



Feed the Future Bangladesh Aquaculture Activity

Gender Strategy (Draft)

Summary

The aim of this gender strategy is to support gender integration across Feed the Future Bangladesh Aquaculture Activities and to provide a road map for implementation of best practices and lessons learned of last four years for empowerment of women in playing due roles in decision making being a market actor in aquaculture sector. This strategy has been prepared in line with the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH) Gender strategy.

1 Gender and Fisheries in Bangladesh

Women are often systematically disadvantaged from gaining access to favorable livelihood opportunities across various segments of aquaculture value chains, often hidden and performing undesirable and underpaid roles. Gender discrimination persists in Bangladesh, and this is highlighted by the fact that Bangladesh ranks 135th in the Global Gender Gap Index 2016 in relation to economic participation and opportunity (Muller et al. 2017). With a projected population of 179 million by 2025, there is a clear role for aquaculture in Bangladesh to make important contributions to the national economy, creating meaningful income opportunities in the value chain for hundreds of thousands of poor households, including women, men and youth, improving nutrition through greater access to nutrient-rich fish, primarily for women of reproductive age, infants and young children and improving related dietary, hygiene and health practices

The Feed the Future Bangladesh Aquaculture Project (BAA) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project goal is to: Inclusive aquaculture sector growth through a market system approach. Where in value chain system women has been mostly excluded.

In terms of gender inclusion, the sector has seen a wide growth in women's involvement, be it in responsibilities around managing homestead ponds or employment in various processing factories or business shop. However gendered aquaculture value chain analyses by WorldFish have shown that women are largely invisible in various parts of the value chain as entry into or benefits from aquaculture livelihoods are hard to equitably derive, given that the sector is largely patriarchal and male driven. Social norms around mobility and purdah as well as perceived social and personal risks and domestic work responsibilities also hindered women's participation.

Why this strategy?

Feed the Future Bangladesh Aquaculture Activity (BAA) is working towards inclusive growth in the aquaculture sector of Bangladesh through a market systems approach. BAA defines inclusiveness not only in terms of concerning poor and smallholder farmers, but also around being especially inclusive for

women, men, girls and boys of different age groups considering the differences in context and culture in ZoI and ZoR area.

To support BAA activities to become more inclusive, this Gender Strategy has been developed. The strategy's aim is to guide and facilitate the integration of gender across all activities with a specific attention to opportunities for more inclusive approaches for women throughout BAA's approach, partnership development, design, communication, facilitation, implementation and monitoring of the Activity. BAA requires gender strategies tailored to working with a variety of different private sector partners and NGO partners around systemic change amongst market actors and nutrition issues. BAA has a wide range of partners in different subsectors of aquaculture sector in Bangladesh where contexts are diverse in terms of gender. Also, from nutrition perspective, BAA is working mostly with NGO partners to work on dietary diversity, intra household food distribution and hygiene practices where gender dimensions has different dynamics and implications. This strategy constitutes one of the main building blocks towards BAA's efforts to engage in inclusive market systems.

Inclusive market systems are defined as market systems that engage and benefit a range of actors including the poor, women, youth, ethnic minorities and/or other marginalized groups who are often excluded—or even exploited—by traditional market systems.

Who is this strategy for?

The aim is for the strategy to be used by the members of the BAA team to support integrating inclusiveness of gender. The document provides guidance around key principles and strategies for integrating gender as appropriate in delivering and facilitating activities through sub-grantees.

What does this strategy cover?

This strategy covers significance and relevance of a Gender Inclusion Strategy for BAA as well as operational direction for inclusion of women by engaging men addressing conventional exclusions for program design, partnerships, communications and research perspective towards achieving the results of BAA concerning aquaculture market systems and nutrition

2 BAA objectives and Activities

In line with the results framework the specific objectives (IRs) of the activity are:

IR 1: Increased productivity of aquaculture production systems.

IR 2: Strengthened aquaculture market system, with particular attention to expanding opportunities for women and youth.

IR 3: Increased awareness and adoption of nutrition-related behaviors, with a particular focus on women and youth.

BAA project aims to achieve inclusive aquaculture sector growth through a market system approach.

BAA Project Gender Strategy Overview

The gender strategy of the BAA project aims to promote gender equality as well as strengthen institutional capacity vis-a-vis gender through equitable approach.

The specific objectives and targets of BAA are:

Objective 1: Increased productivity of aquaculture production systems.

Aquaculture development in Bangladesh has been constrained by a lack of high-quality seed and feed as well as poor management practices. To address these, BAA, in collaboration with private sector actors, aims to i) increase the availability of improved fish seed, ii) increase the availability of affordable, high-quality fish feed and iii) increase adoption of best pond management practices.

Objective 2: Strengthened aquaculture market systems, with particular attention to expanding opportunities for women.

Aquaculture market growth has been driven by increased production. However, despite clearly expressed consumer concerns over farmed fish safety and quality, postharvest handling and market supply chains are poorly managed. The result is reduced profitability across many key aquaculture value chains, threatening the sustainable growth of the sector. Meanwhile, despite the growing importance of farmed fish to the national economy, the sector has little representation in policymaking bodies or ability to address consumer concerns. To address these issues, the Activity, in collaboration with private sector actors, will i) increase market linkages both with backward and forward market actors, ii) increase engagement of the private sector in aquaculture markets and iii) improve the enabling environment for inclusive aquaculture sector growth.

Objective 3: Increased awareness and adoption of nutrition-related behaviors, with a particular focus on women.

Despite considerable progress, undernutrition rates remain high for the poor and vulnerable. Poor dietary quality leads to inadequate consumption of key vitamins and minerals, contributing to childhood stunting, cognitive impairment, reduced productivity and lowered earning potential, thereby undermining national development. These issues can be addressed through increased consumption of fish; a rich source of micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron, calcium, zinc and essential fatty acids, particularly of children and pregnant and lactating women. The Activity will, in a gender-equitable manner, focus on i) increasing nutrition awareness and practices and ii) improving access to diverse and nutritious food.

Targets

1. 400,000 men, women and youth in the Feed the Future ZOI and ZoR have improved access to better quality aquaculture inputs, services and/or market channels.
2. 30 percent increase in investment by the private sector in the Feed the Future ZOI and ZoR in aquaculture production and markets related to inputs and services (seed, feed, production/market-related information, technology, etc.).
3. 30 percent increase in productivity from ponds and ghers in the Feed the Future ZOI and ZoR.
4. 20 percent increase in the number of households adopting improved nutritional practices (consumption of nutritious food, dietary diversity and hygiene practices)

5 Strategic Interventions for Addressing Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment

In conjunction with the systematic change for gender integration, BAA project already achieved some proven results by collaborating with United Purpose and collaboration has been started with Enliven for women economic empowerment in aquaculture sector. These are:

United Purpose created income opportunities for women in aquaculture and also provided a needed products for increased production of mola, a small fish high in micro-nutrients and use of gillnets.

Objective 1: Increased productivity of aquaculture production systems.

Capacity development of women fish producer's group members on improved farming practices to increase productivity.

1.1 10,000 women producer group members received training on improved farming practices, use of gillnets, nutrition consumption through additional production, processing and marketing after meeting family needs of nutrition through mola fish.

10,000 producer group members received training on seven modules namely: Pre-stock management, fingerlings stock management, post stock management, fish collection storage and marketing, food and nutrition, gillnet production technology and fish collection technique, gender in fish production. Homework and fish distribution.

Having learning from training they are applying in at their small scale pond close to their residence. As a result their production has been increased and selling mola fish close to their Women Business Center after meeting family consumption for ensuring nutrition. It also helping to increase their mobility, access to control over income and decision making skill at household level.

-Face to face advice by Women Business Center members about use and benefit of gill net; molafish, nutrition, gender approach to 10,000 women producer group members at Khulna and Bagerhut.

Beyond training, Women business center members are providing face to face advice to the women producer group members on application of fish feed, fish medicine, use of lime for cleaning pond during selling aquatic products from their shop. Individual level learning is ensuring besides collective learning. It is helping to develop their problem solving skill, presentation skill, communication and coordination skill of women business center members. Win-win benefit for both parties is ensuring through this process.

-Establishment of 500 DEMO ponds in Khulna and Bagerhut for sharing result of improved farming practices towards increased production.

500 demo ponds has been established at six Upazillas namely: Botiaghata, Rupsha, Bagerhut Sadar, Fakirhat, Mollahat and Chitolmari.

The idea of demo ponds establishment was to disseminate learning on hands on practice for farming mola fish and apply lessoned has been received from training. Demo result has been share among near about

12000 women producer group members to share and gather experiences. This activities also helped to develop the skill from learn to each other as well as ensure peer learning culture.

Objective 2: Strengthened aquaculture market systems, with particular attention to expanding opportunities for women.

-Needs and interest identified of 100 business women to run their business within COVID-19 situation. 100 business women were interviewed to have their needs and interests towards adopt their business in current COVID-19 situation. Interviewed has been done by following a questionnaire survey tools. A module has been developed based on the identified needs and interest.

Three days Business Development Service training for women market actors to ensure inclusive business.

This activity on process to conduct.

Counselling trained market actors through local mentor and business student engagement.

16 business students and local mentors get ready to provide mentoring/counselling support immediate after three days training.

-Build capacity of women entrepreneurs through ToT for increase their knowledge, skill and transformative behavior on mola farming practices and business model for gillnets promotion.

100 members of 20 women business centers is the core of business model for “Women business in gillnets” Project. Their capacity building on farming mola fish for increase production, marketing is potentially important to expand their customer base, backward and forward market linkages with value chain market actors and selling aquatic products from their shop. 100 women business center members received ToT to build their capacity for managing their profitable business.

-Development and dissemination of marketing leaflets for forward and backward linkages by 100 Women business center members.

To increase their customer base, increased linkages with backward and forward market actors 1,70,000 leaflets has been distributed among producer group members, market actors and consumer to increase their awareness on mola fish farming, processing, marketing, intra household food distribution for ensuring nutrition and market mobility.

Increased awareness and adoption of nutrition-related behaviors, with a particular focus on women.

-Broadcast advertisement over 150 days in local TV channel on consumption of mola fish and nutrition.

For wider awareness creation broadcasted advertisement 150 days in local TV channel of Khulna and Bagerhat. Near about 37,000 viewers were under this coverage. Through this process the identity of women business center has been increased among 1000 consumers and forward market linkages has been established. An outlet has been established at gollamari Khulna operated by Women business center as their social enterprises.

-Sending fortnightly messages to 22,000 producers, entrepreneurs, traders and consumers about quality mola fish, gillnet, nutrition.

Text messages shared through mobile among 22000 producer group members to create awareness on nutrition consumption and source of information to have access to fresh mola fish.

Gender inclusion in Market System Development.



6 Gender Capacity Building and Institutional Arrangements for women inclusion

Implementation of the BAA Gender Strategy requires capacity development of project teams, including partners, on undertaking gender aware impacts related research and development focus. It will also require organizational sensitization relating to gender responsive policy as reflected in the recruitment, particularly for the WorldFish human resources department. A blended learning model of gender capacity development that will focus on enabling: **learning-for-action** through formal learning of new knowledge;

learning-in-action through applying knowledge in practice; and **learning-from-action** through reflecting on experience and raising questions about ways of thinking and acting.

BAA will ensure equitable policies in its institutional arrangements by observing and wherever possible, ensuring partners' attention to:

- **Equal opportunity employment** offered and job advertisements that encourage both men and women (disadvantaged group) to apply and are advertised in sources that reach mixed audiences.
- **Gendered budgets** will be allocated in the project, in line with CGIAR FISH policies.
- Attention will be paid to maintaining **diversity and equality** in staffing procedures as well as in attendance and participation in research, trainings, workshops, conferences, and meetings.
- **Gender-neutral and responsive language** will be used in trainings, reports, publications, and meetings.
- **Gender related targets** will be integrated in staff performance appraisal to ensure staff commitment to gender integration.
- **Sex-disaggregated monitoring system** will be established with gender sensitive indicators and gender equality objectives.
- **Zero tolerance for sexual harassment and gender based violence** will be maintained both at the project level as well as at the institutional level.

Integrating gender across BAA activities for women inclusion

Number of entry points for BAA being more inclusive for women.

-Partners Selection Process and Co-developing interventions: Gender Inclusion will be addressed in the solicitation process for achieving all or any intermediate results.

Capacity Building and Sensitization: In all the capacity development trainings facilitated by the BAA team and partner staff, inclusion of women, men, boys and girls will be emphasized to flag BAA's priority to be inclusive irrespective of sex, age, religion, marital status, ethnicity etc.

Communications: Applying gender lens in content development and designing communication materials

Understand and avoid sexist language and gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes in official correspondence.

Research/studies: BAA will carry out a range of in-depth and quick studies to inform program implementations per the findings from research and studies.

Additionally, in line with FISH gender strategy, BAA will draw on the FISH Gender Integration Guidelines and key principles of the FISH Gender Strategy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning should play a very important role to monitor, capture and communicate gender and youth inclusiveness through its activities. Collection, preservation and analysis of sex and age disaggregated data can bring effective learning along with the progress of BAA. These findings should be communicated specifically as well. Below are some specific aspects on this regard: A gender-transformative approach to research is an approach that “can be applied within research to examine, question and, most fundamentally, enable changes in inequitable gender norms, attitudes, behaviors and practices and the related imbalances of power. Through encouraging critical awareness among men and women of social inequality and practices, [gender-transformative approaches] help people challenge and re-shape distribution of and control over resources, allocation of duties between men and women, and access to and influence in decision making.

In other words, a gender-transformative approach seeks to generate understanding regarding gender and the visible manifestations of gender inequalities and inequities (such as gendered roles and relations and their outcomes), and to catalyze shifts in the norms, attitudes, and formal and informal rules that underpin these visible manifestations of inequality.

Gender Analysis: Design and Analysis of data in baseline and end line evaluations should specifically identify and communicate qualitative and quantitative findings on the gender dynamics in the reports considering inter sectional ties (religion, level of education, marital status, status and role of men and women in the household, status of the area (rural/urban), etc.). The gender analysis will be informed by the FISH Gender integration guidelines. Also, specific analysis on - i) gendered decision making in fish and non-fish activities among smallholder farmers, ii) time use of the household members in sharing household chores by sex and age groups, iii) market mobility of farmer women, iv) Gender norms and attitude is required in the baseline and end line evaluations

8 Reporting, Documentation, and Dissemination

As BAA continues to build its reputation as a leader in gender and development research and practice, it is increasingly important to report and promote our gender-related strategies, approaches, and results. The project is particularly well poised to contribute to the broader gender and development community through our capacity to generate evidence regarding the effect of gender norms and inequalities, and the ways in which gender-integrated programs and approaches can reduce gender inequality, raise women’s status as market actors. Gender related results will be reported to USAID in fortnightly, quarterly and annual report, documented, and disseminated along with women’s economic empowerment.

9 Conclusion

Unless both women and men are able to attain their social, economic, and political aspirations, and contribute to and shape decisions about the future, the global community will not successfully promote peace and prosperity. Therefore, capacity building for gender research among stakeholder institutions and communities should be continually supported and reinforced. The inclusion of gender, particularly in

fisheries programs, has a slippery habit of disappearing. A gender approach fits well within market system development to resource management.

DRAFT