of regionally based/driven interventions. The overall objectives of the umbrella program are to:

- support the integration and practical application of SA/GA at the field level through iterative training and support program;
- develop culturally appropriate approaches and tools for SA/GA in biodiversity and NRM research;
- support interactive south/south networking and information exchange among researchers interested in integrating SA/GA in biodiversity and NRM research;
- build capacity within institutions to mainstream gender in project activities and within the institution itself; and
- document progress and good practices made by researchers towards integrating SA/GA in biodiversity and NRM research in Asia (Project Identification Memorandum, Project No. 101095).

This program effectively integrates many of the measures suggested by SUB POs to support and strengthen the capacity of its partners. These capacity building measures are directly linked to research projects in the region so that partners are able to apply new skills and ideas in the field, to adapt and test SA/GA methods and approaches and develop innovative strategies of their own. Other researchers interested in integrating SA/GA in their work can then draw on the experiences of these projects as learning cases.

The program is designed to create spaces for shared learning between CBNRM/SUB and their partners. The responsible POs see themselves as facilitators and participants in the learning process rather than as instructors with something to teach their partners. POs are engaging in this process to learn what SA/GA means in the social and cultural context in which their partners work and to use this dialogue as a basis for supporting the development of culturally appropriate research and development interventions. What is learned can then be shared with SUB and other ENRM PIs to ensure that their mainstreaming approaches reflect the cultural “lived” realities of their partners and the communities they support.

While it is too early to assess how the program will fair, it constitutes a genuine attempt to support capacity building in SA/GA that meets the needs of the program’s partners and should be used as a learning case both for SUB and other PIs looking to support capacity building in SA/GA.

## **5. A Way Forward ...**

The SUB Program has taken several concrete steps toward mainstreaming SA/GA at the program level and in the projects it supports. Such processes are often slow and yield observable impacts only in the long-term. While it is too early to assess the impact that SUB’s mainstreaming efforts have had on enhancing the equitable and sustainable use of biodiversity in the program’s countries and regions of work, the mainstreaming efforts made by the program have certainly had an impact on the raising awareness and

sensitivity to gender and social issues, and their relevance to biodiversity research, among SUB staff and strengthening SUB's engagement with partners in SA/GA at the project level. Based on the projects reviewed and discussions with SUB Program Officers, it is clear that SUB's partners are increasingly making a genuine effort to integrate gender/social considerations into the development of research proposals and to implement projects with the goal of ensuring that biodiversity-based interventions are both equitable and sustainable. These findings are extremely encouraging and should be congratulated.

Recognizing that mainstreaming initiatives often fall short of meeting their objectives, either because of institutional barriers or because the approach itself was flawed and never corrected, SUB has approached "mainstreaming" as an iterative, learning process. As such, the overall goal of this mid-term evaluation was to provide a formative assessment of the approach taken by SUB to mainstream gender and offer suggestions for strengthening the program's mainstreaming approach to ensure that it is better positioned to meet the objectives the program has set out for itself by 2004. To that end, this final section of the report will review important recommendations raised by SUB team members during the evaluation process and suggest some concrete next steps to ensure that these recommendations, if acceptable to the team, are implemented at the program and project levels.

### 5.1 Recommendations: Mainstreaming Gender in the SUB Program

At the program level, SUB team members provided a diverse set of suggestions to enhance the capacity of SUB staff in SA/GA and to improve the mainstreaming process more generally.

#### 1. Encouraging Sharing of Experience Among SUB Team Members

One of the greatest challenges to mainstreaming gender/social awareness and capacity at the program level in SUB has been, according to team members, insufficient opportunities for SUB staff to share experiences, exchange ideas, and generate momentum in the mainstreaming process. SUB POs indicate that they are interested in learning more about what their fellow team members are doing to mainstream gender into the projects they support and to engage team members more regularly in consultation regarding specific projects. MINGA's electronic questionnaire might provide a valuable opportunity for facilitating such exchange between team members. The questionnaire is used as an information exchange and monitoring tool designed to stimulate sharing of experience, innovative ideas and approaches, and new regional contacts, among other things. The questionnaire is sent to, filled out, and returned by all team members on a quarterly basis. In true participatory fashion, team members rotate responsibility for sending out and collecting the questionnaires from all team members and drafting a synthesis of the experiences and ideas shared. This exercise appears to be a potentially valuable means to ensure that team members remain current and engaged with what their fellow team members are doing to mainstream gender and other social issues into their

projects (while not requiring that the team meet more regularly in person as this is difficult given that SUB team members are working in various regions). Rather than developing a questionnaire of its own, SUB might consult MINGA to assess the potential to scale-up this activity to the ENRM level (since ENRM Program Officers participate in more than Program Initiative).

Also, carefully documenting the process of engaging with partners in project monitoring/trip reports and highlighting these when circulated to the team would facilitate sharing of experiences.

## 2. Observing SA/GA in Practice

A second suggestion strongly endorsed by several team members is the organization of a team visit to a SUB project actively engaging in SA/GA at the field level. Alternatively, smaller groups of POs could participate in field visits organized on a regional basis (according to the regional interest and focus of different POs). This would provide POs with an opportunity to engage with a partner together, to observe and learn about SA/GA in a particular regional and cultural context, and to see what SA/GA constitutes in everyday practice. Such an activity has the advantage of making the abstractions of social science research more relevant and comprehensible especially for POs with less SA/GA experience.

## 3. Learning from Partners: Developing Culturally-Appropriate Strategies to Engaging Research Partners

Several Program Officers have expressed that there needs to be something of a paradigm shift in the gender mainstreaming approach in SUB. Donor agencies, in their interactions with Southern partners, often assume the role of teacher or mentor in the process of developing and implementing new ideas and approaches. This approach however often leads to the “transfer” of concepts, methods, and approaches that are not culturally relevant and therefore not comprehensible or useful to partner organizations. In such cases, the transferred knowledge and ideas are rarely put into practice in a way that has a meaningful impact on the quality of research. To improve the relevance and usefulness of SUB’s support, the development of new ideas and approaches needs to be the product of genuine dialogue and shared learning between SUB and its different partners. This requires that Program Officers become more reflexive – reflecting on and understanding that their perspectives are partial (in both senses of the word) and are not necessarily appropriate or relevant in all contexts. The role of the Program Officer is then to facilitate and actively participate in a process of learning. This approach opens up new spaces for looking at gender and social issues from the unique perspective of SUB’s partners and encourages the development of new ideas, methods and approaches (and/or the adaptation of standard ones) that are more appropriate to partners needs. The ideas and approaches generated by/with partners can then be shared with SUB (and other PIs) to improve the relevance of the program’s mainstreaming approach. A shift of this type will

serve to better ensure that gender and other social issues are integrated into SUB-supported research and that this research has a meaningful impact on improving the equitable and sustainable use of biodiversity.

To put this into practice, SUB might consider developing projects, similar to the SA/GA project in Asia, in one or more parts of Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (perhaps in collaboration with one or more other ENRM PIs) to ensure that the capacity building needs of researchers in these two regions are equally addressed.

#### 4. Mainstreaming Gender across SUB's Areas of Emphasis

During SUB's most recent team meeting (June 2002), several members of the SUB team raised the concern that SA/GA must be integrated into to each of the program's new areas of emphasis. While it is crucial that SUB develop an area of emphasis focussing on building capacity in SA/GA, it is equally important that, in doing so, it not be isolated from SUB's other areas of emphasis. Gender and other social issues cross-cut all areas of biodiversity and NRM research and as such should be effectively integrated into each.

#### 5. Monitoring and Evaluation of the SUB's Mainstreaming Process

While a small number of monitoring and evaluation activities have been undertaken in the mainstreaming process to date (first round of interviews with POs, January 2001; mid-term evaluation; May-July 2002), the program would benefit from more systematic and consistent monitoring exercises to ensure that the program remains "on-track" and to communicate to the team whether and where the process is succeeding and falling short. As mentioned above, MINGA's electronic questionnaire is one possible exercise to achieve this. Over the mainstreaming process, this tool will likely yield rich information regarding changes in attitudes and behaviour of SUB teams members over time, salient gaps in the process, and potential areas where SUB is having an impact at the project level. As is discussed below, it is critical that monitoring and evaluation of the mainstreaming process be conducted with the participation of SUB's partners.

#### 6. Partner Participation in the Evaluation Process

In the process of developing the framework for this evaluation the SUB team reinforced the critical importance of including partners in the monitoring and evaluation process. Partner participation is necessary in order to ensure that partners' perspectives, interests and needs are incorporated into SUB's mainstreaming strategy from this point forward. To that end, in Phase II of the Mid-Term Evaluation, commencing in September 2002, Program Officers will consult selected project partners during scheduled regional visits to obtain their feedback related to SUB's gender mainstreaming approach at the program and project levels and their unique experiences in working to integrate SA/GA in their projects. A set of guiding questions has been developed (see Appendix 4) to assist

Program Officers in their discussions with partners. This information will then be collected, analyzed and fed into the mid-term evaluation process.

#### 7. New Round of Commitment Making and Follow-up

During SUB's Team Meeting in February 2000 in Uruguay the team developed its gender mainstreaming performance framework and each team member made one or more individual commitments related to mainstreaming SA/GA. At this critical stage in the mainstreaming process (mid-way through the process and following the mid-term evaluation) it is important that team members get together to produce a new set of individual and team commitments for the next year. Ideally, these commitments would be documented and monitored by the team leader to ensure that they are achieved. One team member suggested using the objective-setting process in the Performance Review and Appraisal System (PRAS) for this.

#### 8. Strengthening Links with Mainstreaming Efforts of other ENRM Programs

SUB's mainstreaming initiative would benefit greatly from improved interaction with other ENRM programs engaged in similar efforts to mainstream SA/GA into their programming and projects. Encouraging the exchange of experience, novel approaches, regional SA/GA contacts (e.g. resource people/institutions), among other things, would limit redundancy in efforts and expense on the part of programs with a shared vision for mainstreaming gender. IDRC's Gender Newsletter is one mechanism recently developed to "spread the word" about what IDRC's programs are doing in this area. Encouraging cross-PI projects in SA/GA would also go a long way towards pooling the experience and expertise of ENRM program staff, particularly where PIs work in the same region.

#### 9. Social Science Resource Person at the ENRM Level

Given that several of the ENRM programs are engaged in mainstreaming efforts of various types, it has been suggested that placing a resource person with experience and expertise in social science and environment and natural resource issues at the ENRM program area level would be extremely valuable at present. A social science resource person at this level could inform and coordinate mainstreaming activities among the ENRM PIs by, for example, consolidating lists of regional SA/GA resource people/institutions and documentation on proven tools and approaches (in SA/GA for ENRM research), providing specialized feedback in the proposal review process and in project monitoring, providing back-up to mainstreaming efforts at the PI level, and serving as a conduit between ENRM and the GU (to name only a few possible examples).

## 10. Networking with Biodiversity Initiatives Outside IDRC

It has been suggested that SUB would benefit from networking with organizations outside IDRC working on biodiversity issues to share SUB's gender mainstreaming approach and learn about the mainstreaming efforts of other biodiversity programs/organizations in developed and developing countries, and to strengthen dialogue and the exchange of ideas on gender and biodiversity issues. POs should be encouraged to incorporate discussion of SUB's gender mainstreaming work into visits with other donor and research organizations and in their networking activities during conferences and similar fora.

### 5.2 Recommendations: Mainstreaming Social/Gender Analysis in SUB-Supported Projects

SUB team members have also identified several recommendations to strengthen the program's approach to mainstreaming gender in SUB-supported projects.

#### 1. Using Social Analysis as an Entry Point

Social analysis may prove to be a more appropriate entry point to engaging with partners in order to mainstream gender issues at the project level. For a diversity of reasons discussed earlier in this report, "social analysis" (rather than gender analysis) is often viewed as a more culturally appropriate approach in the experience of many SUB POs as it avoids imposing Western cultural concepts and values on partner organizations and provides a sounder platform on which to collaborate with partners in order to build a working conceptual, methodological analytical framework that reflects the complex social context in which a project is situated.

At this stage in the mainstreaming process it is critical that the program encourages a flexible, regionally based, and culturally appropriate approach to mainstreaming social analysis at the project level that is defined with and for SUB's partners and ensures they have access to the capacity building resources necessary to implement social analysis in a meaningful way.

#### 2. New Approaches to Capacity Building in SA/GA

The review of selected SUB projects and discussions with SUB staff demonstrated that the capacity of partners in SA/GA constitutes the single greatest challenge to mainstreaming SA/GA at the project level. As discussed earlier in the report, many partners lack the necessary skills (conceptual, methodological, analytical, and writing/documentation) to design and implement sound SA/GA in the field and to analyze and document their findings in a meaningful way. Drawing on the SA/GA program in Asia as a potential learning study, POs are encouraged to explore more

regionally based opportunities to expand the capacity of researchers. There needs to be a clearer focus on iterative training/learning approaches that include activities such as identifying and linking regional resource people/institutions (with relevant experience in gender and biodiversity research) to active SUB projects, facilitating south-south networking and mentoring among researchers/institutions interested and/or active in integrating SA/GA into biodiversity and NRM research, supporting the development of culturally appropriate tools and research approaches, and supporting regionally based training programs and linking this training to project development. This type of regionally based, Southern-driven capacity building approach is likely to produce more culturally appropriate and sustainable approaches to SA/GA.

### 3. Monitoring SA/GA Processes at the Project Level

According to most SUB staff there needs to be greater monitoring of SA/GA processes at the project level to ensure that SA/GA is effectively integrated into SUB-supported research and that the capacity building needs of partners are being identified and addressed. Program Officers need to better integrate SA/GA issues into their monitoring visits to project partners and ensure more consistent electronic communication with partners throughout the project cycle (especially in terms of feedback from technical reports). Greater emphasis on project monitoring and follow-up in the PRAS might help to encourage this.

SUB team members also indicated that there needs to be a greater emphasis on team-based monitoring of SUB projects given the diverse expertise and experience of team members (related to SA/GA) and the turnover of SUB staff over time. Team-based monitoring would ensure that information and experience related to gender mainstreaming processes at the project level are not lost when a project changes hands (for example, with the departure of staff from the program).

### 4. Strengthening Research Documentation

Documentation of the interaction between program staff and partners through electronic and mail correspondence and project monitoring/trip and project completion reports is a vital source of information in the monitoring and evaluation of the mainstreaming process. There needs to be more consistent documentation of such interactions by all team members.

At the project level, partners need to be encouraged to improve their documentation of the process of integrating SA/GA into their work and the findings from said research. A set of narrative reporting guidelines may better ensure that partners know what is expected in terms of documentation of the SA/GA process.

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

I would like to conclude by saying that my participation in this evaluation has been a rewarding experience. I have learned a great deal from the experiences of SUB's program staff in their endeavours to integrate social analysis into the work they support. The most important finding is of course that gender mainstreaming is an enormously complex and difficult undertaking that demands a great deal of time, effort and patience. The SUB team is currently engaged in a very meaningful learning process that has revealed that "gender" means different things to different people in different contexts. Their experiences reflect a growing appreciation of and respect for such differences and a commitment to engage partners in a way that is culturally sensitive and relevant. Engaging partners in a way that encourages south-south learning, facilitates regional level training and support programs, supports the development of culturally appropriate SA/GA tools and approaches, and builds the capacity of institutions to mainstream gender will go a long way towards ensuring that SUB-supported research promotes the equitable and sustainable use and management of biodiversity and has a positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of people in the South.

## **Appendix 1 SUB/IDRC Documents Reviewed**

- Adamo, A. and A. Hovorka, 1998. Guidelines for Integrating Gender Analysis into Biodiversity Research. Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Program Initiative, IDRC.
- Arnott, S. 2001. Are we there yet? Report on the First Round of Interviews with SUB PI Staff.
- Arnott, S. 2000. Mainstreaming Gender in SUB: Developing a Performance Framework to Evaluate Success. Internal Report.
- Arnott, S. 2000. Mainstreaming Gender in SUB: Developing a Performance Framework to Evaluate Success. Report on Gender Mainstreaming Session held during SUB Team Meeting, February 2000.
- Arnott, S. 1999. Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming in SUB: Identifying Regional Needs and Priorities presentation by Sheri Arnott at SUB Team meeting, February 2000.
- Mackenzie, A.F.D. 2001. Towards a conceptual framework for exploring the relationship between tenurial rights to agricultural land and biodiversity. IDRC commissioned paper.
- Satheesh, P.V. 1997. Issues concerning gender and biodiversity. Deccan Development Society, Hyderabad, India.
- Scholey, P. 2001. Gender Unit Programming in Research and Mainstreaming, 2001-2004.
- Spendjian, G. and A. Whyte. 1999. Review of SUB Program Initiative of IDRC, 1997-2000.
- SUB, 1997. Prospectus.
- SUB, 2000. Prospectus.
- SUB, 2000. SUB Program Strategy and Workplan 2000-2004.
- SUB, 2000. SUB PI Africa Meeting. EARO Officers, 11-12 May 2000. Meeting Notes.
- SUB, 2001. SUB Program Initiative Strategic Planning Meeting, November 2001.
- SUB, 2002. Strengthening SUB's Impact on the Equitable and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Building Capacity in SA/GA, Draft Document.
- Vernooy, R. 2001. Harvesting together: the International Development Research Centre's support for research on agrobiodiversity (results and challenges).

Woodley, E. 2002. Review of Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Program Initiative's Use of Local and Indigenous Knowledge in Selected Projects.

Woolfrey, J. 2001. IDRC Learning Study: Special Expert Advisory Fund for Mainstreaming Gender in IDRC.

## **Appendix 2 List of SUB Projects Reviewed**

101095	Building Capacity for Social/Gender Analysis in Asia: An Umbrella Program (active)
100421	Gender, Knowledge and Innovations of Biodiversity in India / Women, Wisdom and Well-being (Phase III) (active)
100763	Conservation of Medicinal Plants for Sustainable Livelihoods in Nepal (active)
100371	Indigenous Vegetables for Food Security (Zimbabwe) Phase II (active)
100568	Conservation of Embera and Kuna Medicinal Plants and Associated Traditional Knowledge (Panama) Phase II (active)
100356	Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) Phase II (active)
100367	TRAMIL Phase III (closed)
03743 98-0002	Gender, Genetic Resources & Indigenous Minorities / Gender, Ethnicity and Agrobiodiversity (Nepal) (closed)
55418 98-5581	Ethnomedicine and Medicinal Plant Conservation Workshops in Rachuonyo District (closed)
04386 98-0030	Food Security in South Asia: Enhancing Community Capacity to Generate Knowledge and Influence Policy (active)
003747 97-0024	Sustainability of Green Forest Products (Guatemala) II (closed)

### **Appendix 3 Discussion Guide for Partner Consultation**

The following discussion guide is to be used during the process of partner consultation during Phase II of the Gender Mainstreaming Mid-Term Evaluation. Program Officers are encouraged to use this as a guide only and to explore other issues that may be context specific. The questions are meant to be open-ended and used as a platform to stimulate discussion between POs and their partners.

This exercise can similarly be used as a monitoring and evaluation tool during regular visits to SUB-supported project teams. As a regular monitoring and evaluation tool, POs can explore one or more of these questions depending on the project visited, the experience of the project team, and the specific interests of a PO during a given visit.

#### **Guiding Questions:**

1. How would you characterize the capacity of your team to design and incorporate SA/GA research activities into your project?
2. What experience and expertise does your team possess in SA/GA? Is there a social scientist on the team?
3. Were the capacity building needs of your team identified? How?
4. Have you incorporated any SA/GA training activities into your project? Please describe. Did they address the capacity building needs of your team?
5. Have you identified any social science resource people/institutions in the country or region that you can draw on to provide guidance on SA/GA in your research?
6. Do you have contact with other researchers / institutions working in SA/GA in the country or region? If so, what is your relationship with them?
7. In the context of your project, what social issues are considered relevant to the research? How were relevant social issues identified and by whom?
8. How are you integrating/examining these social issues into your research activities? What methods and approaches are used? How were methods and tools identified?
9. What were the strengths and shortcomings of the methods/approach used? How did your team address any shortcomings? Are there other methods you are interested in developing, adapting, and testing in the field?
10. What types of data have the SA/GA methods produced? What has the data told you about the biodiversity conservation and use? Are there new social research questions that have emerged from your research findings to date? How will your team address these?

11. Has the incorporation of SA/GA improved the relevancy and impact of your research? How?
12. What has been the response of your research centre to your work in SA/GA? Are others (e.g. colleagues) interested in what you are doing in SA/GA?
13. Have you been documenting the SA/GA research process? Can you include a discussion of this process in your reporting to SUB/IDRC?
14. How could your work with SA/GA be strengthened?
15. Where can SUB/IDRC strengthen its support to your SA/GA efforts?

## Appendix 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in SUB

Progress Marker	Indicator	Information required	Info Source
<p>Program staff who systematically reflect on and evaluate the gender/social implications of the work they support, integrate this reflection and share it with the team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All project data disaggregated by sex (where appropriate)</li> <li>-All projects include a gender/social analysis as a research priority</li> <li>- Appraisal and proposal capture the dialogue between PI staff and Project Team on the relevance of gender to project</li> <li>-Trip reports summarize discussion of progress in integrating gender analysis in project</li> <li>- PI staff regularly consolidating and sharing ‘lessons learned’ to team and research partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who has defined the research priorities? Are both men and women involved in the definition and design of research?</li> <li>-Was a gender analysis included in the project proposal? Why or why not? What specific steps were taken to insure gender considerations were included in the project?</li> <li>- Were both men and women’s perspectives represented in meetings with project team, communities? How? If not, why?</li> <li>-Are the project components dealing with gender analysis on track? Why or why not?</li> <li>-Does SUB have a mechanism in place allowing PI staff to regularly report successes and difficulties in gender mainstreaming? Is it used? Are these lessons synthesized and shared with partners, other PI’s, the GSD? How? By whom?</li> <li>- How has including gender considerations enhanced research results? Were new conservation strategies, technologies, methodologies customized to differing gendered needs, interests, roles, rights and responsibilities? How? What specific benefits have women and men experienced? How have the options and opportunities available to men and women been advanced or reduced by new strategies? How has this analysis informed the conclusions and recommendations stemming from various research projects within the PI? Do men and women have access to the research outputs? How?</li> </ul>	<p>Proposal</p> <p>Proposal/ Appraisal</p> <p>Proposal/ Appraisal/ correspondence Trip reports</p> <p>PI Reporting mechanism (Progress reports, etc)</p> <p>Technical reports PCR’s</p>

Progress Marker	Indicator	Information required	Info Source
PI staff working in a fully gender friendly environment within IDRC	-Recommendations from IDRC's Workload Study incorporated into PI work	<p>- Were the results of the Workload study presented to the Team? How? Was there an opportunity for Team members to discuss them?</p> <p>Which recommendations were integrated into the PI workplan? Why? Were these decided by consensus?</p>	<p>PI staff/TL/RO</p> <p>PI and individual workplans</p>
PI staff working in a fully gender friendly environment in SUB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PI staff 'Gender Manual' produced</li> <li>- 'Are we there yet?' Award in place</li> </ul> <p>All PI staff taking Annual leave</p>	<p>Have PI staff seen and read the manual? Has it been useful for their work? Do PI staff feel that they have access to gender mainstreaming resources when required?</p> <p>Are achievements in gender mainstreaming recognized and rewarded?</p> <p>Do staff feel they can take their full allotment of annual leave? Why or why not? Are accommodations made for family responsibilities? How?</p>	<p>PI staff</p> <p>PI reports</p> <p>PI staff</p>

Progress Marker	Indicator	Information required	Info Source
<p>Program Officers engaging with researchers in social/gender analysis</p>	<p>-PI staff feel competent to address gender issues in the work they support</p> <p>Project partners feel competent to address gender issues</p>	<p>- PI 'Gender Manual' produced and used by PI staff          - 'Gender Guidelines' used in proposal development?          -Were gender/social analysis training workshops organized for/and attended by PI staff? Do PI staff feel 'comfortable' with different approaches/theoretical underpinnings/methodologies of gender analysis          -Was there an explicit assessment of the capacity of research team to incorporate social/gender analysis? How were any deficiencies addressed?          - Do PI staff discuss SUB progress in gender mainstreaming with partners? Are these discussions shared with the Team? How?</p> <p>-Were gender/social analysis training workshops organized for partners?          - Do projects include a gender analysis?          -Do project workshops include a forum to share lessons learned in gender analysis for the PI and for new project partners?</p>	<p>PI team</p> <p>notes on file of gender workshops / PI Staff</p> <p>Trip reports /project file correspondence</p> <p>project files/ Gender mainstreaming fund file</p>

**Progress Marker****Indicator****Information required****Info Source**

<p>Program Initiative Staff linking researchers to the resources they need to complete their capacity for gender analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of research team to address gender issues</li>   <li>-Gender Analysis Training workshops organized for project teams</li>   <li>-SUB/IDRC has an updated database regional gender and biodiversity/natural resource management expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Does the team include someone with gender/social analysis experience? Does the project team include a woman? Were local women's organizations included in the project ? How?</li> <li>-Were relevant documents/literature about the gender/social dimensions of biodiversity use identified and reviewed in project proposal? How were any deficiencies addressed?</li>   <li>-At what point in the project cycle was the training organized? - Who participated in the training? Was it useful? Was the training geared to the specific needs of the project team? (i.e. was an opportunity provided for participants to apply training to their project?)</li>   <li>- Are PI staff identifying appropriate regional gender expertise/training opportunities and sharing this information with partners, the SUB Team, other PI's, GSD? Do PI staff have easy access to database?</li>   <li>- Does SUB support training of gender and biodiversity expertise?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appraisal / proposal PI staff</li>   <li>Technical reports/ PCR's Project leaders</li>   <li>Database</li>   <li>PI Budget worksheets /Annual reports</li> </ul>
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