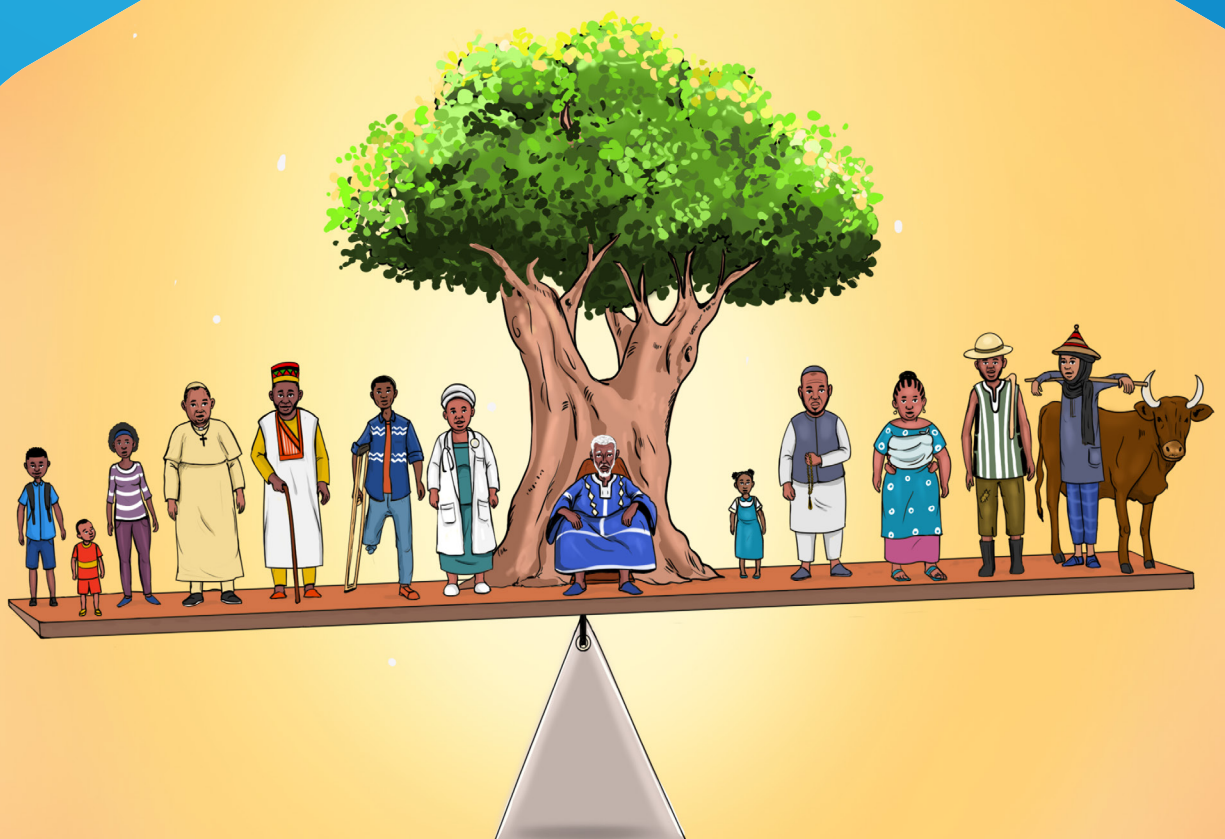




INTEGRATING CONFLICT SENSITIVITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION INTO PROJECT PROGRAMMING

PRACTICAL GUIDE



FOREWORD

It is with pride and gratitude that I write this foreword. As SNV's Country Director for Burkina Faso, Benin and then Mali, I was lucky enough to be involved in this initiative from the outset, with the constant support of the management teams. From 2021 to 2024, I monitored and encouraged the process until it reached maturity. Today, from my position at head office, I am honoured to be able to bear witness to this. This guide and the accompanying toolkit are the fruit of a collective practical experience, focused on the impact on target audiences, and based on two levers that are essential to our actions: gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) on the one hand, and conflict-sensitive project management (CSPM) on the other hand.

This work arose from questions raised as part of the [MOPSS](#) project about how to tackle the issues of GESI and conflict sensitivity in the increasingly fragile and volatile contexts of West Africa. It was then developed through the reflections and practices of the teams, particularly around interventions such as the social engineering required for the construction and sustainable management of pastoral infrastructures for peaceful transhumance. How can we invest without causing division? How can we foster inclusive and transparent governance to promote social cohesion? These questions, rooted in the reality on the ground, laid the foundations for a unique learning and co-construction process.

Between September 2021 and March 2025, successive workshops were organised in five countries - Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Niger and Ghana - bringing together project teams with a twofold objective: to integrate GESI and CSPM approaches more concretely into the project cycle, and to cross-fertilise experiences to learn together more effectively. The process was distinguished by its cross-sectoral (energy, agriculture, water), cross-thematic (climate, governance, GESI) and inter-country dimensions. It has enabled genuine cross-fertilisation between programmes, promoting joint learning within each country, but also between countries. Each workshop enriched the others. More than just an exchange of best practice, it was a collective effort to weave a more global, coherent

vision tailored to the complexity of the contexts in which we operate.

This approach was based on the resources of the projects themselves: it was co-financed by them, fed by their expertise and supported by their teams. From the very first workshops, I was struck by the passion with which the teams got involved, thanks to the participative approach, the facilitation, exchange and co-construction methods. What I saw at work were people committed, ready to reflect on their values, challenge themselves, learn together and adapt their practices. This approach has sown a strong desire for transmission and shared responsibility for putting these two approaches into practice in their contexts. It has led to concrete action plans, carried out by the participating projects. This is one of the great strengths of this process.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the two people who accompanied and shaped this process: Vikki Grime, conflict sensitivity advisor for the MOPSS project, and Jacqueline Terrillon, GESI consultant. Their alliance was invaluable. Together, they were able to combine technical rigour, sincere commitment and intellectual curiosity. Thanks to their cross-fertilisation, they were able to weave a common space between two often separate approaches, moving forward in a spirit of collaboration, with rigour and humanity.

Finally, I would like to thank all the projects and teams in Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Niger and Ghana for their commitment. A special mention goes to the MOPSS and [RESCOM](#) projects, which co-financed and supported this initiative with conviction. This guide reflects what we can achieve when we learn together, across sectors, across countries, across people, defending our shared values of inclusion, peace and justice.

Jeanette DE REGT

*Acting Global Lead Gender Equality
and Social Inclusion*

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Conflict sensitivity at SNV

The integration of conflict sensitivity into SNV programming was initiated in 2019 as part of the «Peaceful cross-border pastoral mobility and social stability in the Sahel» (MOPSS) project, at the instigation of the donor, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), during the negotiation of funding for this regional project. Given the sensitive nature of the project and the growing insecurity in the Sahel, the donor commissioned an external review of the conflict sensitivity of the project document. Since then, conflict sensitivity has been adopted by other SNV projects in the Sahel (e.g., [ECDD](#), [MODHEM+DDC](#) and [RESCOM](#) in Burkina Faso, [PGLR+](#) in Mali and [Pro-ARIDES](#)), and dedicated posts have been filled within some projects.

1.2 Methodology

Action research in Burkina Faso

This guide and the accompanying toolkit are the result of action research carried out by teams from several SNV projects in Burkina Faso as part of reflection and co-creation workshops held between September 2021 and July 2023. These one-day workshops brought together between 10 and 15 participants from the above-mentioned projects, in particular specialists dedicated to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and conflict-sensitive project management (CSPM), and sometimes their partners. Projects aimed at developing value chains and entrepreneurship were also included in the discussions, namely the Local Governance of Forest Resources Project (PGLRF) and the Support Programme for the Promotion of Agricultural Entrepreneurship ([PAPEA](#)). Each workshop was devoted to a theme common to the participating projects, namely:

- **Workshop 1:** Gender dynamics and the role of women actors in social engineering during the implementation of infrastructure investments
- **Workshop 2:** Inclusive and conflict-sensitive consultation frameworks
- **Workshop 3:** Reflection on the gender-specific impact of conflicts and gender identities: toxic and positive masculinities and femininities
- **Workshop 4:** Developing value chains for women and young people
- **Workshop 5:** GESI and conflict sensitivity in advocacy actions
- **Workshop 6:** Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation and GESI

A follow-up workshop was held midway, in June 2022, to check that lessons learnt from the first three workshops had been applied, and that the tools developed were being used to learn from them, identify the challenges and capacity-building needs of the teams, and adjust the tools if necessary.

Sharing and enhancing the GESI/CSPM integrated approach

Reflection then continued in Mali (2 cohorts, in January and November 2023), Benin (February 2023 and March 2024), Niger (May 2024) and Ghana (March 2025) and the GESI/CSPM approach was built around the project cycle. This was an opportunity to develop a more global and coherent approach.

In this way, it was possible to tackle the two cross-disciplinary approaches through the key stages of:

1. Context analysis - including project-context interactions.
2. Planning and identifying strategies to avoid harm and have a positive impact on gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion.
3. Gender- and conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.

The guide and teaching materials were developed by a GESI consultant and an SNV conflict sensitivity advisor. The approach favoured group work and encouraged each project team to reflect on its activities using checklists and practical exercises, including case studies. These reflections were summarised in the workshop reports, which provided input for this guide and gave rise to diagnostic, monitoring and/or awareness-raising tools (see the accompanying toolbox).

The approach emphasised learning by doing. It was participative and iterative and allowed for the adjustment of methodologies and tools. It was based on the principle that it is easier to convince those around you (teams, consultants, collaborators, implementing partners and stakeholders), if you have convincing arguments in favour of GESI and conflict sensitivity, and practical tools to facilitate the implementation of these two cross-disciplinary approaches in project interventions. Similarly, it is easier to convince people if you yourself are convinced of the need to apply these approaches. This involves a process of reflection on one's values and one's own identity as a man or woman (see CARE's Inner Space Outer Face (ISOFI) approach).¹

¹ CARE and International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), [ISOFI Toolkit: Tools for learning and action on gender and sexuality](#), developed as part of the Inner Spaces Outer Faces Initiative (ISOFI), 2007..

1.3 Limitations

Complexity of the two approaches

Given that these two cross-cutting themes each have their own objectives, tools, methodologies and indicators, participants may feel «overloaded» or overwhelmed by their complexity if they are addressed simultaneously. The strategy consisted of 1) tackling them simultaneously in a concrete way, in practice through joint project interventions (Burkina Faso experience) 2) tackling them separately, but focusing on one or other of the approaches, and following the project cycle (Mali experience, January 2023) 3) tackling them simultaneously by building on their common points but focusing on the GESI approach and tools (Benin, February 2023). During the second training course in Mali in November 2023, the one in Benin in March 2024, the one in Niger in May 2024, and the one in Ghana in March 2025, the two themes were addressed simultaneously over five days, with more emphasis on conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation and adaptive management.

Time constraints

At each stage, we had to adapt to the time constraints and availability of the teams: one day per theme or type of intervention for Burkina Faso, five days to tackle the two themes in the project cycle in Mali and three days to tackle the two themes simultaneously in Benin, then five days again in Benin and Niger in 2024 and Ghana in 2025. In addition, the practical exercises carried out in teams were time-consuming and this didn't always allow for a more in-depth approach.

Structural obstacles

The aim of the approach is to ensure better social inclusion of the various categories, with a view to justice, efficiency, stability and social cohesion. Emphasis is placed on the active participation of women and young people (both men and women). However, this imperative is compromised by structural obstacles such as the low de facto representation of women and young people in most of the institutions that govern access to and use of resources and infrastructure, particularly land: customary and religious authorities, municipal authorities, representatives of decentralised State services, etc. In addition, women often have little or no say in the management of land and infrastructure. Women often have a lower level of education and lack leadership skills, self-confidence and exposure to positions where they can develop these skills. So even if the SNV teams are equipped and aware of the need for this inclusion, and make a point of it, in practice it is sometimes difficult to achieve this representativeness. It is therefore necessary to adapt expectations to reality and accept that progress must be made slowly, while at the same time taking affirmative action to encourage change:

identifying leaders within women's organisations, strengthening their capacities and opportunities to exercise their leadership, influence decisions, etc.

Adapting tools to different audiences

The tools developed in a participatory way remain complex and theoretical, and their applicability by partners, in the intervention context and with impact groups is not always obvious. Some tools have therefore been simplified for use, for example, in training courses for infrastructure management committees (e.g., tools 1 and 2: mind map and spaces map). The teams expressed their desire that these tools be adapted in the form of visual aids such as picture kits for awareness raising, with the collaboration of specialists in behaviour change communication (BCC). Media adapted to the context can be used to convey the messages: local radio stations, artistic and cultural troupes, WhatsApp groups, etc. It takes time for partners and stakeholders to understand the concepts behind GESI and to put them into practice. First, the SNV teams themselves need to be convinced, available and ready to use the various tools. The lack of conviction on the part of some stakeholders calls for more tailored communication on the importance of including young people and women in project interventions, using convincing arguments in favour of inclusion such as «women are the mothers of humanity»: they make an effective contribution to household resilience.

1.4 Target groups and objectives

The GESI/CSPM approach is relevant whatever the degree of fragility of the context and the positioning of the intervention on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. It is essential for projects in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, where social exclusion and gender inequalities are particularly marked. In this sense, it is particularly aimed at SNV intervention countries described as fragile (see map below):

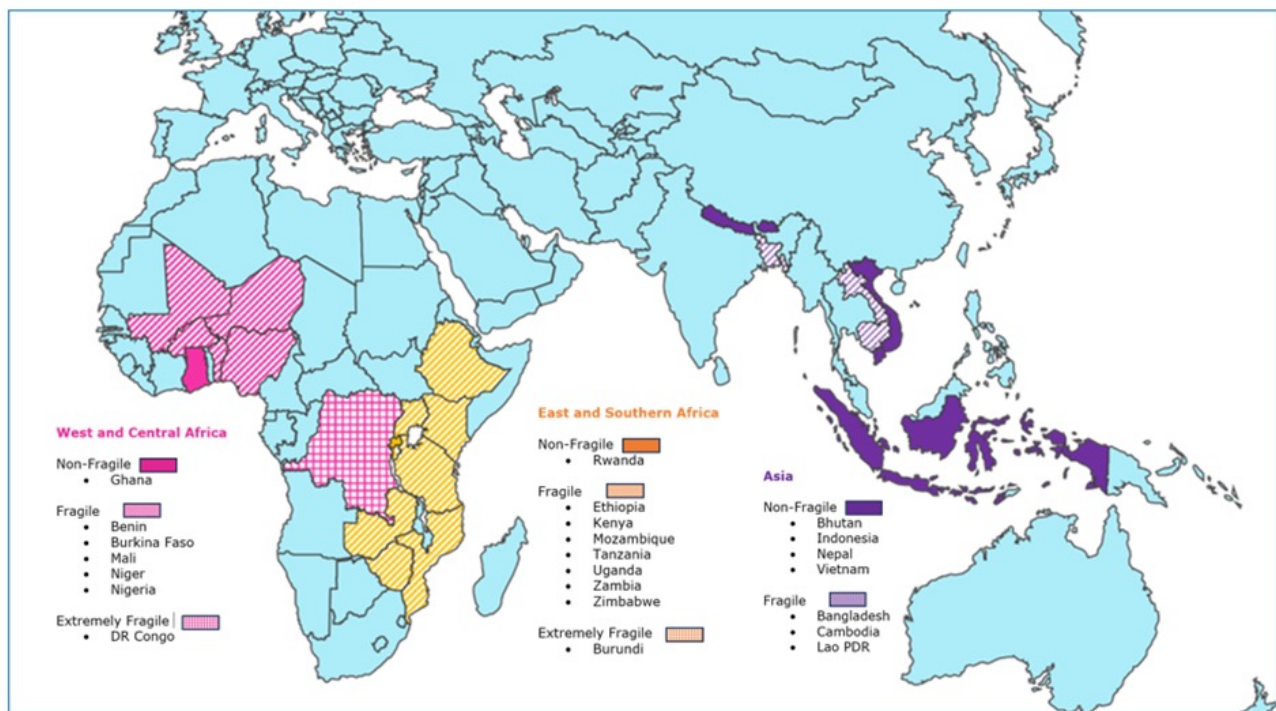


Figure 1: SNV intervention countries and their relative fragility (OECD, 2023)

This guide is aimed firstly at an internal audience i.e., SNV project teams, and secondly at their partners. It is particularly aimed at:

- managers of projects with a gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion component
- conflict-sensitivity advisors
- gender equality and social inclusion advisors
- and those responsible for monitoring and evaluation

The aim of this guide and toolkit is to support SNV country teams and their partners in systematically

integrating the two cross-cutting approaches of conflict sensitivity and gender equality and social inclusion into their projects. The aim is to avoid harm (do no harm) and, at best, to maximise the positive effects of projects for greater inclusion and social stability.



Figure 2: Capacity-building logic for SNV teams in conflict sensitivity, gender equality and social inclusion

PART 2 CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND GESI: DEFINITIONS AND RELEVANCE

2.1 What is conflict-sensitive project management (CSPM)?

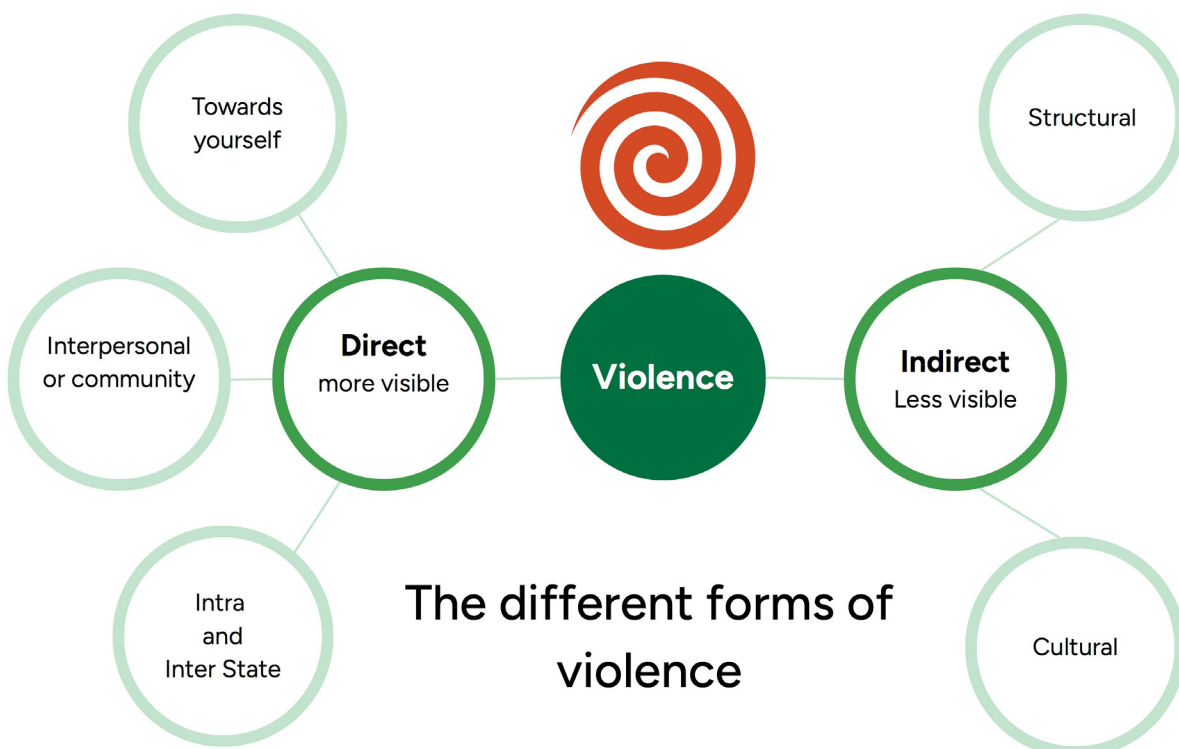
To begin with, it is important to have a common understanding of certain key concepts.

Conflict is a relationship between two or more parties who have, or believe they have, incompatible objectives, values or interests. Any conflict has three dimensions: the subjective level (the actors in opposition), the objective level (the object or causes of the conflict), and the relational level (the dynamics of relations between the actors).

Conflict is a normal and necessary part of relationships, just like understanding. It is not in itself a problem, and conflicts are often useful, for example to stimulate change or to push back injustice. The key is how they are handled.



Violence is a general term used to describe aggressive behaviour (physical and/or verbal) or coercion imposed intentionally, which causes pain, suffering, fear and hatred, both physical and psychological.



A distinction is made between **direct violence** and **indirect violence**, particularly in its structural (social injustices) and cultural (attitudes) forms. It is extremely important to identify indirect violence, as it is often the real cause of direct violence.

All violence is about power. People decide to use it when they feel they have the right and the power to meet their own needs at the expense of others.

Structural violence (social injustice)

- **Institutionalised racism or sexism** : laws and practices that allow unfair treatment based on race or gender.
- **Colonialism**: a country has lost its self-determination. A foreign authority has acquired control of any decision-making process by force.
- **Extreme exploitation**: e.g. slavery
- **Poverty**: the main cause of violent conflict in the world.
- **Corruption and nepotism**: government decisions are influenced or taken in a context of corruption, favouritism and family or tribal relationships.
- **Structural segregation** : Laws that force people to live in isolated groups or in well-defined areas.

Cultural violence (attitudes)

- **Hate speech** : One group accuses the other of being the cause of the difficulties it is experiencing. The use of violence is encouraged to eliminate the accused group.
- **Xenophobia** : The hatred or fear of one people or country towards another creates misperceptions and encourages a policy favouring conflict with that country.
- **Myths and legends about war heroes** : a society whose songs and history books glorify the ancient victories of one side can engender hatred for the other.
- **Religious justifications for war** : Extreme intolerance of other beliefs can lead to conflict.
- **Sexual discrimination**: Allowing practices and laws that discriminate against women is a form of violence.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most frequent human rights violations in the world, occurring and repeating itself daily in every country. It has serious short- and long-term physical, economic and psychological consequences for its victims, hindering their full and equal participation in society. For more information on this subject, visit the website <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/faqs/faqs-types-of-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

Peace means the absence of all forms of violence, but it does not mean the absence of conflict. Peace exists when individuals and groups manage their conflicts without violence, in a positive way, with respect for the needs and interests of others.

By intervening in a given context, an organisation becomes a stakeholder in that context: it can influence it and must therefore assume its responsibilities to avoid producing negative effects and ensure the best possible impact on social cohesion, coexistence and peace within the community. Each intervention context is specific, complex and evolving, so all projects must be flexible and adapt as they go along. The context also influences the activities of a project, which must be able to anticipate changes and adapt its actions to ensure safety, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.

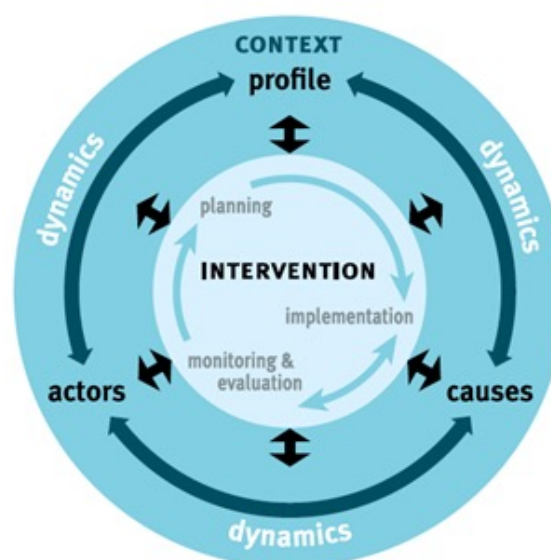
Conflict sensitivity (CS)² means considering all the factors to ensure that project actions:

- Avoid fuelling tensions in the intervention context, and do not weaken or endanger people, organisations, systems or our own intervention.
- Contribute to strengthening the foundations of dialogue and peace within this context and to making people, the social fabric and our own intervention safer.

2 OXFAM, A practical guide to conflict sensitivity for OXFAM partners - Towards safer interventions, October 2022

Conflict-sensitive project/programme management (CSPM³) is the «operationalisation» or implementation of the concept of «conflict sensitivity». It involves the following steps:

1. **Understand the context in which you intervene:**
Analyse and understand the history of conflict and coexistence in the intervention context.
2. **Understand the interaction between the intervention and the context:** Anticipate the effects of our actions/behaviours on the context and those of the context on our interventions.
3. **Act on this understanding to develop adaptation strategies** that aim to minimise the negative impacts («do no harm») and maximise the positive impacts («do more good»).



The key elements of each step are described below:

STEPS	WHAT TO DO
1. Understand the context	Analyse the causes and dynamics of conflict, the sources of tension, the factors of social cohesion (socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-environmental), and identify opportunities for peace. Map the actors: Who are the stakeholders? What are their relationships? Why do they react the way they do? What do they really want? What are their stated motivations and what are their real motivations? Identify what unites these actors (the connectors) and what separates them (the dividers).
2. Understand the interaction between the intervention and the context	Question our intervention in detail. For each activity, ask yourself the questions: What? Why? Who/with whom? Where? When? How? Check whether our choices are detrimental to the context, or whether the context may be detrimental to our actions: - Do the details of our intervention reinforce the dividers in the context, or do they not reinforce the connectors enough? - Do the actions and resources we transfer have an effect that could inflame tensions and/or fuel violence? - Can our behaviour be perceived differently from what we intend (implicit messages)?
3. Develop adaptation strategies	Once the negative effects have been anticipated and the positive effects identified, it's a matter of imagining the best (or least bad) options for adapting the intervention to the context. There are always other options, and it's never too late to do better! This stage may involve: - Adapting details of the intervention to support connectors or avoid reinforcing dividers. - Imagining all the ways of avoiding negative effects (theft/abuse of resources, on the market, distribution, legitimisation of actors, behaviour). - Cancelling, postponing or relocating the intervention or delegating it to another actor. - Making the intervention more flexible (adapting the logical framework, ongoing dialogue with donors and partners). - Building channels of communication/information, knowledge and learning to capture and adapt more quickly to changing circumstances.

³ APESS, DDC and Swisspeace, Conflict Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM) training manual, 2014.

In conclusion, conflict sensitivity is about recognising and accepting **social responsibility, at both organisational and individual levels.**

It's a question of **looking both ways:**

- How does the conflict context affect my intervention?
- How does my intervention impact the conflict context? What precautions should I take to avoid exacerbating tensions and maintain or strengthen social cohesion?

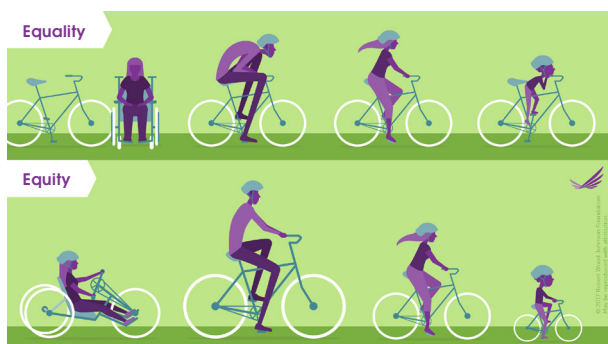
And **both forwards and backwards in time:**

- Looking to the future to prevent and anticipate risks.
- Looking to the past to observe and learn (conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation).

It concerns every type of intervention, whether humanitarian, development or peacebuilding, and whatever the dynamics of the conflict context: pre-conflict, during or post-conflict. Finally, everyone is involved, whether they are SNV teams, partners, service providers, target communities or donors. Every strategic, political and methodological decision, as well as the individual attitudes and behaviour of staff, can have positive or negative effects on the conflict context.

SNV is in the process of moving towards organisational appropriation of the CSPM approach. This involves internalising the approach for everyone (staff and partners), reinforcing behavioural, analytical and thinking reflexes, developing flexibility and the ability to incorporate lessons learned from conflict sensitivity practice. It is also important to integrate conflict sensitivity into procedures, frameworks, teamwork and dialogue with donors and partners.

2.2 2 What is Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and what does it aim to achieve?



One-size does not fit all⁴

Gender equality is an expected outcome for all people, regardless of their sex, in terms of:

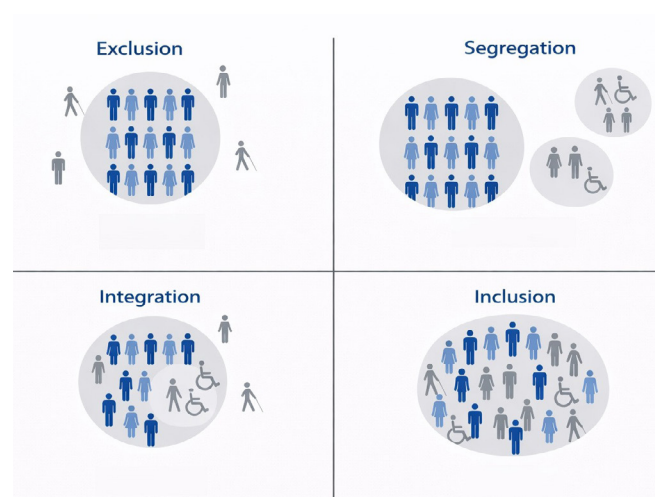
- Access to opportunities (equal opportunities), resources and services for (young) men and women and vulnerable groups
- Equal rights, enshrined in the Constitution and in international texts and conventions
- Equal value for work done
- Results (spin-offs, benefits, autonomy, power, etc.)

Equity is a means of achieving greater **equality**, by treating individuals according to their specific characteristics, needs, interests and aspirations. Sometimes special measures, targeted at a certain group, are needed to redress certain structural or cyclical inequalities. These positive discrimination measures are known as **affirmative action**.

Justice implies fairness, reason, honesty and legitimacy for every citizen to have equal access to the resources needed to live in dignity. Most of these aspects are defined and included in international declarations of human rights, in conventions and in national legislations⁵.

Gender Justice is about eradicating the injustices committed against women and girls because they are female. It fights against violations of their human rights arising from mechanisms of discrimination rooted in gender inequality and the injustice of social constructs.

Equity and justice are key principles in the realisation of human rights.



⁴ Source : <https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/infographics/visualizing-health-equity.html>

⁵ For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), (UN 1979), and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN 1993).

Inclusion is a process that guarantees people greater **participation in the decisions** that affect their lives and respect for fundamental rights (human rights-based approach). It implies that people at risk of poverty and exclusion are given the **opportunities and resources they need to participate** fully in economic, social and cultural life, and that **they are guaranteed access to basic social resources and services**. This presupposes the commitment and accountability of public services.

SNV is committed to a society where everyone has the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development activities. This means recognising the situation of people who are simultaneously subject to several forms of stratification, domination or discrimination in a society.

Intersectionality refers to the fact that individuals have multiple identities that intersect.

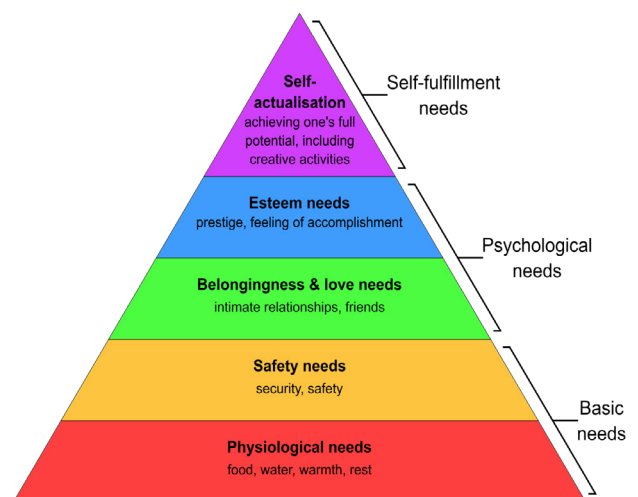


These identities are linked to their gender, age, social status, disability, etc. These identities place them in positions of power or marginalisation. In this way, individuals can combine several factors of vulnerability, exclusion or discrimination. The target groups for our initiatives are not homogenous categories, and failure to recognise diversity can exacerbate inequalities or power imbalances. This «intersectionality» must be considered when devising appropriate strategies.

Vulnerable people deserve special attention. Social **vulnerability** implies a **material** or **moral** fragility to which an individual, an organisation or a society is exposed. The degree of vulnerability will determine the ability to protect oneself (resilience) or to withstand the hazard. This vulnerability is characterised by a combination of different factors, which may be intrinsic (age, disability, membership of a community, etc.) or external, which may be structural (power dynamics, patriarchy, etc.) or situational (conflicts, extreme climatic events, etc.) These factors need to be defined with the vulnerable groups themselves and the communities in which we intervene.

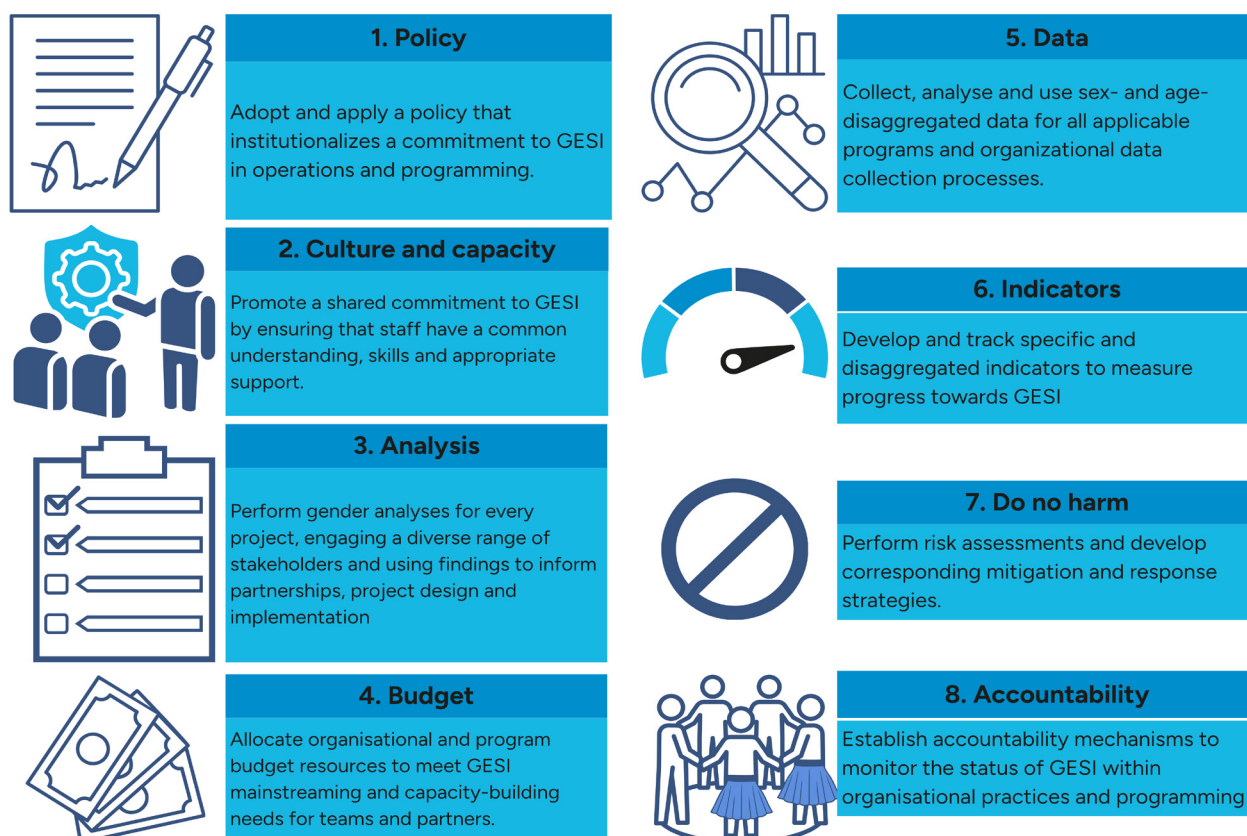
Interventions respond to both the **practical** and immediate **needs** of vulnerable groups (food, clothing, housing, etc.) and to **strategic interests**, the satisfaction of which enables individuals to achieve greater autonomy, respect for their rights and self-fulfilment (see Maslow's pyramid).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Autonomy is the «power to» and is defined by an individual's ability to make their own choices and to translate these choices into action, without being prevented from doing so by limiting factors in their environment.

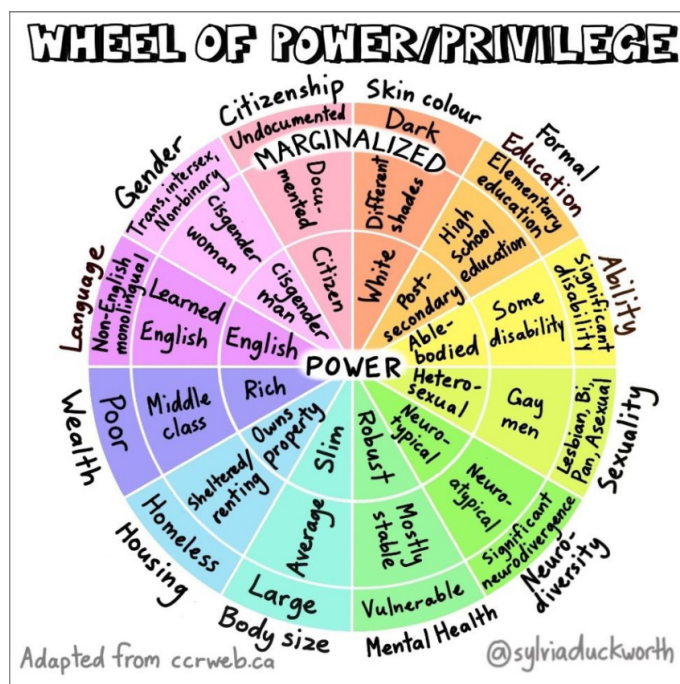
To this end, SNV subscribes to the [minimum standards for gender mainstreaming](#) (Gender Practitioners Collaborative, 2017):



The exercise entitled «**The power walk**» (Introductory tool in the toolbox) illustrates these concepts by showing that the ability of individuals to enjoy their rights depends on their social status and the power relationship they have with other members of society. Social status is largely determined by age, position in society, gender and other characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, socio-professional category, income, disability or sexual orientation. As a result, everyone has multiple identities that intersect and place them in positions of power or marginalisation. Social identities do not form homogenous groups or categories. Development interventions and public policies can mitigate or exacerbate inequalities and/or power imbalances.

The **wheel of power/privilege** shows how several factors of vulnerability can add up and lead to exclusion (on the periphery), or how several privileges (centre) can lead to positions of power, or even domination.

The wheel shown, which was designed in the context of a Canadian province, New Brunswick, can be adapted to different contexts and scales, and can also be applied at a 'macro' level by distinguishing between countries on the 'periphery' and those at the centre of decision-making processes and in control of economic power.

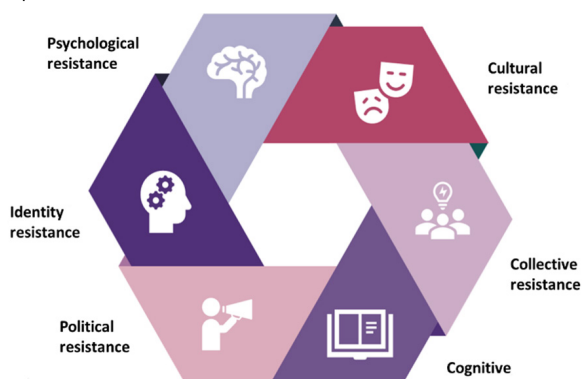


2.3 Dealing with resistance to GESI

Using the term **equality** may create tensions, particularly when the term is not properly explained. In general, terms should be adapted to the local context, and teams and consultants should be made aware of the best way to communicate. For example, the term «equal opportunities» can be used instead of «gender equality». It is also important to bear in mind the pace of change in different environments and to not overstep the «red line», at the risk of becoming counterproductive. Talking about social inclusion rather than gender equality can reduce defensive reactions. However, it is important to bear in mind that gender inequality, by definition, affects half the population, in this case women. This should not overshadow or affect advocacy efforts in favour of women's rights. It is sometimes a strategy of resistance to give priority to defending the rights of «vulnerable and marginalised groups», putting the debate on women's rights in the background.

Sometimes, time and external factors can bring about change, as shown by the example from the Cascades region in Burkina Faso, where it was not possible to impose women on the management committees of an infrastructure, but where the process made headway once interest had been acquired. Another example from the Zinder region of Niger showed that, thanks to radio messages in the villages, the men accepted that women negotiate the prices of their small ruminants directly with the buyer, instead of using an intermediary who often abuses their trust.

As the diagram below shows, resistance can take different forms and have different motivations. It may be useful to classify them to understand them better and try to overcome them. During the workshops, it was noted that most resistance is cultural, based on identity, or political in nature.



Cultural and political resistance (collective)

One participant said that there were already equality and justice in traditional societies - and that capitalism has created discrimination and individualism: «Our societies functioned according to the principle of socialism». It can be a normal reaction to look to the past and question ideologies or models of society.

This does not mean that there were no power relations, or even domination, in traditional societies.

The same applies to the human rights-based approach. Although men and women are equal before the law in the constitutions of many of the countries participating in the workshops, in certain intervention contexts, particularly around land, customary law is patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal - so it is the clan that takes precedence, and land is passed down through the lineage. This differs from the Islamic inheritance system (2/3 - 1/3 sharing between boys and girls respectively). There are therefore different overlapping systems, which can be a source of conflict, particularly between customary law and modern law. For some participants, respecting values means applying customary law.

Individual, psychological and identity-based resistance

Countering arguments in favour of greater equality between men and women (in terms of results), some participants asserted that women already have decision-making power within their households and communities. They are the ones who encourage their husbands to 'enter into conflict', to defend their territory - they influence their husbands' decisions. They are often consulted upstream on decisions affecting the household.

Some consider that the affirmative action measures provided for in national legislation, which introduce quotas for political bodies (local elected representatives, members of parliament), or the quotas in favour of women or young people introduced by certain programmes, may be «discriminatory» against groups considered to be «privileged» (men, elders). The same resistance is common when it comes to recruitment notices that «encourage applications from women». This is why these temporary measures need to be explained. Other «vulnerable groups» must also be considered. This definition is contextual and the groups in question need to be identified and validated with the stakeholders in a particular context. Another point of attention is not to consider «all women and young people as vulnerable». There are «privileged» people in these groups. Furthermore, considering women as necessarily vulnerable confines them to a «stereotyped» image of being weak and passive.

All these reactions reflect forms of resistance to change and need to be addressed by highlighting the different forms of resistance, their causes and the strategies for overcoming them.

Individual reflection on resistance to change

Think of a time when you faced resistance when you were trying to change gender relations and social gender norms in your activities.

- How did this resistance manifest itself in your interviewee?
- How did you feel about this resistance?
- Why did you feel this way?
- How did you react?
- How do you plan to respond to this resistance in the future?

Isabelle's experience in Benin: During a day-long presentation of a project in the communities where we work, the representative of the town hall said, «you have to drop your gender issue». I was shocked that an authority who should be supporting the project should speak in this way, but I understood that he had fears about affirmative action and quotas for women's participation in activities. I assured him that the project would take an inclusive approach and tried to explain the arguments further to improve his understanding of the GESI approach.

Diarra's experience in Mali: The traditional chiefs were very reticent about the idea of involving women in the Land Commissions (CoFo) and, by the same token, in land management. To allay their concerns, I asked them who was the oldest person in the village. They replied that it was an old woman, and they immediately understood that this woman was the holder of the village's history, including its land history. As a result, the traditional chiefs agreed to include women as members of the CoFo. We also communicated via radio about the importance of inclusive CoFo, to get as much relevant information as possible.

Idi's experience in Niger: A female veterinarian who wanted to set up in a rural area found it very difficult to gain acceptance and had to work twice as hard as her male counterparts. Some farmers feared that she would not be physically capable of doing the work, and there was also the cultural taboo that a menstruating woman should not enter the cattle pen. The female veterinarian managed to gain acceptance and even helped to change the system by working with other women technicians.

Saïdou's experience in Niger: In 2021, when the construction of biodigesters was being monitored, the Ministry's management was asked to go and train households in the use of biogas. Normally, it's the women who use the cookstoves. Once, when I was in the field in the Dosso region, I wanted to check that the woman in a household had fully understood the use of the cookstove and the necessary safety measures. To my great surprise, the head of the household made me wait outside and I didn't know why. When I finally entered, there was no-one in the courtyard, so I asked him to call the women in his household. He replied, «No, you haven't come to see my wives, you've come to teach about using biogas. Teach me and then I'll teach them». I reminded him of the importance of monitoring and the commitments made when the biodigester was built, but in the end, I had to leave. I returned later with Mrs Asma from ABC Energy, who was able to conduct the interview with his wives. I realised that there is a gender sensitivity that needs to be considered from now on. Even if the woman accompanying me doesn't really have any experience, we can train her before she goes out into the field to make it easier for her to access the beneficiaries during monitoring.

Best practices to overcome resistance:

- Initiate a dialogue within the organisation to understand resistance and reflect individually and organisationally on the values of equity and inclusion.
- Carry out action research to deconstruct sexist stereotypes (see box with the example of the «Mosaic of women pastoralists»).
- Mobilise “model” opinion leaders or champions.
- Work in partnership with women’s organisations, youth organisations and other vulnerable groups, or organisations that share your GESI and conflict-sensitivity objectives.
- Systematically communicate the vision for gender equality and social inclusion within teams, clarify concepts, adapt language to the context, avoid divisive terms, rely on sayings or traditional values that emphasise the role of women, develop messages and media adapted to target audiences using the principles of behaviour change communication.
- This communication on the values of fairness and inclusion must be initiated by the organisations, supported by their leaders and backed up by exemplary conduct.

The mosaic of women pastoralists⁶, an action-research project conducted by the Billital Maroobé Network (RBM) on women’s leadership: an example of a process to overcome resistance and combat gender stereotypes

This process enabled 350 stories from women (75%) and men (25%) in nine countries to be collected and interpreted. This action research highlights the roles, aspirations and motivations of women pastoralists.

Far from the stereotypical image of them as a vulnerable and passive group, they embody the spirit of entrepreneurship, innovation, collaboration and moral support for their families and their involvement in their children’s health and education. They regulate the emotional climate in a family by trying to moderate it. They strengthen human bonds and are often the mediators within their households. They can be «influencers», looking for solutions to resolve situations when tensions arise.

These findings were corroborated by the men. The men say they ask their wives for advice and support for their initiatives. They say that women are sources of motivation and express the need to be useful to the community, to be respected, to choose for themselves and to adapt to loss. They are motivated by the desire to learn, the children’s future, the dream of a better life, to reduce dependence on husbands and in-laws, their «love» for pastoralism, for enterprise, to change behaviour and «break stereotypes».

This kind of action research, that listens to women, is essential if we are to build interventions that take account of their specific needs and aspirations. It also encourages us to think in terms of households, and to consider that difficulties affect both men and women.



⁶ RBM, [The Mosaic of Women Pastors – Lessons in female leadership offered by 350 women and men from the pastoral community in the Sahel and West Africa](#), 2024

2.4 Why sensitivity to conflict and GESI?

The Conflict Sensitivity (CS) and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approaches aim to ensure that our interventions consider the different needs of community members, particularly those who are vulnerable, to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities and conflicts and having unintended negative consequences. Programmes and initiatives that successfully address inequalities and potential conflict drivers and strengthen existing connectors make communities more equitable, peaceful and cohesive. These two approaches are therefore essential to any intervention and any type of activity.

Even if the aim and objectives of the programme are not explicitly geared towards gender equality, social inclusion or combating violence, activities must include the specific needs and challenges of women, men, girls, boys and other vulnerable groups identified in the CS and GESI analyses. Otherwise, the intervention may unintentionally generate more inequality, prejudice or violence between the sexes and between social groups.

Projects in fragile environments

In fragile contexts, conflict sensitivity goes beyond ensuring that projects do not inadvertently exacerbate conflict dynamics or compromise the safety of staff and beneficiaries. It must strive to maximise positive impacts, help reduce tensions, and actively seek to promote peace.

The intervention is also responsible for putting in place effective systems to prevent, mitigate and respond to any type of harm (discrimination, harassment, violence, exploitation or other abuse) to staff or programme stakeholders. These protections and safeguards aim to prevent harm from occurring in the first place, while ensuring that in the event of misconduct or other harm, robust systems are in place to respond effectively, including investigating and prioritising the safety of victims and survivors.

Projects in a fragile environment need to take several factors into account:

- Climate change and growing demographic pressure on natural resources.
- The decapitalization of livestock herders due to the continuing reduction in access to pastoral resources, which increases the risk of conflicts with other users, namely farmers.
- Lack of security in pastoral areas to ensure/protect mobility (rural and pastoral land tenure), accompanied by continued expansion of land devoted to agriculture.
- The crisis of governance characterised by the withdrawal and/or lack of efficiency and

legitimacy of state services, which are unable to provide basic services in the areas of human health, schooling, security and trade, due to insecurity and the remoteness of pastoral populations.

- Local power relations – political and social – are sometimes unfavourable to livestock herders, to the benefit of other users.
- Exclusion (or perception of exclusion) by certain groups, particularly pastoralists and transhumant herders.
- Insecurity linked to the presence of armed groups (jihadists), where organised crime and violent extremism are intertwined and armed groups are increasingly involved in the management and distribution of natural resources.

Operating in this context requires a conflict-sensitive approach to project management.

Fragile contexts, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)

In line with its programming principles, SNV pays particular attention to GESI, a cross-cutting theme in its projects. Indeed, all projects implemented aim to achieve inclusion, reduce gender inequalities and empower women as economic players, but also as guarantors of food security within agropastoral and farming households. However, the impact of the security crises raging in some of our intervention areas is seriously hampering these processes, while taking a heavy toll on these households, and on women actors in particular: *«Women, children and the elderly are heavily impacted by insecurity, restricted in their mobility and activities, exposed to situations of single parenthood, orphanhood or isolation, and family reorganisation going as far as forced or early marriage, which destroys the family balance. Finally, the precariousness of households has been aggravated by COVID-19, one of the impacts of which has been the reduction in cross-border cash transfers, and the impossibility for young exiles in coastal countries to rejoin their families during the wet season for field work and transhumance.»*⁷

In addition to the impact of insecurity on women as «victims», most of the time they are excluded from consultation and decision-making forums or included in very small numbers and with limited influence, because of social and cultural norms. Insecurity exacerbates this exclusion. It is therefore difficult for them to put forward their points of view, both as economic players and users of resources and infrastructure, and as stakeholders in the identification and implementation of conflict prevention/resolution and peace-building strategies.

⁷ RBM and partners, [Listening to herders in West Africa and the Sahel: what future for pastoralism in the face of insecurity and its impacts?](#) Executive summary, draft version, April 2021.

How are CS and GESI approaches interconnected?

Identities can be a driver of conflict and violence:

- Men and boys may be socialised to use violence to gain power, social status and economic prestige, but also to protect their community and group interests (e.g., gangs or political parties). Men and boys from certain age groups (e.g., teenagers) or socio-economic groups may be more at risk than others of being recruited into violent or extremist groups due, for example, to a lack of other employment opportunities.
- Women and girls may support or encourage men to use violence to protect or improve their family or community situation, or they themselves may use violence to break cycles of violence and restrictive gender norms.
- Deep-rooted norms that dictate the power of certain groups within society can lead to tension and violence.
- Conflict and violence create specific vulnerabilities for men, women, young people, LGBTQIA+ people and other vulnerable members of the community:
- Men and boys, particularly adolescents from socio-economically vulnerable groups, are the most likely to be killed or injured by direct physical violence.
- Women and girls, particularly those in vulnerable situations, not only face a disproportionate risk of gender-based violence (GBV) but are also often required to take on additional household and economic responsibilities if the male members of the household must flee or are victims of conflict and violence.
- People of diverse genders and members of the LGBTQIA+ community face increased homophobic and transphobic violence in conflict situations.
- People with disabilities are at increased risk of injury, death and other serious harm. The inaccessibility of emergency information, evacuation routes and humanitarian assistance exacerbates harm in conflict situations. Older people face similar barriers to evacuation and recovery of their livelihoods in the event of a disaster.
- Members of ethnic or religious minorities may be specifically targeted in times of violence, resulting in loss of life and significant displacement among them.
- Children caught up in violent conflict are at risk not only of being killed or injured, but also of being displaced, trafficked, abused and exploited,

with long-term repercussions for their physical and mental well-being.

Contextual analyses that do not consider gender inequalities and vulnerable communities risk perpetuating inequalities and harm. It is therefore necessary to consider CS and GESI in parallel and to support dialogue and training on these issues and concepts, so that the project team can effectively address and mitigate, rather than perpetuate, the inequalities found in society.

Combining the two approaches

Integrating conflict sensitivity and GESI can help to better achieve objectives by:

- **Responding to the needs of the most vulnerable and promoting inclusion:** Determining the specific circumstances of the most vulnerable populations will make it possible to identify opportunities to better respond to their specific needs and interests, and hence provide gender-transformative and inclusive responses in the intervention.
- **Enabling sustainable and structural change:** Prioritising actions that benefit and empower women, girls and vulnerable groups will promote equality and inclusion and avoid reinforcing existing inequalities. This focus is essential to achieving transformative, effective and sustainable change.
- **Avoiding negative reactions and backlashes:** Determining how the intervention interacts in each context can help maximise positive outcomes and minimise negative outcomes. This requires all decisions to be made with an awareness of how they might affect power and relationships between groups, which could contribute to or increase conflict and violence, gender inequality or social exclusion.
- **Strengthening ownership and representation:** Ensuring the active participation of all - including women, girls and vulnerable groups - can help generate a sense of ownership and representation.

Because of their cross-cutting nature, these two approaches have several points in common and complement each other:

- They follow the project cycle and focus on understanding the context using analysis and diagnostic tools.
- They need to be addressed systematically throughout the project cycle, with activities planned from the project design stage onwards.
- Implementation teams and partners should be trained and equipped to apply these two approaches, which require skills. Both teams and

partners should be accountable and evaluated on the achievement of the objectives of equity, inclusion, social justice, respect for rights and stability.

- The strategies, objectives and expected results for greater gender equality, social cohesion and stability should be an integral part of all project documents, and a budget should be provided for the implementation of specific actions where necessary.
- The aim of both approaches is to analyse and transform the dynamics for more balanced power relations.
- Both approaches require the development of a shared vision in line with the institutional values and principles of the SNV.
- Finally, these two themes are complementary, as conflict sensitivity can draw attention to the likely

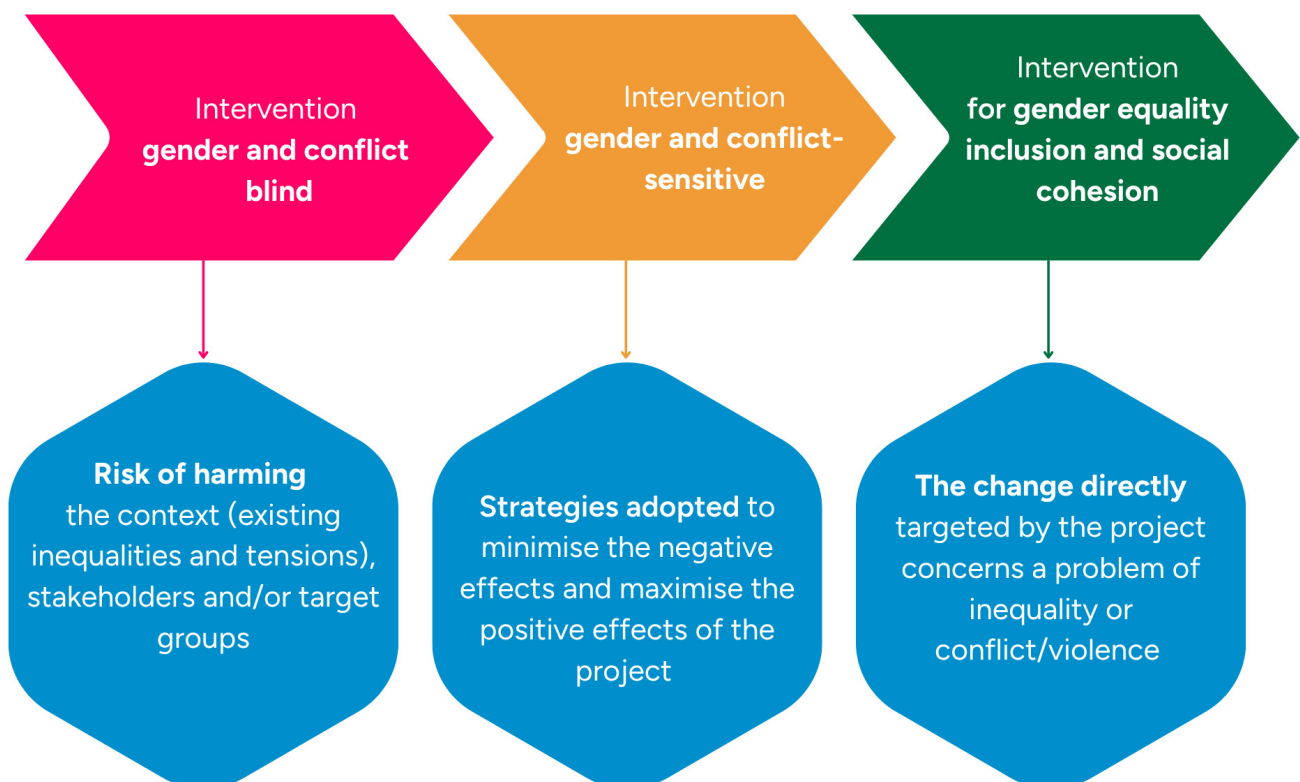
points of tension linked to the transformation of gender dynamics and relations that the projects seek to achieve and hence provide solutions at the household, organisational or institutional level.

However, there are differences between the two approaches:

- Conflict situations are generally highly dynamic and volatile, so flexibility and adaptive management are central to conflict sensitivity.
- Gender norms and identities change slowly and trying to change them can be a source of resistance.

For each project, the aim is to define minimum standards to guide the team during implementation: the continuum below enables us to situate ourselves and define our ambitions regarding inclusion, peace-building and social cohesion.

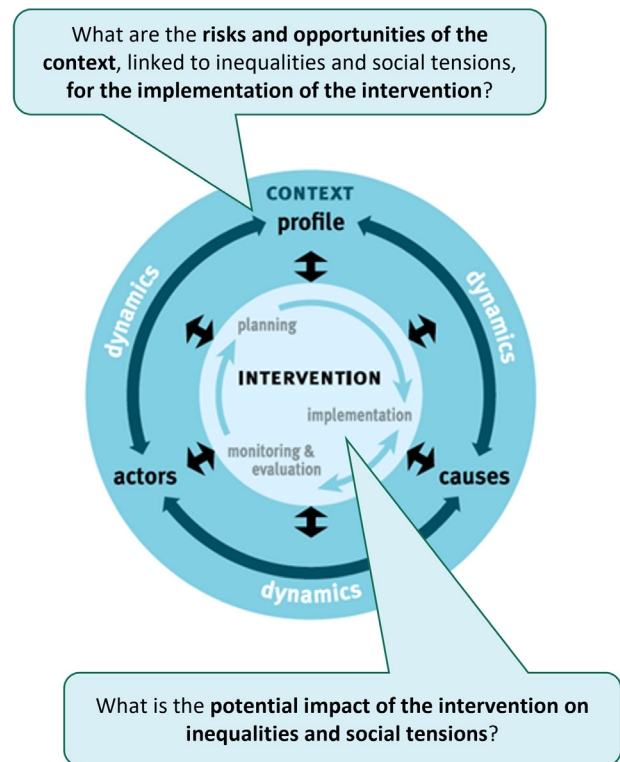
Three levels of ambition



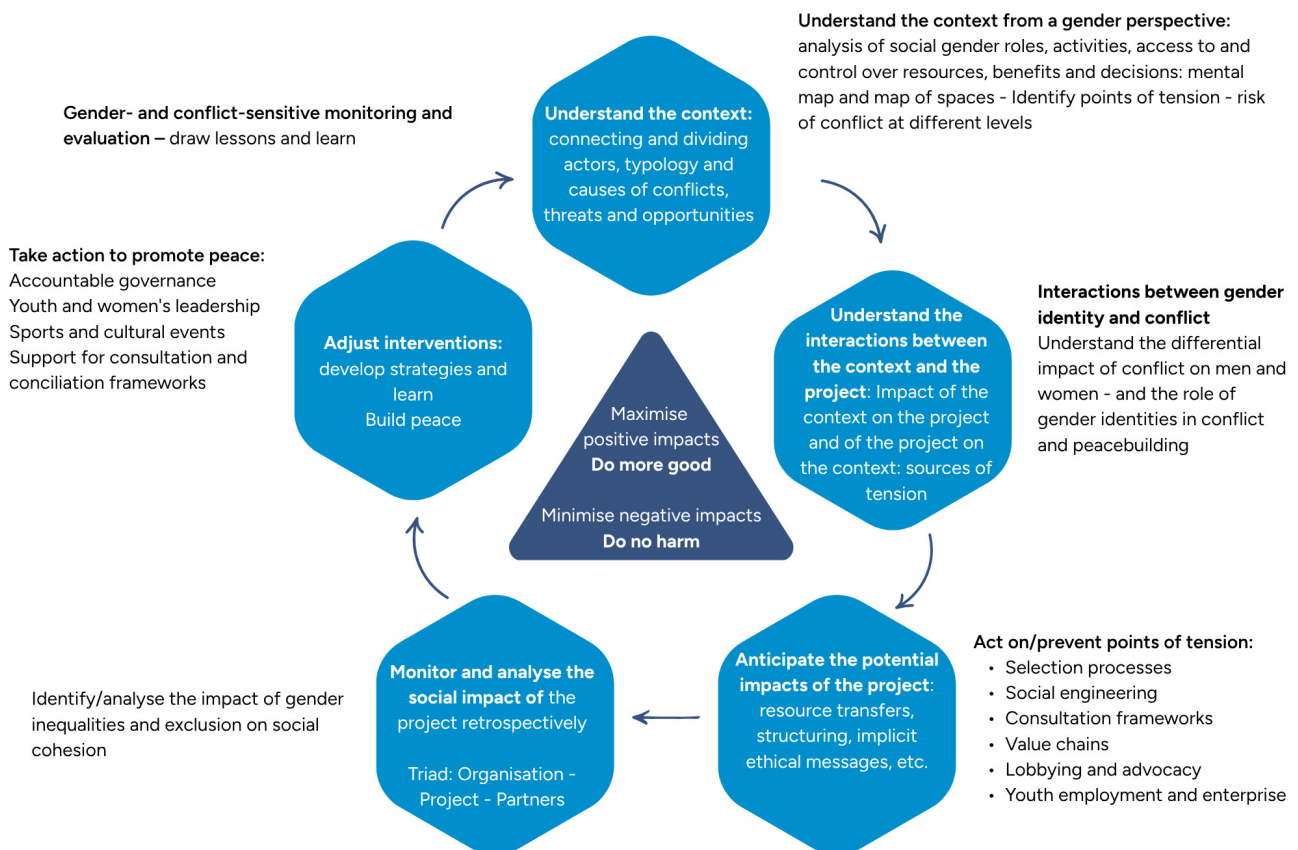
Interventions sensitive to conflict and GESI will follow the three stages of the CSPM, but with a broader focus:

1. **A better understanding of the context of social cohesion, inclusion and gender equality in which we operate** (in a disaggregated way, according to the different social categories: sex, age, vulnerable and/or marginalised groups)
2. **A better understanding of the interaction between the intervention and the context (in both directions)** in terms of risks and opportunities for social cohesion, inclusion and gender equality
3. **Acting on this understanding to reduce negative impacts** (exacerbating inequalities or conflicts) **and maximise positive impacts** (greater social cohesion and inclusion and gender equality)

Throughout the project cycle.



In the interests of efficiency and effectiveness, and in order not to overburden the programme's teams, partners and impact groups, it seems appropriate to address these two issues simultaneously.



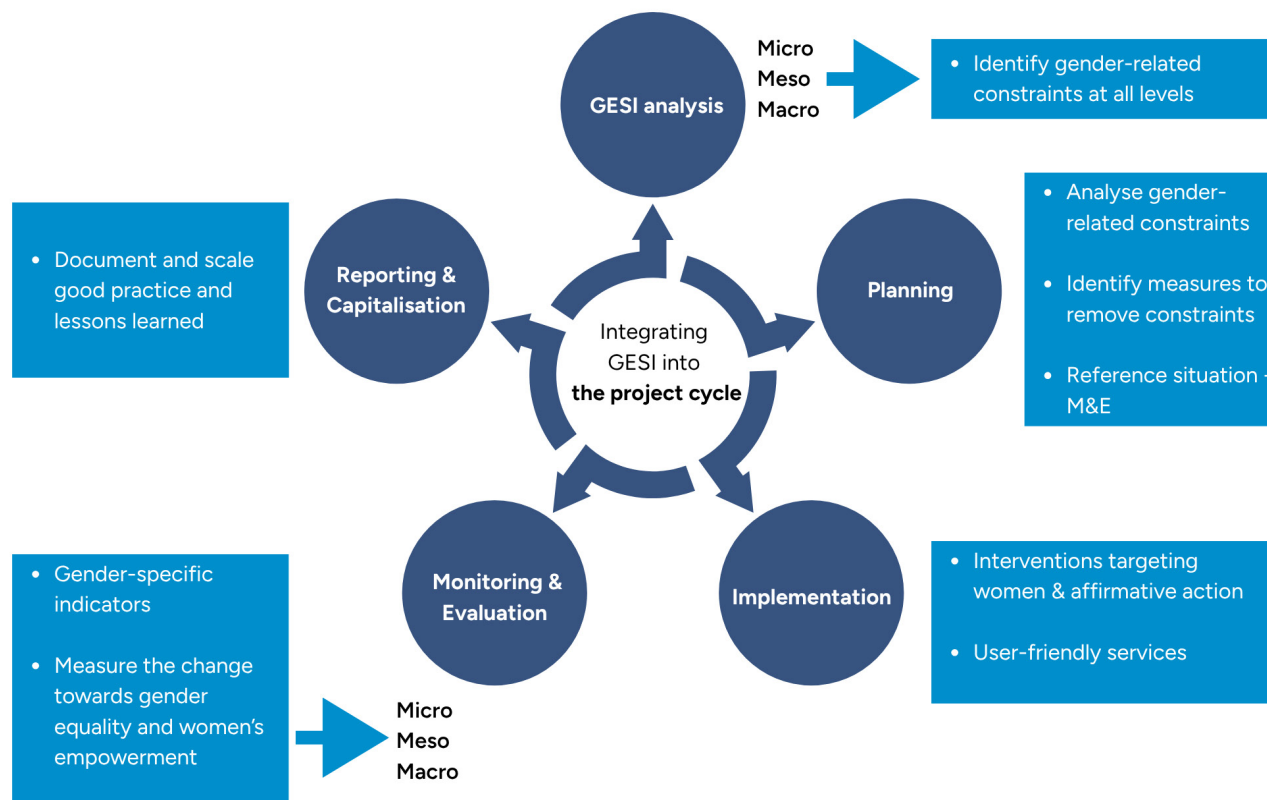
Whatever the case, projects should:

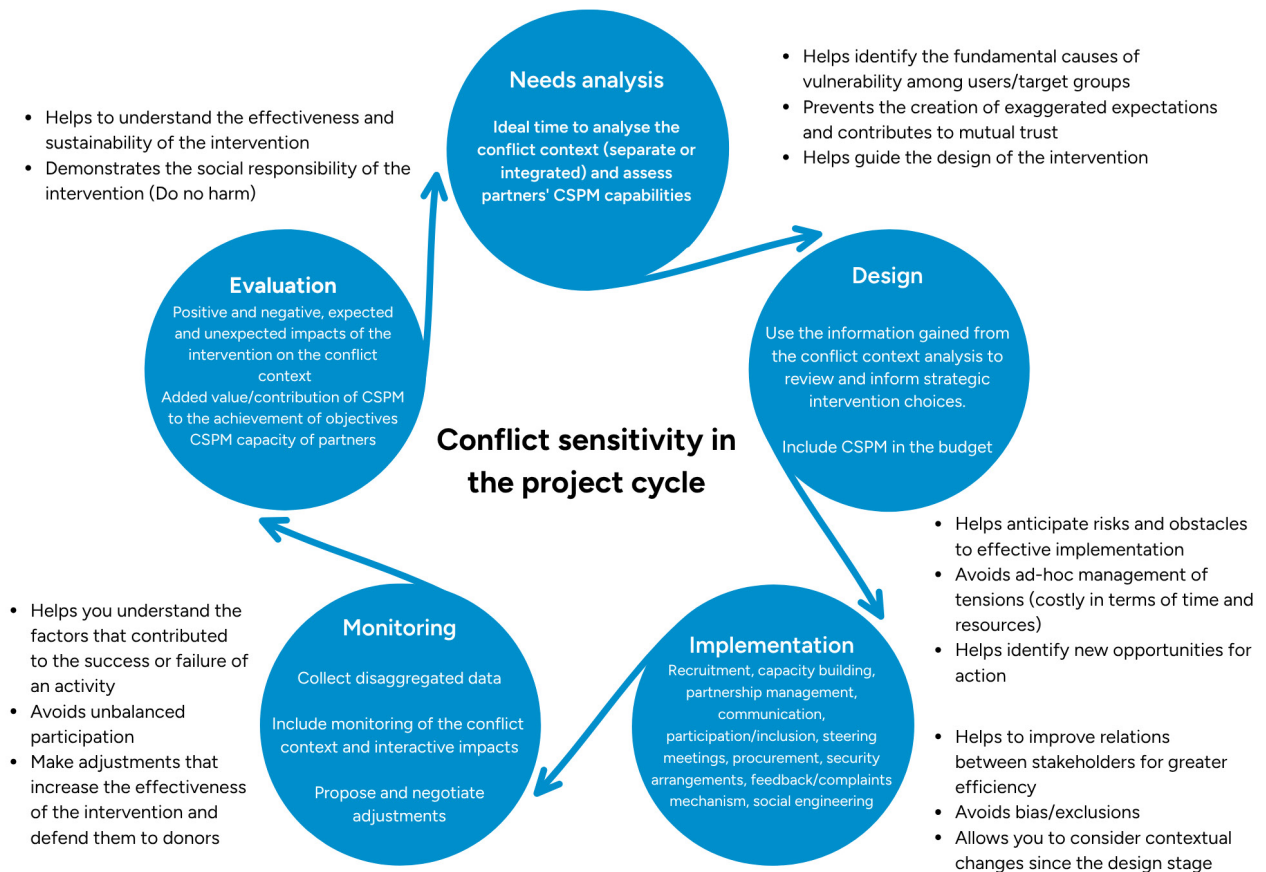
- Listen to the aspirations and needs of different groups and take account of their contexts: «be inclusive, **leave no one behind**» with a view to social cohesion and stability.
- Communicate clearly and systematically about the issues and objectives of the projects: explain why the project is focusing on certain groups rather than others.
- Build on existing consultation frameworks and seek to revitalise them.
- Pay particular attention to gender and conflict dynamics at different levels (individual/self-perception, organisational and institutional/structural).
- Review the perception of what is considered «success» and the expectations of projects: there is a risk of not achieving sustainable performance and results when working with more vulnerable groups.

This practical guide focuses on the project implementation stage and offers guidance on integrating conflict sensitivity into targeted interventions alongside current gender mainstreaming and social inclusion practices. The aim is to gain a better understanding of the context (with both conflict sensitivity and GESI lenses) to avoid doing harm (minimum standard) and, as far as possible, to contribute to positive change in favour of greater equity, one of the conditions for social cohesion and stability.

The preferred approach is an empirical one, with the intention of not going into too much detail about the tools and approaches to be adopted throughout the project cycle, as training courses for both conflict sensitivity and for GESI are the subject of specific manuals and modules. Instead, the emphasis is on implementing «typical» interventions and applying these two cross-cutting approaches together.

2.5 Integrating GESI and conflict sensitivity into the project cycle





When CS and GESI are integrated throughout a programme cycle, starting with the identification phase, they contribute to a holistic and responsive programme that meets the diverse needs of all individuals. This combined approach ensures that programming maximises impact and effectiveness and it can also help to build a resilient system capable of adapting to the ever-changing needs and challenges of all groups within a community. It puts the dignity, safety and empowerment of all people first, ensuring that programming becomes a force for positive change.

Considering the specific needs of vulnerable groups and understanding potential conflict factors will

help design activities that promote inclusion, make a positive contribution to conflict prevention and foster sustainable and peaceful development.

The first step is to ensure that projects have integrated these two cross-cutting approaches systematically throughout the project cycle. To this end, checklists can be used by the teams to verify and ensure that this has been done (Tools 3a and 3b). Ideally, integration should begin at the project design stage.

The following are examples of good practice and areas for improvement in projects implemented by SNV in the Sahel.

Analysis of the consideration of GESI and conflict sensitivity in project cycles

MOPSS

GESI considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Clear GESI objectives (e.g., the livelihoods of vulnerable agropastoralist households, particularly women and young people, are better protected, maintained and developed). Clear targets (40% women and 30% young people, IDPs⁸ and host populations). GESI anchored in planning and monitoring-evaluation (e.g., 7 learning briefs on the inclusion of GESI in the main activities). GESI strategy developed at the beginning of phase 1 and an improvement between phases 1 and 2. Capacity-building for partner staff on GESI and opportunities to reflect on the subject. Inclusive communication is a priority in all documents produced.	The planned quotas for women and young people are not always met. Low level of funding for the GESI budget line. The reporting framework.
CSPM considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Existence of a document analysing the conflict, humanitarian and security context in each intervention municipality and dividing and connecting factors in cross-border areas. Consideration of women and young people, IDPs and host populations, and the countries of departure, transit and reception of transhumant herders. The Regional Producer Organisations (RPOs) are partners representing different interest groups (pastoralists, agropastoralists and crop farmers). The strategy is implemented on the ground by RPO members (subsidiarity principle). The theory of change considers the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) triple nexus. The project team and partners have been trained in CSPM. Partners supported in developing their own safety plan and HEAT training⁹ planned. Collaboration with Land Commissions, National Transhumance Committees and media that practice Conflict Sensitive Journalism (CSJ). In-house expertise dedicated to conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding (3 SNV posts). Implementation of a feedback and complaints mechanism (FCM). Indicators and monitoring-evaluation tools with data disaggregation (by gender, age, PO, country). A flexible response fund that allows the addition of unplanned activities if necessary.	The reporting framework. Collaboration with other players working to promote peace and social cohesion. The degree of functionality of the feedback and complaints mechanism.

⁸ IDPs - Internally Displaced Persons

⁹ HEAT - Hostile Environment Awareness Training

Pro-ARIDES

GESI considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Clearly defined GESI targets, objectives and activities: e.g., building the capacity of women's and youth organisations in lobbying, advocacy and leadership. A dedicated trajectory for GESI. Affirmative action measures. GESI indicators and appropriate tools for collecting disaggregated data.	Insufficient GESI training for the team and partners. The composition of the project team is not inclusive enough. Delay in acquiring specialist expertise/human resources in GESI.
CSPM considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
The project carried out a study (by country) of the conflict context in relation to the programme's interventions. A review of the programme document to take account of IDPs and the recruitment of female staff. Inclusive targeting (women, young people, IDPs, minority groups, etc.) The choice of partners specialising in pastoralism (AREN¹⁰), agriculture (FCMN¹¹), gender and social inclusion (CARE) and governance (Local Authorities) and their strengthening in CSPM. Existence of a conflict-sensitive project management strategy and contextualised work plans. In-house expertise dedicated to conflict sensitivity (1 regional post). Existence of a functional complaints management and feedback mechanism. Adaptive and flexible programming (e.g., changing certain intervention municipalities, and the local assistance mechanism). The budget supports conflict sensitivity.	The programme's contribution to social cohesion is not clearly reflected in the overall objective. Insufficient mastery and application of the CS approach by local service providers (LSPs). Learning on and sharing the programme's CSPM experience. Raising awareness to ensure greater ownership of the feedback mechanism. Use of the various analyses and appropriation of the SC tools by the team and partners.

ABC Energy

GESI considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Recruitment of a gender consultant and ongoing development of a GESI strategy. Objectives to understand the specific needs and interests of women and young people, their accessibilities and adaptations. Clear targets set for increasing the number of women entrepreneurs with mobile phones and aim to increase the use of mobile banking services by women entrepreneurs. Affirmative action measures planned.	GESI not foreseen at the start of the project in terms of human resources and strategy. The partner ministry needs to strengthen its GESI capacity. No gender-specific indicators to monitor achievement of results towards GESI. No budget line dedicated to activities for the integration of GESI.
CSPM considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Limited areas of intervention to take account of the donor's priorities. Existence of an exit strategy. Regularly updated analysis of the risks involved in implementing the project.	Lack of analysis of the conflict context and potential interactions between the context and the project (positive and negative). Lack of a conflict-sensitive project management strategy to ensure contextualised work plans and a «Do No Harm» approach. CSPM capacity of partners not assessed, and no strengthening activities planned. No in-house expertise dedicated to conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. Monitoring and evaluation system does not take CSPM into account. The budget does not support the CSPM.

¹⁰ AREN - Association for the revitalisation of livestock farming in Niger (Association pour la redynamisation de l'élevage au Niger)

¹¹ FCMN - Federation of Vegetable Growers Cooperatives of Niger (Fédération des Coopératives Maraîchères du Niger)

P3SG (Partnership for Sustainable Sorghum Sourcing in Ghana)

GESI considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
A recently conducted GESI study which resulted in the development of a GESI work plan. Collection of disaggregated data and quarterly monitoring reflection process. Potential impacts on women and their activities were anticipated.	No GESI targets. GESI indicators are only now being developed. No budget for implementing the GESI work plan.
CSPM considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
The potential negative effects of transforming a traditional food crop into a cash crop were anticipated and discussed during the project conception phase. Security briefing for staff, who are expected to follow SNV's code of conduct.	No conflict context analysis and hence little/no interaction analysis and risk management. No appreciation or reinforcement of partner CSPM capacity. Little/no awareness of project impacts on inclusion and social cohesion.

HF4A (Healthy Future for All)

GESI considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Clear targets: 40% women. Affirmative action, for example, regarding access to finance (promotion of group rather than individual loans to women to reduce the risk of default). 3 key surveys conducted (base, mid- and endline) which include GESI. GESI partner assessment. Consultation with female led households and women's groups to ensure that services respond to their specific needs. Construction of accessible and inclusive infrastructure (including people living with different forms of disability). Ensure that private sector service providers offer affordable materials and products accessible to vulnerable households.	Room for improvement regarding affirmative action measures.
CSPM considerations	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Upon detection of tension between the Nandom district and a neighbouring district, the project was adapted to include the neighbouring district (Lambussie) in its intervention zone. Risk analysis and mitigation measures (exit routes and safe havens) to ensure the safety of staff and partners. Donor very open/receptive to adaptive management.	No appreciation or reinforcement of partner CSPM capacity. Context analysis not regularly updated. Theory of change still being developed. Analysis of potential impacts of the project on social cohesion. Documenting observed impacts of the project on social cohesion.

Best practice for GESI

	Set clear targets
	Set targets for gender equality (GE) and women's empowerment (WE)
	Conduct gender-based analyses
	Plan targeted activities
	Develop gender-specific indicators
	Report and document on GE/WE

Projects such as ABC Energie, MOPSS, Pro-ARIDES and HF4A, have adopted several of these best practices to integrate GESI.

The ABC project recruited a gender consultant, developed GESI strategies and analysed the specific needs of women and young people. It set clear

objectives and strategies to increase the participation of women entrepreneurs and their use of mobile banking services. Affirmative action measures have been put in place to encourage the inclusion of women.

The MOPSS project stands out for its targets in terms of the percentages of women (40%) and young people (30%) to be integrated, and the inclusion of displaced and host populations, plus the systematic integration of GESI into planning, monitoring and evaluation. It developed a GESI strategy from the outset of the project and has built the capacity of its staff and partners in these areas.

Pro-ARIDES has defined clear objectives to strengthen the capacities of women's and youth organisations, with a specific trajectory dedicated to GESI. The project uses affirmative action measures and appropriate tools to monitor and evaluate progress in GESI.

As for HF4A, the project stands out for its GESI partner assessment, consultation with female led households and women's groups to ensure that WASH services respond to their specific needs, and the construction of accessible and inclusive infrastructure (including people living with different forms of disability). It also ensures that private sector service providers offer affordable materials and products accessible to vulnerable households.

Good practice in integrating conflict sensitivity: examples from the MOPSS project

The project uses appropriate indicators and monitoring-evaluation tools, with data disaggregated by gender, age, Regional Producer Organisation (RPO) and country, enabling a precise analysis of impacts and results.

A flexible response fund is available to meet unforeseen needs and adjust activities where necessary, ensuring adaptive and responsive programming. The project carried out an in-depth analysis of the conflict, humanitarian and security context in each intervention municipality, and identified the dividing and connecting factors in each cross-border area, thereby enabling interventions to be adapted appropriately.

The project strives to be inclusive of women, young people, internally displaced people and the various host and transhumant populations. The RPO partners effectively represent the various interest groups such as pastoralists, agropastoralists and farmers.

An effective localisation approach has been adopted, in which local producers' organisations that are members of the RPO are actively involved in the field, thereby respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

The theory of change integrates the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) triple nexus, ensuring a holistic and coherent approach.

The project teams and partners are receiving ongoing training in peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity, thereby strengthening their operational capabilities. Partners have been supported in drawing up their own security plans, and Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) is planned. To ensure compliance with the principles of consensual, concerted and transparent resource management, the project is working with existing consultation frameworks at local, regional and national level and is raising media awareness of the practice of conflict-sensitive communication and journalism. The project has in-house expertise with three posts dedicated to this issue (a senior international post and two national advisors).

Feedback and complaint management mechanisms are in place to ensure continuous feedback and improvement of interventions.

Challenges for GESI and CS

The ABC Energy, MOPSS, Pro-Arides and P3SG projects face various **challenges in terms of GESI**:

The ABC project did not plan human resources or develop a GESI strategy at the start of the project. In addition, capacity building in the partner ministry while crucial to improving the integration of GESI into their activities, has yet to be done. The lack of gender-specific indicators to measure progress towards GESI and the lack of a dedicated budget line for these initiatives also hamper their efforts.

The P3SG project finds mainstreaming GESI difficult for such a market-based project (motivated by profit) because it is associated with additional costs and private sector funding is less flexible than traditional donor funding. The project works with aggregator businesses and has little direct contact with local farmers, and hence less influence: the aggregators main concern is meeting the volumetric targets, and they are less concerned with issues around gender equality and inclusion. Furthermore, when sorghum seed was distributed to women's groups, the women did not plant it for cultural reasons: traditionally sorghum culture is the preserve of men so even if they planted the seed, the women would not have benefited from the revenue.

The objectives set for the inclusion of women, young people and other target groups are not always achieved by the MOPSS project due to cultural barriers and different forms of resistance, and there are insufficient budget allocation and inadequate reporting regarding GESI.

As far as the Pro-ARIDES project is concerned, insufficient training of project staff and partners in GESI issues, a team composition that does not fully reflect the necessary diversity, and a delay in acquiring specialist GESI expertise are all points that require improvement.

To improve the way they consider GESI, projects need to strengthen their initial planning, improve institutional capacity, put in place precise gender-specific indicators and monitor them systematically, allocate adequate resources, achieve the objectives set, optimise their reporting, strengthen staff training, promote inclusive team composition and speed up the acquisition of the necessary expertise.

Regarding **the challenges of conflict sensitivity**:

Among the challenges, the ABC project did not carry out an in-depth analysis of the conflict context, nor of the potential interactions between the local context and the project's activities, which limits the understanding of the positive and negative impacts.

The absence of a CSPM strategy compromises the ability to develop work plans adapted to the context

and to apply the «Do No Harm» principle.

The CSPM capacity of the partners has not been proactively assessed or strengthened, which affects the quality of the integration of these critical aspects.

There is no internal post dedicated to conflict sensitivity, which limits coordination and leadership efforts in this crucial area.

Monitoring and evaluation systems do not take sufficient account of the CSPM dimension, which makes it difficult to measure impacts accurately and adjust interventions.

Finally, the budgets allocated do not adequately support CSPM, thus limiting the scope and effectiveness of the actions undertaken.

2.6 GESI and conflict sensitivity as organisational values and practices

Attempts to mainstream gender and conflict sensitivity as a project management tool, have led to the recognition that these cross-cutting approaches need to be institutionalised at different levels of the organisation - in overall organisational capacity and management processes. However, while an institutionalised commitment to gender and conflict sensitivity is important, what matters more is how these commitments are reflected in implementation, through sound operational practices.

It is therefore important that the partners involved in the implementation of SNV projects adhere to these two cross-cutting approaches and can implement them. This implies that when negotiating partnerships, SNV clearly communicates its expectations in terms of GESI and conflict sensitivity and assesses the commitment and existing capacities of each partner in these areas. This will enable it to identify areas for attention and, if necessary, plan support and capacity-building measures.

The tools proposed for this purpose can be used separately or simultaneously, ideally during the project design phase (to include capacity-building activities in the budget), and if necessary, during the start-up phase.

Organisational gender scan

This tool enables a guided self-assessment to be carried out on the capacity of partners and service providers in the public or private sector to provide services tailored to the needs, situations and aspirations of different target groups: men, women, young people and vulnerable groups (tool 2.a). This gender scan is based on three key criteria:

1. **The organisation strives to understand the specific needs** of young people (men and women) by gender and age through an in-depth analysis of user needs, interests and satisfaction,

and then collects and presents data by gender, age and vulnerable groups.

2. **The organisation strives to make its products and services accessible** to different audiences. It is aware that users may encounter difficulties accessing or benefiting from certain services because of their gender, age or vulnerability, and therefore adapts its products and services to the needs and living conditions of these audiences. For example, regarding working hours, distance, costs, eligibility criteria, payment options, the content or presentation/packaging of its products or services, etc.

3. **The organisation has the internal capacity and skills** to understand, respond to and monitor the needs and interests of employees and customers/suppliers based on their gender and age or situation.

The tool takes the form of a questionnaire to be used during an interview with key representatives of the partner or service provider. The respondent gives a score on a scale of 1 to 10 (from the lowest to the most satisfactory) to assess their performance. The criterion with the lowest score is analysed and the respondent proposes measures to improve performance.

Below is an example from the [STAMP+](#) project¹² in Mali.

Role of Tassaght, an implementing partner of the STAMP+ project in Mali, in mobilising and informing people about the “Garbal” service

Tassaght plays a crucial role in mobilising and informing people about the “Garbal” service using various communication channels, including meetings with traditional chiefs and community leaders, assemblies, and local media such as radio and television. Tassaght is also responsible for collecting and reporting data on the people mobilised, disaggregated by gender and age.

Understanding users’ needs

Mobilisation data is collected in a disaggregated way by gender and age, but there are no specific surveys to understand the needs and interests of young users. In addition, there are no formal mechanisms for collecting complaints and satisfaction, although this information is collected by field staff without being disaggregated.

To address the issue of inconsistencies in billing and the customer journey for service requests, which is currently lengthy and poorly adapted, particularly for people with low literacy levels, a survey is recommended to understand the specific needs of women and young people and adapt the service accordingly. It is also suggested that women’s and youth associations be identified and sensitised, aligning these efforts with the GESI strategy.

Adapting services

One of Tassaght’s strengths lies in the efforts made to encourage women’s participation in awareness-raising and information meetings about the service. Communication channels include awareness-raising sessions, meetings, general assemblies, door-to-door canvassing, and collaboration with other projects. However, questions remain as to whether these sessions are facilitated by men or women, how participants are identified and invited, and the potential links with similar strategies such as those of MODHEM+/EKN, which mobilise facilitators from women’s organisations.

Although there are no apparent barriers to accessing the “Garbal” service, there are still challenges that could affect women to a greater extent, such as high costs, the need to have ID, and an untailored user journey.

GESI organisational values and in-house expertise

Tassaght has in-house expertise in GESI, but little use is made of this in the Garbal service. The organisation is committed to promoting equal opportunities for its female employees, despite relatively low internal representation (85% male). It works in partnership with organisations such as USAID, SNV, UN Women and Save the Children to promote GESI, which are assets that should be exploited.

¹² The STAMP+ project aims to increase the resilience of pastoral and agropastoral households by generating economic benefits via the use of a range of digital solutions integrated into an innovative service called «Garbal». It is implemented in the northern regions of Gao, Menaka, Kidal, Timbuktu and Mopti.

Organisational conflict sensitivity scan

Conflict sensitivity requires partners who can design and implement programmes and projects in a conflict-sensitive way. They must have a sound understanding of the local context, be able to adapt programmes to changes in that context and be able to identify and monitor the risks and opportunities associated with conflict sensitivity on an ongoing basis.

The tool (tool 2.b) takes the form of a checklist to be used during an interview with the main representatives of the partner or service provider. The respondent provides details to illustrate their response (positive or negative) to the series of questions asked. Questions that have been answered in the negative are discussed with a view to mitigating shortcomings and incorporating reinforcement measures into the project's technical and financial planning.

Example of the MOPSS project

An assessment of the CS capacities of the project implementing partners in 2020 during its start-up phase revealed the following:

- Conflict sensitivity is a fairly new approach. With the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel, organisations are increasingly motivated to incorporate conflict sensitivity as an intervention principle. Some, such as APESS and RBM, have already taken their first steps in this direction with the support of experienced partners such as the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation ([SDC](#)) and [Peace Nexus](#). RBM is a founding member of the **Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub (CSC-Hub)** in West Africa, a network of organisations and individuals interested in the concept and practice of conflict sensitivity in the international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors.
- The evaluation helped to raise awareness of the issues relating to the conflict-sensitive implementation of MOPSS and to clarify the expectations of conflict sensitivity support. While reconciling the divergent interests of livestock herders and farmers is part of ROPPA's vision of inclusive, mutually supportive and sustainable socioeconomic development, the pastoralist and agropastoralist organisations (RBM and APESS) aim to defend the interests of their members. This is why MOPSS seeks to strengthen inter-RPO collaboration at all levels (local, national and regional) to ensure that **the concerns of all interest groups are considered**.
- **Conflict sensitivity skills** are concentrated at regional staff level, hence the importance attached to building the capacity of RPO focal points in each intervention country.
- Generally, organisations struggled to provide practical examples where their organisation intervened in a "conflict-blind" manner. In fact, their monitoring and evaluation systems do not capture the harmful effects of their interventions (unexpected/undesired negative impacts). This is why MOPSS has supported the introduction of a **feedback and complaints mechanism** that relies on their local relays in the municipalities where they operate.
- They spoke much more openly about the impact of the conflict context on their operations (delays, travel restrictions, relocation of activities, inaccessibility of certain areas, malfunctioning of infrastructure, disruption to the operation of their monitoring systems, etc.)
- None of the RPOs have a **security manual**, so MOPSS supported the development of security plans by APESS and RBM and encouraged partner staff to take the [BSAFE online security awareness training](#).
- ROPPA saw the benefit of greater ownership of its code of ethics, while APESS and RBM did not have such a code to guide the behaviour of their staff. In the end, it is the SNV **code of conduct** that must be respected by all members of the MOPSS consortium.
- The RPOs have set up community monitoring systems that collect information on the local context, including sources of tension and conflict, which the project's monitoring and evaluation system might use and extend in its area of intervention to better **monitor ongoing changes in the context**.

A capacity-building programme for a pool of experts in conflict sensitivity within the three Regional Producer Organisations (RPO) has been implemented. For more details of this programme, see [Case study: training in conflict sensitivity](#), MOPSS Project (Peaceful Cross-Border Pastoral Mobility and Social Stability in the Sahel), (SNV, December 2022).

PART 3 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT IN A GENDER- AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE WAY AND THE PROJECT-CONTEXT INTERACTIONS

3.1 Understanding the conflict context

A good prior understanding of the social context, through the identification of sources of tension and factors that bring people together/opportunities for peace, makes it possible to adjust the implementation of each activity. Even if it takes time, «*prevention is better than cure*».

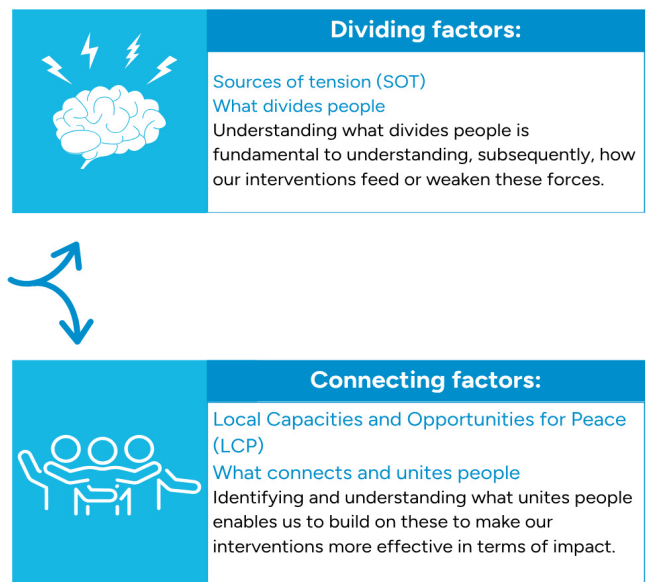
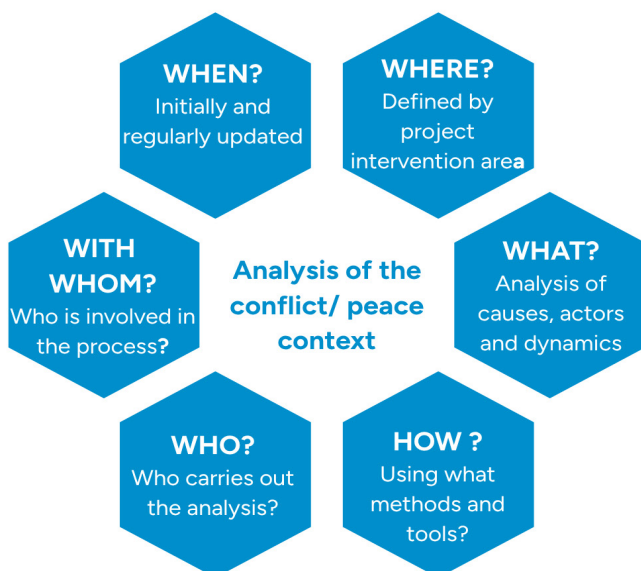
There are several reasons for this approach:

- To reduce the risk of an intervention inciting or supporting violence (Do no harm) and to contribute to peacebuilding (Do more good) by

identifying points of tension and building bridges between antagonists.

- To add value to the effectiveness of the intervention alongside the fundamental principles of participatory approaches, accountability and sustainability.
- To secure the intervention and its stakeholders in a fragile context, by mitigating risks and exploiting opportunities.
- For greater credibility in the eyes of both donors and stakeholders.

Step 1: Understand the conflict context



Key questions to guide the analysis process

Teams are asked to reflect on the context of their project. This process of analysing the context must be carried out at the start of the project and updated regularly during its implementation. The analysis is limited to the project's area of intervention, while considering the factors of the general context (political, security, socio-economic and environmental) at national or even regional level, which influence the specific conflict context.

The aim is to identify the types of conflict, their causes (visible and underlying), their history (changes over time and in terms of intensity), as well as the parties involved, noting their motivations (real and stated) and the power relationships between them. This can be complemented by a description of the security and humanitarian context.

This analysis enables us to identify the main **dividing and connecting factors** in relation to the following 5 aspects:

- Attitudes, perceptions, values, feelings and culture:** How do these aspects influence the conflict context, positively or negatively?
- Behaviours, experiences and activities:** what has happened in the past that has had an impact (positive or negative) on the current conflict/peace context? How did this happen?
- Capacities and resources:** What existing capacities and resources influence the conflict context (positively or negatively)? How do they do this?
- Structures, systems and institutions:** Which structures, systems and institutions play an important role? What role do they play?
- Interests and issues:** What are the interests and issues of the various stakeholders? How do these convergences or divergences influence the conflict/peace context?

MOPSS example: Analysis of the Danderesso area in the Sikasso Region of Mali (during the GESI/CSPM workshop in Bamako, November 2023)

Dividing factors (sources of tension)	Categories	Connecting factors (sources of cohesion)
Strong social stratification Discontent/frustration with broken promises made by administrative and political authorities	Attitudes, perceptions, values, feelings, culture	Joking kinship/alliance Historical culture of religious tolerance
Agricultural expansion to the detriment of grazing land Politicisation of the customary sphere The rise of religious fundamentalism and violent extremism Attacks by armed groups on production facilities	Behaviours, experiences, activities	The area is almost ethnically homogenous Promoting interreligious dialogue and communication through moderate channels Involving traditional and religious leaders in peace-building activities
Land pressure linked to demographic growth Pressure on basic social services and natural resources in the area The weakening of traditional systems and formal conflict management mechanisms Poor governance of land and natural resources, fuelling a sense of injustice among certain social groups	Capabilities and resources	Radio as an information channel to defuse tensions Projects that promote access to justice and respect for human rights Presence of local mediators
Existence of tension between modern formal justice and customary justice	Structures/ systems, organisations/ institutions	Existence of a framework for consultation on natural resource management Existence of local structures for consultation and inter-communal cooperation
Rivalry over the use and management of natural resources exacerbated by demographic pressure The population is divided between collaborating with the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) and non-state armed groups for their protection	Interests and issues at stake	Negotiating humanitarian access and coordinating aid responses to the challenges of the area and the needs of the population Disarmament, demobilisation and social reintegration of ex-combatants

3.2 Understanding the interactions between the context and the project

3.2.1 Risks and opportunities of the context for our intervention

Risk analysis of the context for project implementation is already part of the practice of most projects. For GESI- and conflict-sensitive project management, it is also important to analyse the opportunities offered by the intervention context to promote greater gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion. This helps identify how your project can leverage or build on these opportunities to maximise positive impact.

This analysis should consider the following aspects:

- 1. Location/timing/programming:** What are the possible impacts of the project's geographical location? How does the timing of the project affect its chances of success?
- 2. Actors involved:** What is happening in the peace/ conflict context that could influence the ability of the partners or actors involved to carry out the project successfully? Are there any actors who could bring added value to the project (including in relation to CS and GESI)?
- 3. Political context:** How might changes in the political context influence the project positively and/or negatively? What is happening politically that could help or hinder the performance of the project (including in relation to CS and GESI)?

- 4. Economic context:** What is happening economically that could help or hinder the project's performance (including in relation to CS and GESI)? How might this impact project performance?
- 5. Socio-cultural context:** Are there any barriers to the inclusion and participation of certain categories of people/populations? What is happening in the peace or conflict environment that could influence the project?
- 6. Security context:** What is happening on the security front that could influence the project's performance (including in relation to CS and GESI)? How might this impact project performance?

It is important to identify these risks and opportunities, to consider them in the planning (risk mitigation and opportunity exploitation measures), to monitor their effective management and to assess their impact on the project's performance.

3.2.2 Understanding the social impact of our actions

In CSPM, it is also necessary to understand how our actions influence the conflict/peace context (through which mechanisms) and to identify «do no harm» approaches (preventing new conflicts and not fuelling existing ones) while maximising the positive impact of the intervention on the conflict/peace context (within the limits of the project mandate).

Indeed, the strategic choices and inputs of a project (tangible and intangible resources) can sometimes undermine social cohesion to the point of compromising the achievement of its initial objectives. For example:

- **The resurgence of a land dispute** between two villages during the construction of water point, which was subsequently abandoned to preserve the peace.
- **The misappropriation of a new cattle embarkation dock** that competed with an existing traditional cattle market.
- **The refusal of host communities to provide a site** when they were not involved in opening and managing literacy and training centres for mobile herders.

Hence the need to review the details of our intervention (What? Why? Who/With whom? Where? When? How?) and to check whether our choices are detrimental to the context:

- Do the details of our intervention reinforce the dividers in the context, or do they undermine rather than reinforce the connectors?

- Do the actions and resources we transfer have an effect that inflame tensions?
- Can our behaviour be perceived differently from what we intended (implicit ethical messages)?

Among the **behaviours likely to undermine social cohesion** are the following:

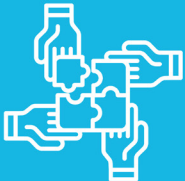
- choosing biased partners or stakeholders
- neglecting communication and transparency
- creating new resources that increase competition for access and political control
- increasing socio-economic inequalities
- favouring some groups over others
- creating new structures and institutions that compete with existing ones

The following **behaviours that unite people** can have a positive impact on social cohesion:

- bringing different populations and communities together around common interests
- creating channels for communication and consultation
- creating opportunities for the various actors/communities to work together and collaborate
- involving those who are often excluded from the decision-making process
- encouraging the emergence or growth of interpersonal relationships between different communities and stakeholders

So, we need to keep a close eye on the main influencing mechanisms to ensure that we have a positive impact and do no harm.

The main mechanisms for influencing an intervention

	Resource transfer What resources do we bring? What impact will this have?
	Structuring What influence do we have on the structure of the environment (organisations, systems and institutions) With what impact?
	Implicit ethical messages What messages are we sending out through our actions? What impact will they have?

Transfer of resources

The transfer of resources raises several challenges relating to their distribution and appropriation. The choice of site, based on land status and access to infrastructure, can reinforce the power of one actor to the detriment of others, particularly through theft, misappropriation or inappropriate distribution of resources. In addition, the project may create new issues and interests, either by freeing up internal resources or by stimulating competition for the use or control of a new resource. In some cases, the resources diverted or released are used directly in the conflict, such as vehicles or food.

Considering the stakeholders is also crucial. If resources are allocated to one group to the detriment of another, this can create feelings of exclusion and injustice. Collaborating or not with certain stakeholders can reinforce or diminish their legitimacy. In addition, the influence of the resources provided on markets can be significant, affecting prices positively or negatively and generating winners and losers. This, in turn, can reinforce inter-group conflict and the war economy.

Structuring

Actions aimed at structuring the community, in terms of organisations and institutions and their governance, must take account of the local context. The creation of new structures, parallel to existing ones, can prove problematic, especially if membership is not sufficiently inclusive or representative. A structure that defends the interests of one group to the detriment of others can exacerbate tensions. The systems put in place must ensure that delegates are representative and accountable. However, if this does not work as intended, it can create new, well-informed and trained elites, thereby altering power relations. Neglecting transparency, for example by always going through an influential person, can also cause problems.

Implicit ethical messages

Finally, projects often convey implicit ethical messages. In terms of strength and power, the legitimisation or refusal to bear arms, or the imposition of ideas, sends out the message that *«he who has the power or the arms decides»*. Mistrust, suspicion and competition between projects and organisations that do not collaborate suggest that *«there is no need to collaborate»* and that *«it is acceptable to ignore what others are doing and to not communicate what you are doing to others»*. Accountability and impunity are also at stake when project officers use resources in a personal capacity, implying that *«you can use the resources you control without being accountable to others»*. The project

may also accept or decline responsibility for its actions, adopting an attitude of *«it's not my fault, I did what I was told»*.

Differing values and ethics are also important aspects. Ignoring cultural values or taboos, or applying different policies to national and expatriate staff, sends the message that *«our values or lives take precedence over yours»*. Staff who are belligerent, hostile or aggressive communicate that *«this kind of behaviour is acceptable»*. Finally, seeing one group as the aggressor and another as the victim implies that *«the other is responsible for all the ills»*.

SNV is committed to avoiding or minimising the negative social impacts of its projects and to increasing their positive impacts.¹³ To this end, this analysis of interactions (tool 4) should be carried out as early as possible, so that strategic and operational adaptations can be integrated into technical and financial planning. It is also important to adopt a positive approach to conflict: a society without conflict is a society in stagnation, in other words **«there is no development without conflict»**. It is therefore important to highlight the potential of conflict to drive development through its positive management. To achieve this, projects must :

- **Understand the context** of conflict or peace in which they operate
- **Learn to perceive and harness** the positive functions of conflict (alarm signal, catalyst for change, stimulus for creativity)
- **Assume their responsibility** for conflict transformation and peace promotion throughout their cycle.

3.3 Understanding the context from a gender perspective

3.3.1 Gender social roles

The aim is to equip project teams with a better understanding of the intervention context, taking gender roles as a starting point. Gender social roles are the social construction of men's and women's identities, forged by actors (parents, teachers, peers, etc.) and socialisation factors (school, institutions, media, etc.) in a specific context and at a given time. They determine the distribution of roles, power, decisions and access to resources, opportunities and benefits for men and women. They can be a source of inequality.

Analysis of gender roles and social norms helps us to understand the division of tasks and responsibilities between men and women in a particular area¹⁴ and, by extension, the need to ensure that they have access to the resources and infrastructure they need

¹³ SNV Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) including the Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (ESSP), SNV 2016.

¹⁴ These include productive tasks such as raising small ruminants and processing milk, and reproductive tasks such as fetching water, hygiene and keeping the home clean

to carry out their activities. This means including them in the process of setting up infrastructures and in the various frameworks that determine the use and management of these infrastructures (pastoral and others) and natural resources (land, forests, etc.). These may be management committees for infrastructures, or consultation frameworks dedicated to resource management: for example, land commissions and national transhumance committees, etc.

To this end, participants are asked to create a mind map of masculinity and femininity (Tool 5). This involves conducting a brainstorming session starting with a central idea (masculinity - femininity), exploring the secondary ideas (roles, characteristics, influence of context, etc.) and the underlying ideas (maternity, hygiene, childcare, etc.).

Participants work in groups, by project or by sector - pastoralism, water, hygiene and sanitation, energy, non-timber forest product development - and contextualise the concepts of masculinity and femininity in their respective projects. The prism of gender roles and relations provides a better understanding of the obstacles to the participation and inclusion of women in the various activities carried out by the projects, and the impact of these obstacles on the experiences of the women involved: vulnerability to insecurity and violence, economic dependence on the head of the household, failure to meet their basic needs such as access to water and appropriate hygiene and sanitation services, failure to take account of their interests and productive activities, and limited access to infrastructure, services and decision-making forums.

Using the mind map, workshop participants were able to contextualise gender roles in different environments.

Example: Masculinity and femininity in the context of pastoralism in the Sahel

In the pastoral environment, **adult men** are the heads of household and, as such, the managers of livestock and property and the main decision-makers when it comes to herd movements during transhumance. They are active in cattle rearing, providing them with the necessary care, feeding them, and selling them at livestock markets. They are active in the meat, leather and hide sectors. At family level, the head of the household, in most cases a man, is responsible for the protection and security of the household. He ensures its survival by generating an income to meet its needs, such as food and shelter. It is he who decides how household expenditure is spent. Adult men predominate in pastoral organisations and cooperatives, in customary and territorial authorities and in state technical services, and they are very little involved in reproductive and domestic tasks, although these roles vary depending on the context.

Young men have little autonomy before they marry and set up their own households. In pastoral areas, they lead the herds on transhumance and are active in the meat industry, slaughtering and selling animals. They are present at livestock markets and are involved in butchery, ropemaking and fodder production, and may be involved in milk collection and sales. Due to insecurity, they are increasingly involved in tasks previously reserved for young women, such as collecting wood and water for domestic use. They are also entrusted with activities that require physical strength, such as building infrastructure. They are mainly present in youth organisations, less so in mixed organisations where they have little or no access to management and decision-making bodies.

Adult women have a say in household management and spending, especially when it comes to the well-being and subsistence of the household: buying grain, healthcare, and clothing. They contribute to income generation, resilience, food security and household 'balance'. In pastoral areas, they carry out productive activities such as processing milk into by-products, fattening and selling small ruminants, and subsistence farming for food crops: onion, potato, groundnut, cowpea and vegetable gardening. They are responsible for hygiene and cleanliness, caring for household members and preparing food. They may be involved in building infrastructure and are present in mixed organisations with little capacity to influence, whereas they have more room to manoeuvre within women's organisations, which give them easier access to resources such as inputs and credit, for example, via village savings and loan cooperatives and associations and the tontines supported by projects. Their ability to move and influence may be limited in some areas, due to the presence of armed groups and gender-based social norms.

Young women are the most limited in their decisions and their ability to make choices. They carry out the same productive activities as their elders. They are overloaded with household chores and have less time to devote to productive activities. Finally, they have little or no influence in mixed organisations, but more in women's organisations.

As a result, men have priority access to pastoral resources and infrastructure. They also take precedence in deciding on access to and use of resources and infrastructure. They take an active part in consultations, hold information on land ownership and resource use and are represented in dialogue frameworks dedicated to managing these issues (e.g., land commissions and transhumance management committees).

The current context is exacerbating rather than easing tensions over the use of resources:

- Scarcity of resources leads to community conflicts, particularly between farmers and herders (linked to demographic pressure and climate change)
- Increased appropriation of resources and use of infrastructures by certain groups
- More frequent movements and absences of men with their animals
- Greater involvement of men in milk marketing, an activity normally reserved for women

Example: Masculinity and femininity in the context water, hygiene and sanitation in Burkina Faso

Men are the decision-makers in the home and in management bodies. In this capacity, they influence the choice of sites and types of infrastructure. They contribute to the construction of family latrines and cover the fees for the use of water points and the costs of building infrastructure and water points. They are responsible for the technical maintenance of these facilities. In pastoral areas, they are responsible for watering cattle.

As guarantors of the hygiene and health of household members, **women** are responsible for hygiene education for children. They also have specific needs in terms of the hygienic management of menstruation. They are responsible for fetching water and maintaining sanitation facilities. As such, they are more sensitive to hygiene issues and more reliable when it comes to organising and delivering water services. They also use water to grow food crops, which are essential for household food security, and to water small ruminants and poultry.

Despite their crucial role, their specific needs, and the fact that they are directly concerned, when issues of access to water, hygiene and sanitation are addressed, women are rarely consulted on expenditure linked to these services, or when decisions are taken regarding the setting up of WASH services or infrastructures. It therefore seems appropriate to involve them in the planning and management of access to water and sanitation.

The context of insecurity increases women's vulnerability, namely their access to hygiene and sanitation services:

- Women run the risk of being sexually assaulted while fetching water and washing or relieving themselves.
- Women and children are more exposed to diseases linked to a lack of hygiene and access to water (infections, diarrhoeal diseases, etc.)
- The scarcity of water resources puts additional pressure (time and hardship) on the already busy schedules of women, who are generally responsible for fetching water.

The role of women in the development of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) - the example of shea under the PGLRF programme¹⁵ in Burkina Faso

Women are active in the collection and small-scale processing of non-timber forest products. Collecting these products (shea in particular) is an almost exclusively female activity/prerogative. The income from this activity is reinvested in their households and is an important factor in their resilience.

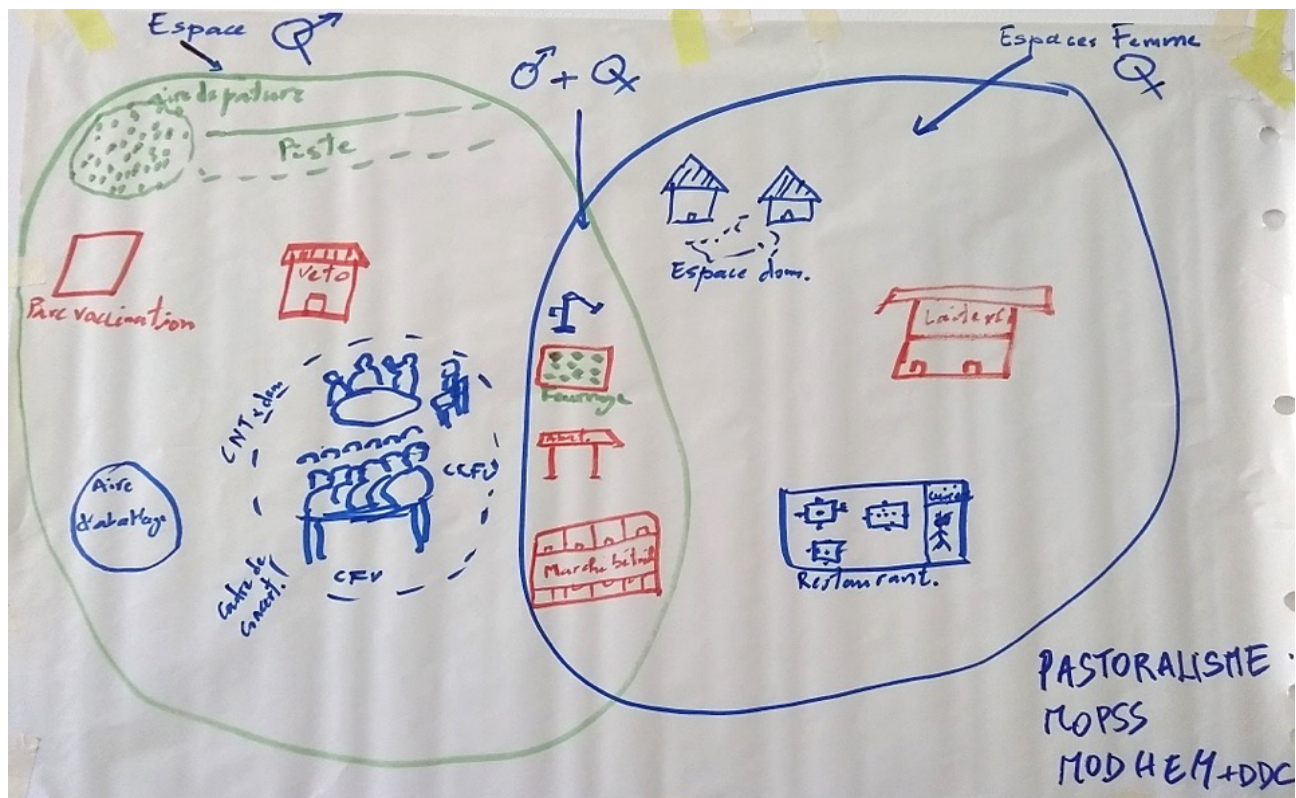
Although women are heavily involved in NTFP collection and processing activities, they have less access to the resource, as they do not own the forest areas or the trees. They are also underrepresented if represented at all in forest resource management bodies such as village groups. They have limited involvement in the social organisation related to the delimitation of forest areas and the establishment of processing units that would enable them to transform the nuts into quality butter, and they have little decision-making power over the marketing of NTFPs. The PGLRF project aims to address these challenges.

3.3.2 Gendered mapping of spaces used

The map of the occupation of spaces by men and women (Tool 6) complements the gender roles mind map and enables us to visualise the spaces and places occupied by men and women, the elderly and the young, in a given context according to their roles. Gender roles determine the different access of men and women of different ages to (decision-making) spaces, natural resources and infrastructure (pastoral and other).

¹⁵ PGLRF «Weoog Paani» project for local governance of forest resources, implemented by the Tree Aid-SNV-UNCDF consortium and financed by the Swedish cooperation (SIDA).

Example: Occupation of spaces in a pastoral environment in the Sahel (experience of the MOPSS and MODHEM+DDC projects)



There are few spaces shared by men and women, apart from livestock markets (where animals are bought and sold together with associated activities such as catering), fodder production units and water points. Within these areas, activities are highly specialised between men and women and are determined by social and cultural norms.

There are few exclusive spaces for women, and they are confined to the domestic sphere ('inside'), in places dedicated to their activity or around the home, even when economic activities are involved: e.g., rearing small ruminants or poultry, vegetable gardening, milking livestock, food processing, etc. This can be explained both by the need to reconcile household tasks and productive activities in a context where time is a scarce commodity and women's mobility is therefore limited, and by social norms which tend to limit women's movements outside the home.

Men are more present in areas 'outside' the home where productive activities are concerned: cattle tracks, vaccination pens, abattoirs, where young cattlemen are particularly present. Areas of consultation and decision-making such as the palaver tree, the town hall, village land commissions (CFV), transhumance management committees (CNT), etc. are generally reserved for older men. This presence is even more important when it comes to consultation forums on the management of infrastructure or

resources where the issue of land ownership is central, as these are considered to be «men's affairs», generally involving traditional chiefs, village councillors or, at the very least, heads of household, who are considered to be the most competent to manage these issues. In fact, women are rarely involved (or informed). For example, it is considered that women's presence would not be relevant in the context of a diagnosis and the search for social agreements regarding demarcation of a section of cattle track. They are therefore mostly excluded from these processes.

However, the map of spaces demonstrates that women, although often confined to the domestic sphere, carry out productive activities (raising small ruminants, fattening sheep, selling milk, catering in markets, agriculture), which lead them to occupy these mixed spaces and to use the so-called «pastoral» infrastructures.

Example: Occupation of spaces in the context of water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) in Burkina Faso (experience of the ECDD project in Burkina Faso)

Four spaces linked to access to water were identified, at least three of which are mixed:

- The borehole, used for drinking water, domestic use and productive activities (watering livestock); women are responsible for fetching water.

- Water points such as rivers, marigots and dams are mainly used for productive activities such as livestock rearing, agriculture and fishing, predominantly by men, but also for domestic use by women.
- The private space of the household, where women are more involved in reproductive and child-rearing tasks.

Women are omnipresent in the use of water, particularly for household needs: drinking water, cooking, watering animals, hygiene and cleaning. However, they are poorly represented in the public and consultative bodies that make up the local water committees. It has been noted that the predominant role played by men in the construction of infrastructure (funding, equipment, physical strength) could constitute an obstacle to the participation of women in the social engineering upstream of the construction of water infrastructure and on its management committees. It can be argued that the non-inclusion of women in these decision-making bodies is harmful in that it constitutes discrimination and failure to take account of their specific needs, resulting in technical choices, sites or types of service that are not adapted to the needs of women users. When women users do take part in consultation forums, their point of view is often overlooked or considered with reservations. These inappropriate choices have repercussions for the health of women and children.

Example: Occupation of spaces in the context of NTFP exploitation, including shea (experience of the PGLRF project in Burkina Faso)

Most women are involved in shea gathering and processing, while men are concentrated in the marketing sector, where they make more profit. For these reasons, women are present in most areas: forest, home, watering points, processing units, umbrella organisations and markets. However, they are less well represented in 'public' consultation and decision-making forums, such as the palaver tree and forest resource management groups at municipal level.

With the support of community leaders, a change is underway to protect the shea tree, which is in danger of disappearing. It is therefore in their own interests that the resource is protected and that women collectors participate in this protection. Women are increasingly recognised as economic players, generating a significant income to maintain the livelihoods of their households. In this respect, it would also seem appropriate for them to take part in the various frameworks at village, municipal or regional level, as is the case with the agribusiness clusters (ABC).

Conclusion

Women are generally socialised to be confined to the private sphere and not to move around, express themselves or speak up, whereas boys/men can move around and express their point of view, sometimes vehemently. They will be listened to, because they are held in a position of authority, and seen as legitimate in that role.

Consultation and decision-making forums are generally reserved for senior men. This presence is all the more important when it comes to consultation forums on the management of infrastructure or resources, where the issue of land ownership is central, as these are considered to be 'men's affairs', generally involving customary chiefs, village councillors or, at a pinch, heads of households, who are considered to be the most competent to manage these issues. As a result, women are rarely involved or even informed.

However, the spaces mapping shows that women, although often confined to the home, carry out productive activities that lead them to occupy these mixed areas and use the so-called «pastoral» infrastructures and natural resources: land, non-timber forest products, water, etc.

Women are often socially associated with reproductive tasks, while their involvement in productive activities is undervalued. Yet they are present on both fronts. We need to make this presence more visible and take advantage of the socialisation spaces that enable women to play a role and express themselves – groups, producer organisations, committees, consultation frameworks – so that they can invest in decision-making spaces where they are poorly represented. It is not only a question of «legitimacy», but also of effectiveness, to make women and young people visible and to recognise them as actors in their multiple roles and as stakeholders in consultation frameworks, including the management of natural resources or infrastructure and social engineering. This is also important for social cohesion, to avoid latent conflicts that could degenerate and cause harm.

3.3.3 Map of spaces occupied and risks of tension

As part of the workshop in Benin, the participants used a symbol to mark the places and sources of tension on the maps of spaces occupied. These tensions can be found at several levels and are points of attention for our projects:

- There is a risk of **tension within the household** when projects carry out activities that influence the distribution of roles and power dynamics and generate «transformative change»: income generated and/or increased for the wife, more autonomy, need to travel to carry out

her activities, attend training courses, attend meetings of tontines or village savings and loan associations, sell on the market, in short, «get out of the domestic confines». The introduction of new technologies, such as biodigesters, is a potential source of tension, in that it requires a change in attitudes, roles and the division of tasks within the household. Hence the need for information and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at both spouses and communities.

- **Women's mobility** is even more problematic in fragile contexts, particularly where armed groups are present and religious extremism is on the rise. Projects must provide alternatives to avoid exacerbating tensions and ensure, for example, that meetings happen in places that are safe for women and are held separately by gender, and sometimes by age group.
- **Tensions over access to land** for various uses and interests - agriculture, livestock - are most frequent and particularly exacerbated during transhumance. These tensions become more complex when land management policies - customary law/modern law - overlap and new government policies are introduced. In principle, there are mechanisms in place to regulate this access (transhumance management committees, land commissions, etc.) and even resolve conflicts, but they are not always functional (see Tool 9 - checklist for diagnosing consultation frameworks).
- **The use of natural resources**, such as shea, can be a source of tension, particularly in a context of climate change and insecurity where access to these resources may be compromised, and/or these resources are depleted and become rarer. Gravel extraction quarries can be a source of tension¹⁶ : this activity is clearly divided between men and women according to the physical strength required. However, when an activity becomes lucrative, there is a risk that it will be taken over by men. Concertation frameworks designed to protect these resources and regulate access to them are also opportunities to avoid tensions.
- The **construction and use of infrastructures**, such as water points, livestock tracks, markets, etc. are another point of tension. Infrastructure must be built and managed in a concerted,

equitable and inclusive manner. To achieve this, it is proposed that before any infrastructure is built, the eight key considerations should be reviewed and the needs and interests of the various social categories should be considered throughout the process (tool 11). The setting up of the management committee also deserves particular attention in terms of inclusion, representativeness and legitimacy. The members of these committees must have the necessary skills to carry out their roles and be accountable to the people they represent. Complaints mechanisms can be put in place to collect and consider any grievances to mitigate or even avoid tensions. Infrastructures such as markets have the potential to bring people together, by stimulating economic activities, encouraging contacts between actors, generating revenue for the local authority that can be reinvested in development, etc.

- Problems of **governance** within an institution (e.g., a municipality) can arise for a variety of reasons, such as the seizure of power by an elite, an ethnic group or a political party.

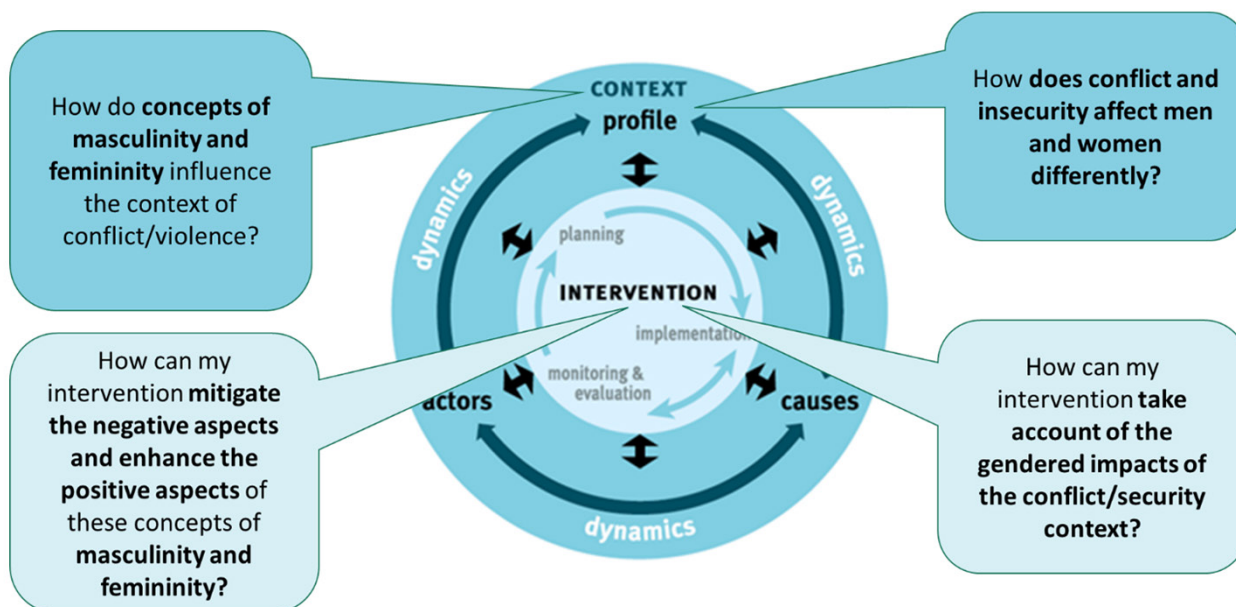
The space occupation map is an effective way of visualising sources of potential tension and conflict. It would be useful to combine it with tools for analysing the conflict context: actor mapping and analysis of their positions, interests and needs, a tree of the causes and consequences of conflict, a historical profile or cycle of conflict, connecting-dividing factors, etc.

3.4 Gender identities and conflicts

The issue of gender identities or gender social roles in conflict situations or fragile contexts is part of the analysis of the context and aims to better understand the interactions between gender identities and conflicts, as explained in the following diagram.

¹⁶ [PDIEM](#) project in Benin.

Gender, conflict/violence and CSPM



The aim is to ensure that teams have a better understanding of:

- **Social gender roles** (masculinity/femininity) in conflict resolution and peacebuilding
- And the **differentiated impacts of conflict and insecurity** on men and women (older and younger) in households in their areas of intervention.

By understanding these interactions, we can guide project planning by mitigating the impact of militarised and toxic masculinities/femininities (dividers) and building on positive gender identities (connectors) to prevent conflict and build peace. On the other hand, it allows us to take account of the impact of conflicts and the vulnerability of our impact groups in our interventions, so as not to exacerbate this vulnerability and to strengthen their contributions to peace.

3.4.1 Toxic masculinity and femininity

The first step is to make participants aware of the harmful and even violent behaviour associated with social gender norms by reading a list of statements (Tool 7). Generally speaking, to show his virility, a man must demonstrate his physical strength and authority and hide his emotions, which can sometimes result in violent behaviour, that is valued: *«a real man doesn't cry and may come to blows to defend his family, his values, etc.»*

Participants answer the questions from their own point of view. This exercise reveals values and demonstrates the importance of being convinced oneself of the relevance of GESI and of sensitivity to conflict in order to be able to convince others.

It is an interesting test for participants in terms of their degree of sensitivity to social gender roles, stereotypes and prejudices that can encourage discriminatory or even violent behaviour. For example, during one workshop, a participant expressed her surprise at certain reactions in favour of men demonstrating their strength (physical) towards their wives, depending on the situation, while referring to the precepts of the Koran that endorse this behaviour. She said: *«At our level, as educated intellectuals, it's surprising that there hasn't been more change.... We are at level 0 - nothing has changed».*

The exercise raises awareness of gender inequalities and discrimination in society. It was pointed out that situations depend on the context and on individuals and their perceptions as a function of socialisation and the «pressures» exerted by culture, religion and peers. According to one participant, the use of «modern law» runs the risk of «breaking up families», particularly when settling disputes and in cases of domestic violence.

The participants are then asked to reflect on the contextual or cultural elements that encourage these behaviours. They can refer to the mind maps that were used to identify the characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity: aggressiveness, selfishness, violent behaviour in men, jealousy, mobilising role of women for good and bad causes.

Toxic femininity Dividing factors	Positive femininity Connecting factors
- Supporting men's «manly» behaviour, to feel more feminine, or the «mirror effect» - Gossiping or spreading rumours, which can fuel tensions - Passive consent in the face of escalating conflict - Incitement to hatred and violence to satisfy a thirst for power and take revenge on the patriarchy: e.g., Simone Gbagbo during the post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire - The perpetuation of harmful «cultural» practices: excision, forced and early marriages, etc.¹⁷ - Songs and tales told by women, praising the bravery of warriors and encouraging men to fight	- Respect for older/menopausal women for their experience and wisdom - The fact that women are more 'socialised' or encouraged to show their emotions and are therefore more in touch with their emotions - Their ability/pre-disposition to communicate and listen empathetically - Marriages and blood ties between ethnic groups/communities as factors of cohesion - The traditional role of women in organising festivities and ceremonies that promote social cohesion (weddings, christenings, funerals, etc.) - Their role as educators, central to the construction of the social identity of boys and girls, and therefore to the transmission of «positive» behaviours - Physiological characteristics (female hormones - oxytocin plays a role in trust, empathy, and generosity)

In conflict situations, women can also be directly or indirectly involved.¹⁸ They are enlisted in Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) as informers and even to carry weapons. They can also incite violence and play a mobilising role, for example by mocking the virility of men who do not take up arms (a comment confirmed by a participant in Niger as being a reality in his locality). Women can encourage their sons to join various armed groups in order to obtain protection (according to one participant, this is a common practice in the Diffa region, but to be accepted by

Boko Haram, a family member must be killed, and it is generally the father who is killed and the mother is married to an influential member of the group).

Women tend to be infantilised, and their involvement as actors is unsuspected in cases of conflict/insecurity, hence their instrumentalisation for kamikaze or supply acts. There are also women in state armies, sometimes in leadership roles, but they are generally more focused on organisational rather than operational aspects (on the battlefield).

Toxic masculinity Dividing factors	Positive masculinity Connecting factors
- The use of force to demonstrate virility - The use/abuse of authority - The dominant character - Feudalism/patriarchy - Militarised masculinities These behaviours are strongly encouraged socially and seen as a sign of virility - Physiological characteristics (male hormones - testosterone increases muscle mass and sometimes aggression)	- Social responsibility - Protective role - Guarantor of traditions, in particular customary and religious leaders - Self-control, control of emotions, reserved character - Decisiveness

In many societies, men and boys are brought up to be combative and dominant: they are encouraged to play with weapons, to engage in ritualised combat and to play contact sports. The military and armed groups construct, reproduce and deploy a specific version of a warrior masculinity, or what have been called «**militarised masculinities**».

The idea that masculinity and/or virility should translate into superiority or even domination of one group over another can also lead to **gender-based violence (GBV)**. Gender-based violence is defined

as «*any harmful act perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity*». It is based on a feeling of superiority and the desire to assert that superiority within the family, at school, in the workplace, in the community and in society, and can therefore manifest itself in both the private and public spheres. It can be sexual, physical, verbal, psychological or socio-economic in nature. It is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful norms.

¹⁷ Extracts from the Ouagadougou workshop, December 2021, MOPSS Project

¹⁸ Extracts from the Niamey workshop, May 2024

GBV is common in situations of conflict and insecurity. The victims are mainly women and adolescent girls, whose vulnerability is exacerbated by the chaos caused: for example, separation from family and community, or having to take on certain roles, such as going out in search of food or firewood, can expose victims to greater risks of exploitation and violence. In addition, the breakdown of law and order allows aggressors to commit their acts with impunity. In many conflicts, women's bodies themselves become battlefields, and rape is used as a tactic of humiliation, domination or disruption of social cohesion, and as a «weapon of war». GBV is also endemic in post-conflict situations, perpetuating a cycle of anxiety and terror. Sexual violence can have devastating effects, both psychological (trauma) and physical: injuries, unwanted pregnancies, fistulas and HIV.¹⁹

The group exercises highlighted gender-specific behaviours that are deemed acceptable and even valued in a given society. These behaviours are not innate but are forged by actors and socialisation factors throughout life. Certain behaviours linked to masculinity promote reactions in a tense situation, potentially conflictual, characterised as «violent» or aggressive and which will contribute to the escalation of a conflict.

The implication of these findings for our work is that, because of social gender norms, men are more often the protagonists of conflicts, while women are vulnerable and suffer the repercussions of these conflicts. Women are also often excluded from the areas where disputes over the management of natural resources or infrastructure – potential sources of conflict – are settled.

3.4.2 Building on positive femininity and masculinity

However, for both boys/men and girls/women, toxic behaviour is not inevitable. Other masculine behaviours or reactions will, on the contrary, allow us to rely on compassionate and reasoned communication, and enable us to reach a consensus or agreement. It is this positive masculinity that projects need to harness.

Deconstructing toxic masculinity

The masculinity maps show that men must be «protective, reasoned and responsible». We therefore need to reduce militarised and toxic masculinities (dividing factor) and build on positive masculinities (connecting factor). The strategy involves influencing the societal norms and institutions that generate and perpetuate the links between men and violence.

This can be done in several ways: by educating/raising awareness among young people about these gender identities, by creating spaces where people can speak out in talks, debates and governance cafés, by training young leaders (men and women) who can serve as examples for their peers by promoting constructive male roles. Commemorative dates (such as 8 March, [International Women's Rights Day](#), and 25 November, [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#)) can also be used to raise awareness in this area. In any event, it is important to give priority to participatory approaches and to adapt to the context and pace of change in the communities in which we work. Organisations such as CARE and Oxfam have conducted experiments in this area in post-conflict or fragile contexts.²⁰ Workshops have been held with young men on masculinity and the role of socialisation in violent behaviour and the valorisation of violence in order to «deconstruct» «hegemonic» masculine identities.

A policy of zero tolerance of gender-based violence should be applied, and all forms of impunity should be ended by working on security and justice.

Women are better socialised and equipped for peace

Many girls are socialised not to express their anger. They are encouraged to develop interpersonal skills to look after their children and maintain networks (women's associations). The mother figure, their empathy and the desire to protect their children can lead them to mobilise in extreme situations. In addition, girls are conditioned to believe that they are «weaker» than boys and so develop non-violent forms of problem-solving.

They want to put an end to all forms of violence

Because many women suffer structural oppression and domestic violence, they are more likely to conceptualise peace as a way of life rather than the absence of war. In peace negotiations and political arenas, women are more likely to be concerned about structural justice, human rights and ending domestic violence.

They belong to networks

In many societies, women and men operate in different social networks. Some women have privileged access to certain spaces, such as the market or religious networks. They can mobilise their community to negotiate a peace agreement or initiate dialogue through their extended networks of family and acquaintances.

¹⁹ United Nations, Stop Rape Now: United Nations Initiative against Sexual Violence in Conflict ("UN Action"), launched in 2007

²⁰ CARE, Engaging men and boys for gender equality – guidance note, 2021.

Eckman A., Jain A., Degnan Kambou S., Bartel D., and Crownover J., Exploring dimensions of masculinity and violence, CARE/ICRW, 2007.

Dembélé M.D., Herrera A.D. and Legacé H., Positive Masculinities – Training Booklet 2: Strategies to unite men with equality for all, Global Affairs Canada and Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) as part of the project Justice, Prevention and Reconciliation for Women, Minors and Others Affected by the Crisis in Mali (JUPREC).

They are mobilised around an ideology of femininity

Women's identity as daughters, wives and mothers can command respect. Because women generally have less authority and political power, they may be seen as more neutral or even unrelated to political conflicts. As a result, they may have more scope to get involved in peace activism and demonstrations for change.

We can draw on their skills and networks to help build peace.

In Mali, UN Women has set up peace huts (case de la paix) in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu, Menaka and Mopti.²¹ This innovative idea by UN Women was inspired by its experience in Liberia. It was implemented following the 2012 political and security crisis in Mali, to ensure greater involvement of women and girls in the search for lasting peace.



This approach is based on three principles:

- **Non-discrimination:** all women's associations or groups of women's associations can join
- **Participation:** taking part in peace hut activities
- **Accountability:** compliance with internal regulations

The peace hut provides a framework for women and girls to share their experiences of the challenges faced by victims/survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, such as access to justice and security in the peacebuilding process, including support for building the conflict-resilience capacities of young people and women and peace education for peacebuilding in northern Mali.

Some good practices :

- Listening sessions, counselling and guidance on psychological, economic and social support for survivors
- Raising awareness among women and young girls in the community to encourage them to report cases of GBV or gynaecological illnesses so that they can receive psychological and health care in good time
- Community intermediation
- Raising awareness among religious and traditional leaders about the disadvantages of early marriage, the human rights of women and girls, and the importance of economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls
- Support for income-generating activities, identification of internally displaced people and cases of GBV (especially rape) for management by the state's decentralised social development services and local NGOs

²¹ This example is taken from the training workshop for the Mali project teams, 2nd cohort, in November 2023.

3.4.3 Differentiated impact of conflicts on men and women

In the light of these reflections, participants were asked to consider the different impact of conflicts and fragile contexts on men and women.²² The table

below is a summary of the work carried out in several workshops on this issue and is also supplemented by the study «Listening to herders in West Africa and the Sahel»²³.

The impact of conflict on men	The impact of conflict on women
• Mass forced displacement of families • Loss of means of production, land, decapitalisation, theft and/or loss of livestock • Reduced authority of the head of the family • Shirked responsibilities/abandoned families • Enrolment in jihadist movements (young men) • Movement of young men in transhumance who may be blocked in neighbouring countries due to the closure of borders in some countries • Decrease in cross-border cash transfers during the lean season • Deaths resulting from armed attacks, unidentified explosive devices or involvement with armed groups • Erosion of traditional and religious values • Loss of identity and bearings • Feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness • Idleness, loss of economic power • Loss of dignity, as heads of household are no longer able to ensure their family's food security and subsistence	• Forced displacement • Widowhood, isolation, pressure to look after the family • Family reorganisation, including forced or early marriage, which destroys the family balance • Loss of mobility for productive activities • Loss of livelihood, food insecurity • Inaccessibility of basic social services (health, education), for which they are responsible, for example for maternal and reproductive health • Decline in school enrolment, increased illiteracy • Loss of economic and political autonomy and increased exclusion from decision-making bodies • Dependence on help, suffer harassment • Adoption of negative strategies: begging, forced early marriages, prostitution, etc. • Vulnerability to all forms of gender-based violence in their villages of origin, during exodus and in sites hosting IDPs and refugees • Suffer harassment when registering for humanitarian aid • Suffer from psychological trauma linked to GBV, amplified by forced displacement and extreme deprivation

All social categories are negatively affected by conflict in their own way. Women pay a heavy price, as they are often forced to leave their communities, losing contact with support networks and being cut off from their livelihoods and productive activities. In addition, their movements to go to the market or to carry out their activities are increasingly restricted in insecure environments. They are often separated from their spouses, who have migrated, been murdered or enlisted, and become de facto heads of household. This places them in a situation of extreme vulnerability, as they become subject to all sorts of abuses, ranging from weaker bargaining power when carrying out their productive activities, to dependence on humanitarian aid at best, and harassment or gender-based violence at worst.

While militarised masculinity is observed in men, women are sexualised in situations of violent conflict. This can lead them to develop «negative» survival strategies such as begging, prostitution or joining armed groups. Forced marriages are part of these strategies, as there are fewer mouths to feed and alliances can be forged with armed groups to «buy»

their protection. They are also deprived of the support they could get from their sons, who are themselves placed in extreme situations that force them to migrate, or to enlist in armed or self-defence groups, which exposes them to the risk of being killed.

The approach adopted by projects in response to the situation is multifaceted

Firstly, it involves equipping teams and their partners with the necessary conflict-sensitive project management skills, through training in CSPM, conflict analysis and the design of peacebuilding strategies. In addition, security monitoring mechanisms are put in place to constantly assess the situation and to plan adaptive measures.

The approach also consists of working with target populations in an inclusive way, involving women and young people in all interventions. This can mean providing support for the social engineering process, and/or boosting consultation forums to prevent or manage conflicts related to the management of natural resources and infrastructure, particularly pastoral infrastructure. The aim is to build the

²² Listen to the Crisis Group/Afrique 360° podcast entitled [Gender and conflict: understanding insecurity in the Sahel](#), 8 March 2024

²³ RBM and partners, Listening to herders in West Africa and the Sahel: what future for pastoralism in the face of insecurity and its impacts, September 2021.

capacities of young people and women in terms of their roles within these processes or frameworks, so that they acquire skills in leadership, communication, negotiation and mediation.

Finally, supporting young people and women in their productive activities in the agriculture, milk, fodder and meat sectors helps to maintain their means of subsistence, through cooperative societies involved in these activities, while supporting village credit and savings associations.

The introduction of feedback and complaints mechanisms within projects makes it possible to gather the opinions of project teams and target populations with a view to improving project performance and the satisfaction of target populations with the services provided. Upstream, the aim is to involve target populations in the processes, soliciting their contributions and comments and seeking to find constructive solutions to mitigate the risks of conflict. Part 4 on «Strategies for avoiding harm and contributing to social cohesion and peacebuilding» explores these avenues in detail.

3.4.4 Individual reflection to avoid causing harm

During the reflections on GESI and conflict sensitivity, participants were encouraged to reflect individually on the behaviours they should adopt to be respectful of their environment, inclusive and not to exacerbate tensions.

These aspects are essential and deserve to be emphasised. In addition, it would be appropriate to strengthen cross-disciplinary skills in compassionate communication, negotiation and mediation within project teams and partners.

The following points were highlighted:

In the conduct of activities, it is crucial to ensure that all social strata are involved and to always draw up a **disaggregated attendance list** (by gender and age group) for meetings, workshops and training courses. Arrangements for mainstreaming GESI/CSPM should be included in the Terms of Reference (ToR), and progress on GESI and conflict sensitivity should be documented in reports.

It is essential to invest in **building the capacity** of the project team and implementing partners in GESI and conflict sensitivity at the start of the project.

Targeting and selection processes should be inclusive and conflict sensitive, a **feedback and complaints mechanism** should be in place and stakeholders and communities made aware of its use. The rationale for any **affirmative action** measures must be clearly explained to all project stakeholders to mitigate any resistance. In addition, it is important to assess and monitor the extent to which sensitivity to conflict and GESI is considered, using **specific indicators**.

The social engineering process is a decisive factor in conflict prevention and the integration of GESI during the construction of infrastructure investments (markets, storage and warehouse facilities, cattle tracks, water points, etc.)

Regarding communications, it is essential to adopt impartial and neutral language.

Communication must be **inclusive and conflict-sensitive**, following well-defined principles (Tools 1.a and 1.b). It is also important to use a common language between all stakeholders involved in program implementation, to be inclusive in the invitation process and to ensure that **no one is left out**.



In relation to my **mandate**:

1. Where should I pay attention?
2. What do I need to do to integrate GESI and conflict sensitivity more fully into my work?

In terms of my **attitudes and behaviour**:

1. Where should I pay attention?
2. What do I need to do to further integrate conflict sensitivity and GESI in terms of individual attitudes and behaviour?

It is important to **listen to all stakeholders** and to ensure that each member of the team does the same, while avoiding using offensive language. It is also essential to **respect the dress code** in force in the communities where we work.

Each agent and partner must set an example through their own behaviour. The **code of conduct** requires compliance with SNV's internal values and principles. They must be attentive to their social environment, and the people they associate with, and ensure compliance with the principles of **accountability** by sharing information transparently with all stakeholders. Institutional and socio-cultural anchoring means respecting legitimate representatives' authority and hierarchical links. A good grasp of their mandate and the ability to explain it to partners and stakeholders are also necessary.

It is crucial **to adopt a neutral stance** rather than partisan one, and to be aware of sensitive issues that may offend certain individuals or social groups. It is important to avoid maintaining special relationships with one category of stakeholders to the detriment of others or appearing to be closer to one group or community than another.

Caution is essential: observe your partners and avoid inappropriate dress or language habits. You need to **be sensitive to your partners' concerns**, without making commitments or creating unrealistic expectations. Obtaining feedback from partners helps to check their understanding, and it is important to trust them and make them responsible. It is also essential to support them, for example in establishing selection criteria, and to highlight their role.

When it comes to security, it is essential to respect the organisation's principles. Missions must be approved, and you should be careful with the contents of your telephone and remain discreet. It is important to find out about the situation through channels other than those provided by the agent, to observe the codes in force in the locality and to respect public authority representatives. In areas of conflict, a good understanding of the context is necessary to grasp the tensions within communities. Finally, it is crucial to be vigilant, to **check information** several times and **with different sources**, and to have a critical sense, while being attentive to non-verbal communication.

Once the analysis of the context and the interactions between the project and the context have been carried out, strategic decisions need to be taken, which will be the subject of the next section.

PART 4 DEVELOPING OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT SENSITIVITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

4.1 Selection processes sensitive to GESI and conflict

4.1.1 Background

The selection of impact groups is a crucial stage common to all projects, whether it involves selecting young men and women farmers in entrepreneurial support schemes, households receiving biodigesters or young leaders. The selection process involves several issues, and if it is not conducted in a transparent, consensual and fair manner, it can seriously compromise project implementation and the achievement of results. It may be a source of tension or conflict and/or perpetuate or reinforce existing social inequalities.



The first step is to set and achieve the targets established in terms of gender, age, socio-professional category, and vulnerable group, with a view to inclusion and social justice. Then, in the interests of effectiveness, the characteristics of the impact groups must be in line with the project's objectives and enable the results to be achieved (age, activity, aspirations, etc.). Selection criteria must be defined consensually and communicated through channels

best suited to target audiences. In the event of dissatisfaction or misunderstanding, a feedback and complaint mechanism should be put in place to allow communities to express their dissatisfaction and to dissipate feelings of exclusion and frustration. Any selection process should therefore consider both GESI and conflict sensitivity concerns.

The workshop on this topic aimed to share and build upon the experiences of projects around the processes of selecting impact groups in terms of considering GESI and conflict sensitivity.

4.1.2 Project approaches

Guiding questions to get you thinking

- What activities do you organise selection processes for?
- What are the selection criteria and how were they set?
- Briefly describe these selection processes.
- What measures are you taking to ensure that your targets (women, young people, other marginalised groups) are reached? With what results?
- Did these selection processes give rise to conflicts/tensions or complaints? If so, please describe them.
- How did you manage these tensions/complaints? With what results?

RESCOM project - Household selection

The aim was to select poor households in host communities or households of internally displaced persons (IDPs) so that they could benefit from the project's support. RESCOM set criteria for the final selection as described below, but the categorisation of households (poor, average, affluent) was made based on criteria established by the communities as follows.

- Be an IDP or host
- Be a 'poor' household
- Be a household headed by a woman or a young person is an advantage
- Have a young person in the household
- Reside in the intervention zone

A village assembly was organised to explain the intervention objective, after which a selection committee and a complaints committee were set up. The villagers then defined the criteria for classifying the households based on their realities and met in focus groups (men, women, IDPs), under the supervision of the project team. The team then verified the classification using a survey of households classified as 'very poor' and 'poor', while only a sample of the other categories was surveyed. A village general meeting was then held to validate the list against the results of the household survey.

The following measures were taken to ensure an inclusive selection process:

- A quota was set from the outset
- All strata are represented at village general meetings
- All sensibilities were represented on the selection and complaints committees

There were complaints from households that were not selected, even though they are among the poorest. A general meeting was organised to explain why they had not been selected.

ECDD Project: Selection of farm unit promoters (young people and women)

A press release was broadcast through radio stations in the areas concerned and a micro-project template was made available to candidates. At the end of the application period, a committee made up of local technical services, local leaders and the ECDD project team examined and selected the applications received. Candidates were then shortlisted and those shortlisted were interviewed. The results were published 72 hours after the interviews. They were broadcast by radio and posted in the local Technical Departments of the villages concerned.

The ECDD project team, in collaboration with the decentralized technical services, endogenous facilitators and leaders of women's and youth groups, set the following selection criteria:

- Be a young woman or man between the ages of 18 and 35
- Be from an economically vulnerable household
- Reside in the village of intervention
- Have experience in agricultural production
- Be a member of a cooperative society, a farmer or an individual
- Agree to carry out the activity in the village for which you have applied

The following measures were taken to ensure that targets were met:

- A quota to ensure the selection of young people and women was set from the outset
- Good communication using media adapted to the target audience: local radio, posters in popular places, etc.
- The involvement of certain village leaders

No complaints have been received to date. A feedback/complaint mechanism consisting of five people, including three village leaders (one man, one woman and one young person) and two project advisors was set up in each village concerned.

4.1.3 Good practice

Strategies to reach the target of 50% women : ²⁴

- Set up an inclusive selection committee at the appropriate level (generally municipalities), in line with local realities and with the participation of impact groups (women, young people, IDPs, etc.)
- Apply affirmative action measures for women on certain selection criteria
- Convene interviews with shortlisted candidates close to their homes
- Agree on a favourable time for mass participation by women
- Involve opinion leaders as effectively as possible
- Use a variety of communication channels likely to reach a wide audience (radio broadcasts, posters, etc.) If necessary, broaden the network for disseminating announcements of candidacies and results by adding channels that are more accessible to women (e.g., town criers)
- If the targets are not met, «fish out» applications from women candidates who were not shortlisted



Gender and participant selection in the EJASA project

To solve the problems related to the low employability of young people and food security in northern Benin, SNV Benin, with the financial support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, implements the Youth Employment for Improved Food Security project (EJASA). This project puts inclusion of all social categories and gender equality at the heart of any intervention.

SNV

www.snv.org

Anticipate and manage tensions through :

- Transparent communication using local languages
- Interactive information programmes upstream and downstream of the process
- Obtention of spousal authorisation for each woman candidate selected to avoid household tensions: talk to the husbands to obtain their approval and encourage them to accompany and support their wives
- Have the selection committee members sign a conflict of interest declaration
- Set up a complaints management committee: for example, in projects targeting young people, older people may question the age selection criteria and feel aggrieved

See Tool 8 for a full description of the measures to be followed at the various stages of the selection process:

- Setting up an inclusive, fair and representative selection committee
- Definition of selection criteria and transparent, appropriate communication on these criteria
- During and after selection

When it comes to choosing suppliers and service providers, it is important to:

- Include our GESI and CSPM expectations in the recruitment notice
- Consider GESI and CSPM expertise when assessing technical bids
- Involve GESI and CSPM experts at the service scoping meeting
- Ensure that the service provider uses inclusive and conflict-sensitive communication
- Ensure that the service provider is informed about compliance with the code of conduct, the incident reporting system and the handling of complaints

Affirmative action in favour of local companies and labour are other measures to be considered, as far as SNV's procurement procedures allow. However, it is important to avoid recruiting suppliers or service providers who come from or belong to only one of the opposing groups or communities.

²⁴ Source : [Case study : Gender and participant selection - EJASA project in Benin, November 2021.](#)

4.2 Sensitivity to conflict and GESI in consultation frameworks

4.2.1 Background

A consultation framework is a structure, formal or informal, ad hoc or permanent, of varying scale and scope - local, regional, national, transregional, and whose objective may be:

- concerted management of a given area, resource or activity
- considering the concerns of different interest groups
- economic and social development
- stakeholder awareness and training
- prevention and management of disputes and conflicts between stakeholders

Typology of consultation frameworks



Although consultation frameworks are generally intended to help prevent and manage conflicts, they can also be a source of tension and/or feelings of exclusion. In fact, during the various exercises dealing with social roles and gender norms and the map of the occupation of spaces, including decision-making spaces for young and older men and women, it was noted that women, young people and certain vulnerable groups participated less.

SNV projects often aim to set up or revitalise consultation frameworks to improve their functionality and governance (management committees, multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultation frameworks, agribusiness clusters, land commissions, etc.) As a result, it is important for the project team to reflect on and develop strategies to improve the involvement of women and young people within these frameworks, and to ensure that structuring and governance activities do not become a source of tension.

As part of their reflections on GESI and CSPM, taking a consultation framework within their project as an example, and using guiding questions, project teams

had to determine whether this consultation framework was conflict-sensitive and inclusive in terms of the representation and participation of women, young people and vulnerable groups. They then had to identify the main obstacles to the participation of women and young people and, using the framework provided (gender-related constraints, cause, consequence, strategy), develop strategies to remove the obstacles to their participation.

4.2.2 Project approach

Three types of consultation framework supported by projects in Burkina Faso were described and analysed in terms of their purpose, composition and functionality.

The agribusiness cluster (ABC) under the PGLRF project, is regional in scale, with flexible and informal rules. It has an «economic» vocation and aims to improve the efficiency of the shea value chain by connecting stakeholders, enabling women producers to offer increased volumes and product quality (kernel or shea butter), and thus gain access to market and sell at a transparent price negotiated with the buyer(s), in a win-win approach. Women are widely represented as they dominate the activity of collecting and producing shea butter and are organized from the ground up to market their product. If we look at the map of spaces (3.2.2), we observe that women are present as users of the shea resource, albeit weakly, even in «public» or decision-making spaces, where their involvement is increasing. Moreover, this is an almost exclusively female activity, traditionally practised by women, allowing for the generation of an increasingly substantial income. Furthermore, this activity does not call into question the prerogatives and status of men, so it is socially accepted and acceptable.

The local water committee (LWC) is a formal framework, with clear rules which provide for the participation of women, either as representatives of a function within the administrations (municipal, technical services) or as users. However, this representation is considered weak/unsatisfactory, given the issues surrounding the allocation of water for use in connection with their reproductive (drinking water, hygiene, etc.) and productive roles (rearing small ruminants or poultry, agriculture). The WASH map of spaces shows that women are omnipresent as users, but less present in the LWCs. There are many obstacles to their participation: low representation of women in the various «colleges», lack of time, lack of interest in the role, etc. The fact that they are not involved in decisions about the planning and use of water resources can have harmful consequences for their health and that of their household. Strategies must therefore be put in place to improve this participation in terms of both quantity and quality (quotas, training on their role, leadership, etc.)

The last case concerns **an informal, ad hoc framework for the development of a cattle track**, almost exclusively led by members chosen for their status and the topic of land, a prerogative of men and elders: councillors and

village chiefs, and to a lesser extent, heads of households and young people. The social agreement was concluded between these parties without including the transhumant herders, the main users of these corridors, or the women, potential users and farmers, who should be informed of the route of these corridors. Project teams and partner consultants should encourage stakeholders to reflect on the risks of excluding these categories for the sustainability and effectiveness of the social agreement or consensus.

A diagnosis sensitive to conflict and gender dynamics should therefore be carried out by the project team and consultants or partners to avoid accentuating tensions and, ideally, improve inclusion and social cohesion. The following elements, listed in the checklist (tool 9), should be analysed as part of the diagnosis:

- Type of framework: formal/informal - ad hoc or permanent
- Scope or scale: local/regional/national/transregional
- The objective/purpose of the framework
- The framework installation process: in line with legal rules, standards and provisions
- Inclusiveness and legitimacy: representation of different social categories (women, young people, vulnerable groups, etc.)
- Operating rules (transparent and consensual)
- The skills of framework members and their level of understanding of their roles
- Framework performance: do their interventions contribute to social cohesion or do they accentuate tensions/conflicts?

ECDD project example: Ziga Amon Est Local Water Committee (LWC)

Framework identity

This involves the Nakanbé Water Agency and the Ziga Amon Est Local Water Committee (LWC), set up in 2014 by Order 2014-003 of 17 February 2014 with headquarters in Kaya. The LWC has 19 members, including 4 women and 1 young person, who meet once a month.

Inclusive nature

All the colleges and social categories mentioned in the texts are represented, but the representation of women and young people remains low. This situation can be explained by the fact that they are poorly represented in the state technical services, local authorities and user groups. Indeed, each structure must identify and appoint representatives by vote.

These categories are participating in decision-making, particularly regarding the planning and implementation of activities. The most under-represented group remains the grassroots users (men and women). The project team proposed a review of the texts establishing the LWCs, with greater involvement from this category, where women are already underrepresented due to a «lack of enthusiasm». The team recommended establishing participation quotas for each category and raising awareness among them about the benefits of their participation.

In terms of the services offered by this framework, the team mentioned the training courses, which in principle are aimed at everyone but are not always adapted to the specific needs and situations of women in terms of content, timetables, locations, etc.

Conflict sensitivity

The scale and scope of the framework (local authority level) are considered relevant and reasonably inclusive in relation to the various colleges, although no particular attention is paid to ensuring the participation of the various categories in terms of number and quality. The LWCs work in collaboration with other levels and frameworks such as the Water Agency. Planning and review meetings are held between local councils and the Water Agency.

The team felt that representatives of the various colleges were legitimate and consensual, since they had been appointed by these colleges, that the operating rules were consensual and respected, and that the framework had had a positive impact on social cohesion. However, this does not necessarily mean that the representation and participation of women, young people and marginalised groups is sufficient. This is a skills issue, as stakeholders need to have skills in integrated water resource management to take part effectively in framework meetings, which is not the case for everyone.

The framework has an alert and accountability mechanism through regular sessions of the general assemblies and board meetings, and it works with the decentralised technical services and local authorities. The framework favours consultation between stakeholders, which helps to prevent conflicts, and ensures that activities are planned from the bottom up and that water resources are allocated to the various user groups. There are exceptions, as the LWC is trying to manage a conflict linked to the operation of a dam managed by two neighbouring municipalities.

MODHEM+DDC project example: Ad hoc framework for the development of a cattle track in the Tô municipality

Framework identity

This was an ad hoc and informal consultation framework, as part of the social engineering for the development of a cattle track in the village of Vatao, in the Tô municipality. It was made up of 15 members, all men and five young people. The stakeholders were village councillors, members of village development committees (over 25 years) and heads of household (under 35 years), all farmers. Their involvement was judged to be good in the case of village councillors and village chiefs, and poor in the case of village development committees and heads of household.

Inclusive nature

The representation of the various social categories affected by the issues discussed within the framework is inadequate, since herders and women are absent. The absence of women may be linked to the way the consultation framework was organised (designation of stakeholders without any specific criteria, e.g., age, gender or occupation) and the fact that women are generally excluded from discussions on land tenure, the central theme of this framework. Land ownership is perceived as a male prerogative. As for young men, although they are present, they do not seem to have the right to speak in the presence of the elders. These two categories are therefore excluded from decision-making because of socio-cultural norms. Herders are not represented, despite the existence of conflicts between herders and (indigenous) farmers. Women and young people should be informed, as they are users of this cattle track, just like the herders. Failure to do so carries the risk of contraventions and the emergence of conflicts. On a more practical note, the team also mentioned that to demarcate this corridor, it would be necessary to travel a long distance over «hostile» terrain, which the women have neither the time nor the «physical strength» to do.

The team recommended changing the way this framework was set up by establishing quotas to ensure representation of the various social categories (women, young people, vulnerable groups, herders, etc.) and by making them aware of the importance of their participation and their role(s). The services cited by the team are communication/information on the MODHEM+DDC project with a view to reaching a consensus on the creation of a transhumance corridor.

Conflict sensitivity

The scale of the framework was not considered sufficiently relevant or inclusive by project team members. The framework is ad hoc and informal, with no links to pre-existing frameworks. The members/representatives were selected by virtue of their status: village chiefs and councillors, heads of family/landowners, etc. They were deemed competent and legitimate by virtue of their status, since they were familiar with both village land issues and transhumant movements. A consensus was reached between the stakeholders during the diagnosis of the transhumance corridor.

PGLRF Weeog Paani project example: Agribusiness Cluster (ABC) in the Pô municipality

Framework identity

The Agribusiness Cluster (ABC) is in the Centre-South region, in the province of Nahouri and the Pô municipality. This platform bringing together the actors and supporters of the shea value chain was created in January 2020 and has 65 members, including representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, the town hall, the regional Chamber of Agriculture (responsible for the governance of this framework), microfinance institutions, buyers, collectors and processors. The quality of participation by each stakeholder was judged to be good (3 on a scale of 0 to 5), and average for the microfinance institutions. To date, two meetings have been held, with the aim of bringing stakeholders together to conclude commercial agreements.

Inclusive nature

The executive bureau is made up of two men and four women (including 4 young people) and is deemed representative of the different social categories, as members and within the ABC governance bodies, for example, the chair of the ABC monitoring committee is a woman. Women are key players in the development of non-timber forest products (NTFP). As such, they take part in organising the NTFP production campaign and are involved in negotiating product prices. There do not appear to be any constraints on women's participation in this framework, although the team has recommended that the women's capacities in terms of leadership, public speaking and negotiation techniques should be strengthened. The services provided by the framework are the organisation of B2B meetings with all stakeholders and the signing of contracts with buyers.

Conflict sensitivity

The regional scale of the framework is deemed relevant, as it improves business links between the local level (village forest enterprises, umbrella organisations) and buyers. The Shea ABC was set up based on the achievements of existing ABCs, with which it shares information and establishes collaborations. Delegates from the various stakeholders or interest groups were chosen by consensus at regional meetings bringing together the different players. The Regional Chamber of Agriculture is responsible for governance of the ABC, as part of its role as interlocutor for the various stakeholders. The latter have the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in the framework, apart from negotiation and leadership. As the framework is not formal, the decisions taken are not binding and are sometimes inappropriate, especially when it comes to setting prices. The framework has a positive influence on relations between value chain actors thanks to greater transparency (e.g., in setting prices). There are no accountability or conflict management mechanisms.

4.2.3 Good practice

The first step is to choose a **relevant scale** (micro, meso, macro or supra) in relation to the issue being addressed: for example, the country of departure and arrival for transhumance, or the involvement of all the municipalities sharing the same resource in the management of a forest massif. There are therefore frameworks at different levels, depending on the issues:

- Inter-State cooperation, such as the high-level regional consultation framework on transhumance in West Africa, bilateral frameworks, or joint inter-country cooperation commissions
- National Transhumance Committees (NTC), frameworks between cross-border regions
- Regional Transhumance Committees (RTC), national and cross-border inter municipalities and associations

- Municipal forums for dialogue: infrastructure management committees, local water management committees (LWC), municipal consultation frameworks and land commissions

Attention should also be paid to **interconnection, articulation and synergy** with frameworks at other levels or between different frameworks at the same level. Finally, projects should avoid creating new frameworks wherever possible but rather enhance and strengthen existing frameworks. Existing frameworks must therefore be identified and analysed beforehand. This diagnosis should be accompanied by an analysis of the context to understand the dynamics between actors: their roles, interrelationships, power of influence, positions-interests-needs, as well as the causes and manifestations of any conflicts.

In addition, the frameworks should be **set up** using a participatory, inclusive, transparent, empowering and consensual process, involving prior consultation with each stakeholder identified during the analysis,

and paying close attention to the legitimacy and representativeness of their delegates. The process must comply with the standards, rules and legal provisions in force and, as far as possible, the framework should be recognised and formalised in accordance with the texts in force. Documentation and communication on the establishment and activities of the framework must be provided to stakeholders.

To be **inclusive**, the framework should include representatives of women, young people, vulnerable and marginalised groups, and/or temporary or transient populations. It should also consider the needs and interests of different groups of resource users. Finally, care must be taken to ensure that the choice of members does not reinforce power relationships and the hegemony of an elite, or the emergence of new, well-trained and well-informed elites to the detriment of other members. It is recommended that project teams define quotas for women, young people and vulnerable groups, produce arguments to justify the inclusion of these groups and communicate these quotas and their justification to all stakeholders.

When it comes to **framework functioning**, the rules must be established in a concerted and consensual manner. This presupposes that the following conditions are met:

- By-laws, internal rules or agreements, and the necessary management and communication tools (minutes and reports) are in place
- Regular meetings, with a working language adapted to the context and the effective participation of members
- A strategy for self-financing beyond project support to ensure the sustainability and functionality of the framework

For the framework to be functional, its members must be competent and aware of their roles and responsibilities. They should be sensitised about «peaceful coexistence». To this end, **capacity-building** initiatives should focus on:

- Better knowledge of the relevant texts (for example, for pastoral infrastructure management committees, the Law n°034-2002/AN relating to pastoralism in Burkina Faso)
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders to ensure that they are accountable to their constituencies

- Managing community resources and infrastructure
- Mainstreaming gender into the governance of the framework and spaces/natural resources, together with the development of female leadership
- Skills in (compassionate) communication, negotiation, mediation and constructive conflict management
- Internal and external mobilisation of financial resources

The performance and functionality of the framework then needs to be **monitored**. To do this, project teams need to pay particular attention to the effects of proposed solutions to identified problems, and to adverse effects such as the non-resolution, aggravation or escalation of conflicts. The causes of these effects need to be identified: there may be a lack of skills on the part of members, a perception of bias in decision-making and/or the implementation of interventions (favouritism for one group over another). The following points deserve attention:

- Ensure the fairness and acceptance by all stakeholders of the proposed solutions to the identified problems, and their effective implementation.
- Ensure that politicians do not interfere with their electorate and electoral pressure.
- Provide a monitoring and early warning system on the one hand and a community accountability/feedback mechanism on the other.
- Capitalise the achievements of the framework in terms of conflict prevention and management and make the necessary adjustments to mitigate any negative impacts.

In the interests of sustainability, the financial autonomy of the framework is essential. Multi-year plans and funding strategies are needed. These frameworks also need to produce results to justify their funding by the State or the Municipality where applicable.

4.3 Promoting value chains for women and young people

4.3.1 Background

The «economic» dimension of the projects was addressed during the fourth workshop in Burkina Faso. Many projects aim to ensure the resilience and livelihoods of livestock breeders, agropastoralists and farmers, by developing value chains (VCs) with a strong presence of women and young people, such as milk, livestock/meat and fodder for the MODHEM+DDC and MOPSS projects, and the shea value chain for the PGLRF project.

There are several reasons for taking conflict sensitivity and GESI into account in these interventions. Firstly, the security context can affect the performance of VC actors, by limiting their movements, increasing the number of incidents between actors, and impacting both the production and marketing of products such as milk. On the other hand, support for these value chains can have harmful effects and be a potential source of conflict by exacerbating inequalities, supporting one actor to the detriment of another, or altering competitive relations, market prices and/or the balance between supply and demand. Finally, supporting women and young people in their economic activities helps to sustain their livelihoods and prevent these groups from adopting negative

strategies to meet their most basic needs (begging, prostitution, delinquency) and swelling the ranks of armed groups.

Specifically, the workshop aimed to:

- Consider conflict sensitivity and GESI in value chain development activities for women and young people.
- Anticipate the risks of harming and generating conflicts and/or having a negative impact on these categories, other stakeholders in the VC, or other VCs in the same area.
- Emphasise the importance of securing livelihoods for these groups, with a view to sustainability and conflict prevention/mitigation.

4.3.2 Project approaches

Using a list of questions, participants began by taking stock of activities to support value chains and the employability and entrepreneurship of young people and women (strategy 1). Support for maintaining livelihoods and building resilience can also take the form of infrastructure around which economic activities are organised (strategy 2).

MODHEM+DDC Project - Support for pastoral value chains for young people and women

The project aims to promote and sustain value chains with high potential for women and young people, namely, fodder, livestock, meat and milk, through improved structuring and capacity building of actors. The main objective is to empower women and young people, strengthen their leadership and make their economic activities sustainable. To achieve these objectives, a precise methodology was adopted, comprising several key steps.

The first stage involves conducting a regional level diagnostic, followed by arbitration and prioritisation of actions. Stakeholder information and awareness-raising is then carried out, including working sessions with the authorities, decentralised technical services and resource persons to identify the stakeholders concerned. Thematic studies were carried out on promising value chains, in particular fodder and milk. Finally, support was provided, and the implementation, monitoring and learning were assured.

The project achieved several notable successes. The involvement of local authorities and decentralised technical services was secured, and the interest of stakeholders was clear. A diagnostic study of the milk value chain was carried out, followed by support for the development of operational action plans for two cooperative societies. At the same time, clients were organised into biodigester user clubs, helping to improve household incomes.

However, several challenges remain. It was difficult to select the cooperative societies (SOSCOOP) to be supported due to the large number of applications received. In addition, the security situation is a major obstacle to project implementation.

RESCOM project - Supporting the resilience of young people and women through agricultural enterprise clusters (AEC)

The project aims to strengthen the resilience and food security of households by enhancing livelihoods through capacity building, better access to markets and improved incomes. The project mainly targets women and young people (quotas of 50% and 30% respectively). Initially, a study of the potential niches for young people and women was conducted to direct them towards training centres and identify training courses leading to qualifications. Rice, fonio, potato, milk and tomato value chains were selected during this analysis. Support involved setting up agricultural enterprise centres (AECs) and facilitating contacts with microfinance institutions. In terms of achievements, 828 women farmers were trained in heap composting, water and soil conservation techniques, soil restoration techniques and micro-dosing of fertiliser. Two onion conservation storage facilities were built, four credit savings groups were set up with 128 members, and the producer organisations supported were put in touch with microfinance institutions (MFIs).

MOPSS project - Support for the employability and entrepreneurship of young pastoralists and agropastoralists

The MOPSS project aims to boost entrepreneurship among young people and women in promising pastoral sectors and overcome various obstacles to achieve greater resilience and better environmental conservation. To achieve this objective, the project facilitates young entrepreneurs' access to inputs such as water and pasture, with the aim of making them economically self-sufficient.

The expected results of these initiatives for the period 2020-2023 were as follows: 110 young people, 40% of them women, are supported to draw up and finance their business development plans. In addition, the project involves the construction of 75 biodigesters and the distribution of 150 solar lamps and 20 stand-alone solar kits. In addition, 2,300 vulnerable households will benefit from kits containing sheep, livestock feed, fodder seed and cereals, with a focus on those run by women (25% of the total). In terms of infrastructure, eight boreholes will be built, and 58 km of cattle tracks will be marked out.

To ensure that these targets are reached, several methodological steps are implemented. Systematic communication to stakeholders of the quotas for women and young people is essential for identifying and selecting these target groups. The «market scan» tool is used to map the employment context and opportunities, with a focus on activities and opportunities for young women and the skills required. Young women entrepreneurs receive specific support in formulating their business development plan, and service providers are selected based on their responsiveness to the conditions, needs and interests of young women entrepreneurs. Finally, the social engineering process and the environmental studies are carried out paying particular attention to the inclusion of all categories, with an emphasis on women and young people.

Among the successes achieved, quotas for women's representation were respected in several countries (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso). Jobs for bricklayers have been created, and women entrepreneurs have launched a new activity, cattle fattening. Access to certain support services, such as artificial insemination, has also been facilitated.

However, several challenges were encountered: the quotas for women entrepreneurs were not met in Togo and Benin. The low level of literacy among young people in pastoral areas and the challenges of introducing biodigesters, a new technology, were also obstacles. In addition, identifying young women with ideas, and the lack of business plans in the dairy sector, posed problems. Finally, collecting disaggregated data in a timely manner was an additional challenge.

For more information: [Case study: employability of young people in agropastoral value chains](#), December 2022, MOPSS Project

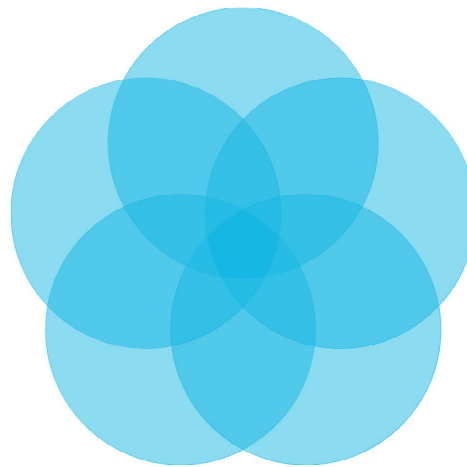
Strategy 1: Develop value chains with high potential for the economic empowerment of women and young people

Main types of support

Equipment: storage and warrantage warehouses, processing units, multifunctional threshers

Capacity-building: conservation and climate-sensitive agricultural practices, business management, financial education, leadership, etc.

Build connection with support services
(input suppliers, microfinance institutions)



Identify (self-)employment opportunities for young people (market scan) and provide **support** for their business plans, vocational training and **start-up kits** (YEE approach)

Organisational support: structuring of value chains, formalising producer and umbrella organisations

The first strategy adopted by projects is aimed at developing pastoral (meat, fodder, milk) or other value chains (market gardening, cowpeas, shea, honey) with high potential for the economic empowerment for women and young people.

This may involve organisational support (formalising producer and umbrella organisations), capacity building (conservation and climate-sensitive agricultural practices, agroforestry, business management, leadership, financial education, etc.) or the structuring of value chain actors in the form of agricultural business clusters (ABCs) to facilitate business dialogue and product marketing. This support is often accompanied by an equipment component (storage and warrantage warehouses, processing units, multifunctional threshing machines, etc.) and links with support services (input suppliers, microfinance institutions).

Finally, the capacity of the groups supported is strengthened in terms of financial education and their members are encouraged to develop a savings culture, by setting up savings and credit associations, to facilitate their loan applications to microfinance institutions.

The recommended approach may also involve identifying (self-)employment opportunities for young people (women) within these value chains, through a Market Scan which analyses supply and demand. Young people and women are then supported in defining their business projects, and strengthening their capacities through vocational training partner organisations, via a structured training pathway and, in some cases, the provision of start-up kits ([YEE approach](#)).

Points of attention for GESI and conflict-sensitivity within this first strategy are:

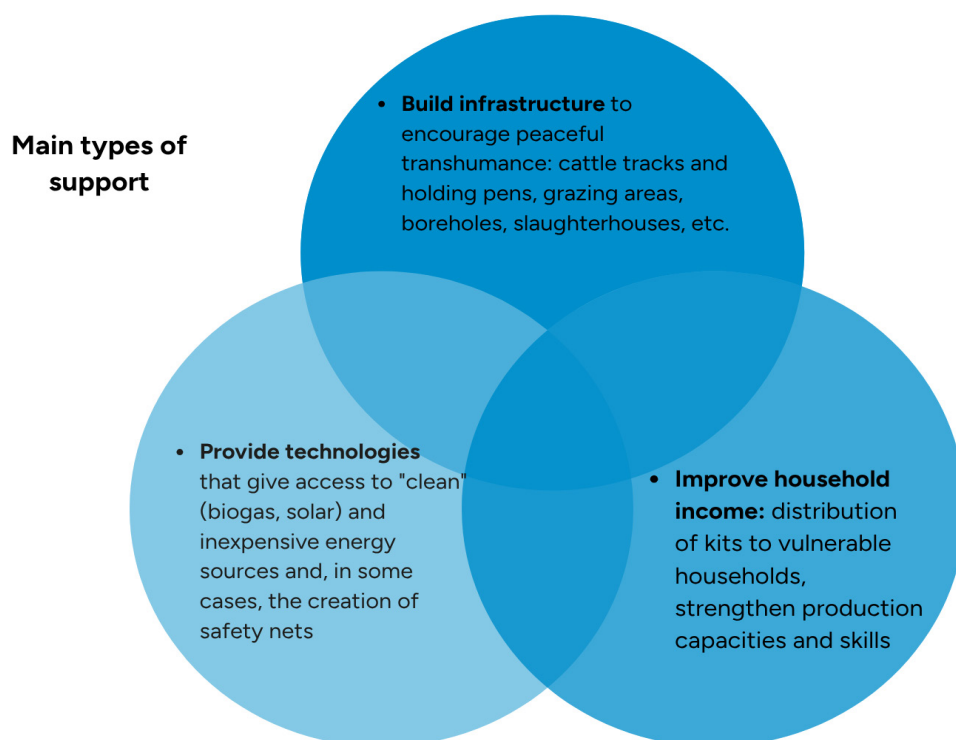
- Establish quotas/targets to encourage the inclusion of women and young people in activities.
- Communicate these quotas to implementing partners (consultants, consultancy firms, local authorities, traditional authorities, decentralised technical services, etc.) and stakeholders (participating producer organisations) using arguments tailored to the various target audiences: the numerical importance of women and young people, their central economic role, the attention to food security, the rationale for preventing and managing conflicts over the use of natural resources and infrastructure, etc.
- Involve partners that pay attention to being inclusive in the selection of «impact groups», information, service provision, access to inputs and equipment, etc., and to meeting the expectations, needs and interests of these categories. This often involves a diagnosis of needs, expectations and interests using appropriate tools: gender- and conflict-sensitive mapping of value chains, gender profiles and simplified balance sheets of family farms, and profiles of young entrepreneurs.
- Attention should be paid to markets that are promising for women and young people, and access to information about these markets should be provided, particularly during the process of gender- and conflict-sensitive mapping. Support should be provided to facilitate access to these markets and to ensure that products meet their requirements, thereby enhancing efficiency and sustainability.

- Monitoring and capitalisation of good practice in favour of GESI and conflict sensitivity should be carried out on an ongoing basis, using appropriate tools (attendance records for all activities disaggregated by age and gender, observation and reporting on changes in behaviour).
- The low level of education, particularly among young people (women), is a concern and may hinder the achievement of results. Partnerships

with literacy programmes should therefore be considered. The use of mobile phones and audio-visual tools should be favoured for communication and capacity-building activities.

- Insecurity is also a constraint, and requires projects to adopt adaptive approaches and limit their support to areas that remain relatively secure.

Strategy 2: Resilience and livelihood maintenance for pastoralist and agropastoralist households via an infrastructure component.



The second strategy is aimed at building resilience and maintaining the livelihoods of pastoralist and agropastoralist households. It is implemented through the development of infrastructure aimed at promoting peaceful transhumance (livestock tracks and parks, grazing areas, boreholes, slaughter areas, etc.)²⁵, as well as through the provision of technologies that enable access to clean, affordable energy sources (biogas, solar). In some cases, it also includes the establishment of safety nets for vulnerable households. In both the short and longer-term, the use of biodigesters and photovoltaic solar energy provides

lighting for family farms and for units involved in the production, processing, packaging, preservation and distribution of agropastoral products, thereby improving performance and yields across the value chain. They also improve household hygiene and health conditions by reducing cooking smoke and managing animal waste, while lowering energy costs and the burden of labour.

Below is an example of good practice in maintaining livelihoods and building resilience through access to energy: biodigesters.

²⁵ See the section on social engineering for how GESI and conflict sensitivity are considered in this type of intervention.

Good practice - MOPSS - Installation of biodigesters in agropastoralist households

1st point: selection of recipient households

The project began by setting up a committee to select the agropastoral households to receive a biodigester, with the aim of allocating the five biodigesters across the intervention communes in the five countries, based on a set of predefined criteria.

Among the selection criteria, these activities target household heads between 18 and 35, and female-headed households. However, no specific quotas were set for these target groups. It is not easy to identify female-headed households and when this is the case, they may not have sufficient income to pay the 20% contribution. Older women are generally widowed and placed under the responsibility of other male family members. Certain criteria also require a male presence, as is the case for providing the labour needed to build the pit for the digester. However, there were some female heads of household on the list, and, as soon as the biodigester was installed, they operated and were responsible for its management.

2nd point: sound understanding of gender dynamics within households

The upstream context analysis phase should provide a clear understanding of gender dynamics and needs. For example, in the case of a polygamous household, the configuration of the installation is likely to be influenced, with each co-wife needing to route the pipework to her cooking area. In Togo, for example, the piping was carried out to the kitchens of the two co-wives.

3rd point: fair sharing of tasks to ensure operation and maintenance

The use of biodigesters within the selected households requires clear organisation of tasks, with points of attention at each stage, to ensure proper functioning while avoiding an increased workload for any single household member. To this end, it is necessary to understand the division of tasks between men and women. For example, who will collect the faeces and mix them with water? Who will collect the water? These tasks are generally carried out by women, sometimes with the help of their children. Loading the biodigester (a task that tends to be left to the men) must be done at specific times, otherwise the biodigester's operation may be compromised. All adult household members should take part in training to familiarise themselves with the safe use of the installation, including gas ignition.

For more information: [Case study: solar kits and biodigesters](#), December 2022, MOPSS project

4.3.3 Good practice

GESI and conflict-sensitive mapping of a value chain

A **value chain** is a sequence of actors collaborating to varying degrees at different stages, from design to consumption of a product. There are several market systems in a value chain. A **market system** is a set of actors linked by concrete transactions on a territorial scale.

A value chain comprises:

- **Actors** who work together to varying degrees to take a product from producer to consumer
- **Support services** (financial services, business development services, research centres, NGOs, business incubators, etc.)
- **Factors in the environment** of the value chain (which may be favourable or unfavourable)

To better integrate gender equality and conflict sensitivity considerations, projects are encouraged to use the value chain mapping tool that incorporates these two cross-cutting themes (tool 10). This tool has been tested in several workshops and is recommended for systematic application in SNV-supported value chain interventions. The tool is presented below, together with examples drawn from these workshops.

The mapping process is divided into two stages, to facilitate understanding of the concepts and analytical frameworks of the two approaches (GESI and conflict sensitivity).

a) Analysis of the value chain from a GESI perspective

For each project or depending on the intervention areas and targeted value chains (e.g., milk, meat), the aim is to carry out gender-sensitive mapping of a value chain in a defined area by following the steps below:

- Step 1: Illustrate the value chain by identifying the functions, actors and links.
- Step 2: Identify the male and female owners.
- Step 3: Identify the paid and unpaid workforce.
- Step 4: Map support services and identify opportunities and constraints/risks.
- Step 5: Add the social, environmental or contextual factors that are favourable or unfavourable (to gender equity, entrepreneurship and/or employment for women and young people, better positioning of stakeholders, inter-stakeholder cooperation and social cohesion, etc.) and identify the opportunities and constraints or risks.

GESI-sensitive mapping of the milk value chain in Fada N'gourma, Burkina Faso



Actors in the value chain: This mapping has the advantage of making visible the presence and contribution of different categories, by gender and age, within the various links in the value chain. Women are virtually absent from the 'inputs' function ('intrants') where they are active as 'small retailers' ('détaillante'). This function is dominated by men because it requires a certain level of education and the ability to invest, as well as freedom of movement and entrepreneurship. On the production side, women are present (30%) as 'small-scale livestock farmers' ('petits éleveurs'). The question here is whether these are livestock owners, and what type of livestock they have. Although the majority were male owners, especially of cattle, women were involved in milking and caring for the animals.

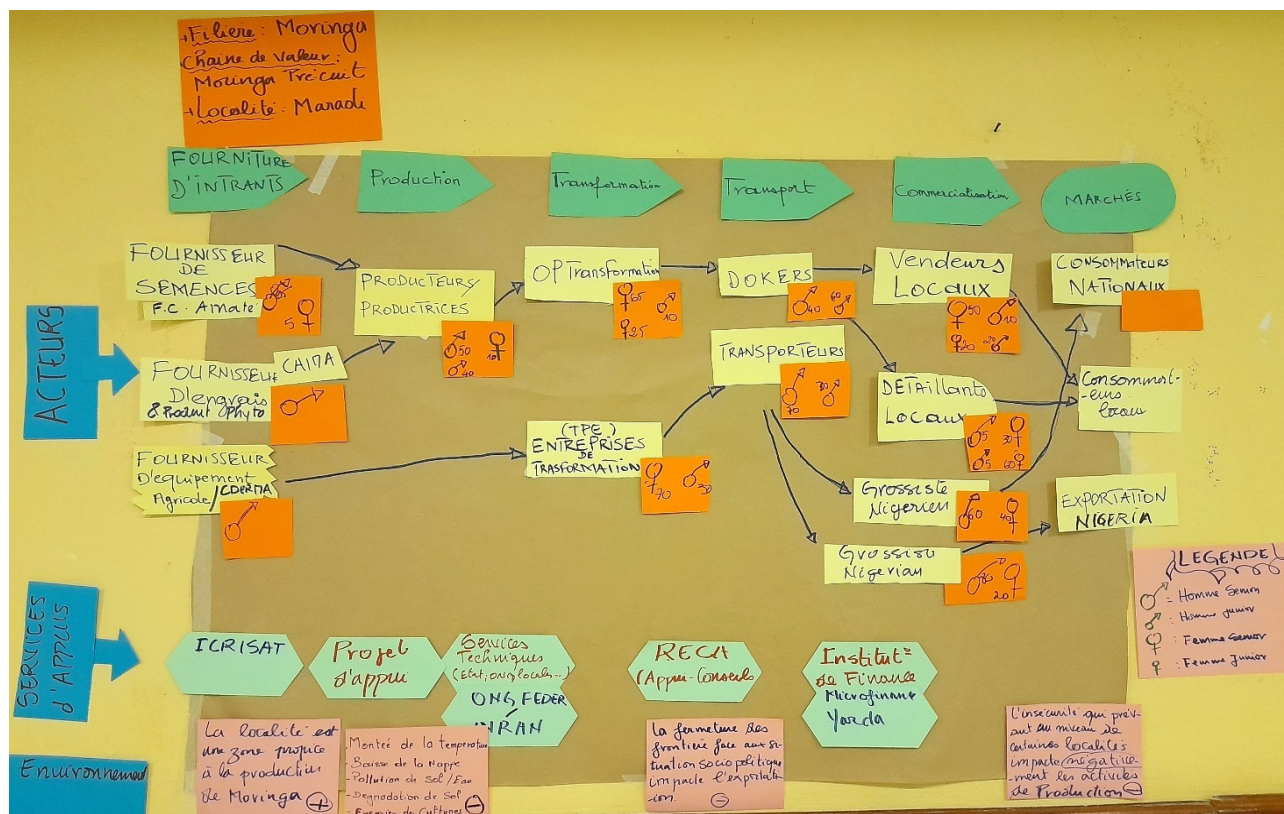
When milk is collected by a cooperative, it is generally organised and carried out by young men who transport the milk by motorbike. Women are much more represented when the milk is collected individually (60% of women), on foot or by bicycle, with possible repercussions on quality due to delays and storage. Women are omnipresent when it comes to processing (99%), especially when this is done in the home, using traditional methods. In mini dairies, the (paid) jobs are held more by men. In terms of distribution (50%) and marketing (95%), whether of milk or processed products, there is a strong presence of women when products are sold individually on local markets, and less so in shops and supermarkets.

Support services: public and private providers are listed, but for the mapping to be complete, it would be necessary to specify whether these services are responsive to the situations, interests and needs of a young and female clientele, both by demonstrating efforts to understand this type of clientele using surveys and disaggregated data collection, and by adapting their services (content, timetable, logistics, etc.) and periodically assessing the level of satisfaction of this clientele (questionnaires, surveys, separate focus groups, etc.). The «gender organisational scan» tool (tool 2.a) can be used to assess service providers and initiate a dialogue to help them adapt their services.

Environmental factors (which may be favourable or unfavourable): the mapping focuses on access to inputs for farmers and to equipment for processors. When interpreting the mapping and the analysis, it will be important to determine how farmers and processors, and possibly collectors, are affected by these constraints, and what explains this lack of access: is it a problem of availability or access to financial resources?

The same applies to factors such as insecurity: do women have the same mobility as men? What are the risks for both? How can we take this into account in our support?

Value chain mapping for precooked Moringa leaves in the Maradi region, Niger



In the Maradi region of Niger, the pre-cooked Moringa leaf value chain is a dynamic sector involving a variety of **actors**. At the start of the chain, inputs ('Fourniture d'intrants') are supplied mainly by structures run by men, such as FC Amate for seeds, the Agricultural input and equipment supply centre (CAIMA) for fertilisers and plant protection products, and the Rural Crafts and Agricultural Machinery Development Centre (C/DARMA) for agricultural equipment.

Production itself is largely dominated by men, representing around 90% of the actors, including a significant proportion of young people. It is in the processing stage ('Transformation') that women take the lead, occupying over 70% of positions, especially within producer organisations (POs) and local businesses.

There is a clear division of roles in the transport of goods: the dockers ('dokers'), responsible for loading and unloading, are mostly young men, while the hauliers themselves are exclusively male.

As far as marketing ('commercialisation') is concerned, local sellers and retailers are mainly women, accounting for over 70% of operations, while wholesalers in both Niger and Nigeria are mainly men, accounting for over 60% of this part of the market.

The value chain extends all the way to the market, with a clear distinction between local, national and international consumers, particularly through exports to neighbouring Nigeria.

To support this momentum, several **support services** play an essential role: the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) supports the production of improved seeds, while the National Institute of Agronomic Research of Niger (INRAN) and the decentralised technical services provide support for production and processing. The National Network of Chambers of Agriculture (RECA) and the Yacinda microfinance institution are involved in processing and transport/marketing respectively.

Despite the opportunities offered by this activity, several unfavourable **environmental factors** affect the value chain. Although the region is ideal for growing Moringa, it is adversely affected by rising temperatures, falling water tables, soil and water pollution, as well as security conflicts in border areas with Nigeria, leading to risks such as kidnappings, which disrupt production, transport and marketing.

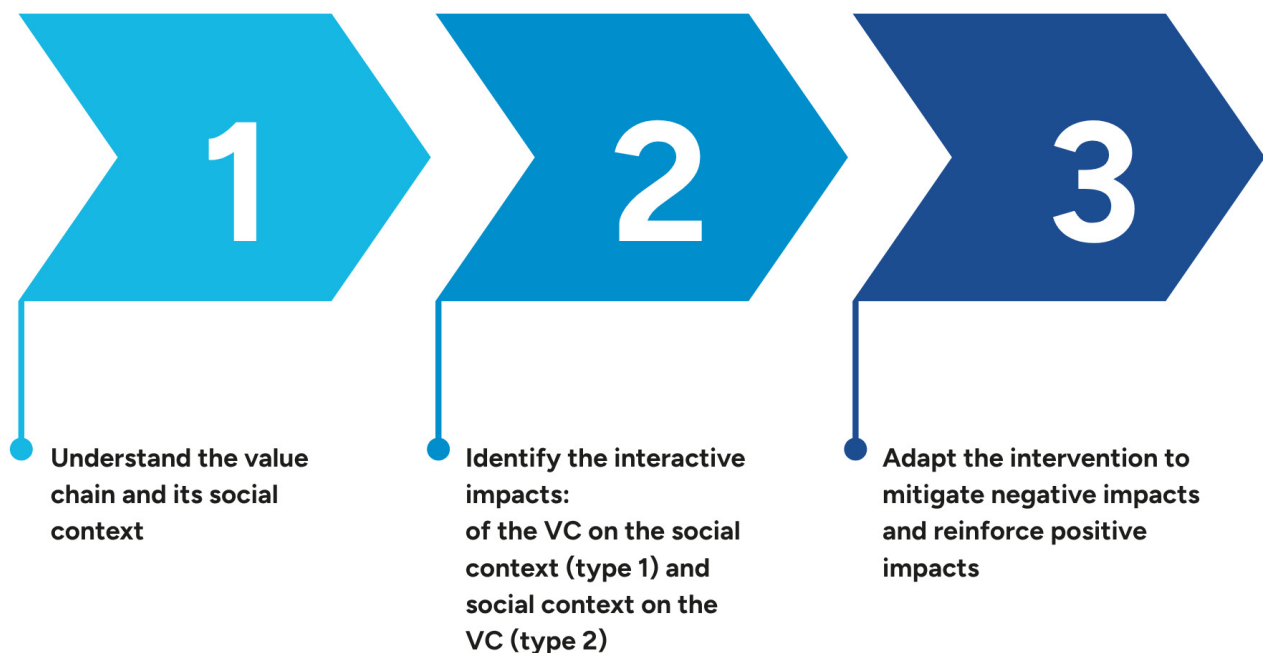
Tips and tricks for gender-sensitive value chain mapping:

- Collect accurate, up-to-date data before mapping
- Disaggregate data by sex/age
- Translate the total number of male/female owners and employees in the various links of the value chain into percentages
- Obtain data on the gender division of labour within family farms and businesses (Harvard Tool 1: the activity profile) ²⁶
- Distinguish between the actors in each link of the value chain. Indicate size, legal status, degree of mechanisation, etc.
- Use the organisational gender scan to assess whether service providers adapt their services to female/young customers (assess customer satisfaction). This will enrich the section on organisations supporting the value chain
- Identify gender-related constraints or opportunities: for example, do women producers, processors and traders have access to the services identified in your mapping? Which services can strengthen women's position in the value chain?
- Data on the context/environment must be precise: it should describe how environmental factors affect men/women/young people differently: migration, conflict, climate change, etc.
- Be specific about the gender constraint or opportunity you have identified, for example, avoid saying «gender norms» or «policies» but describe precisely which norms or policies are involved

b) Conflict sensitivity analysis of the value chain

The second part of the mapping consists of analysing the context of the value chain from a conflict-sensitivity point of view, i.e., how the context of insecurity/conflict influences or disrupts the value chain on the one hand, and the risks of tensions and conflicts that could emerge from project support on the other, in order to adapt the intervention so as to mitigate negative impacts.

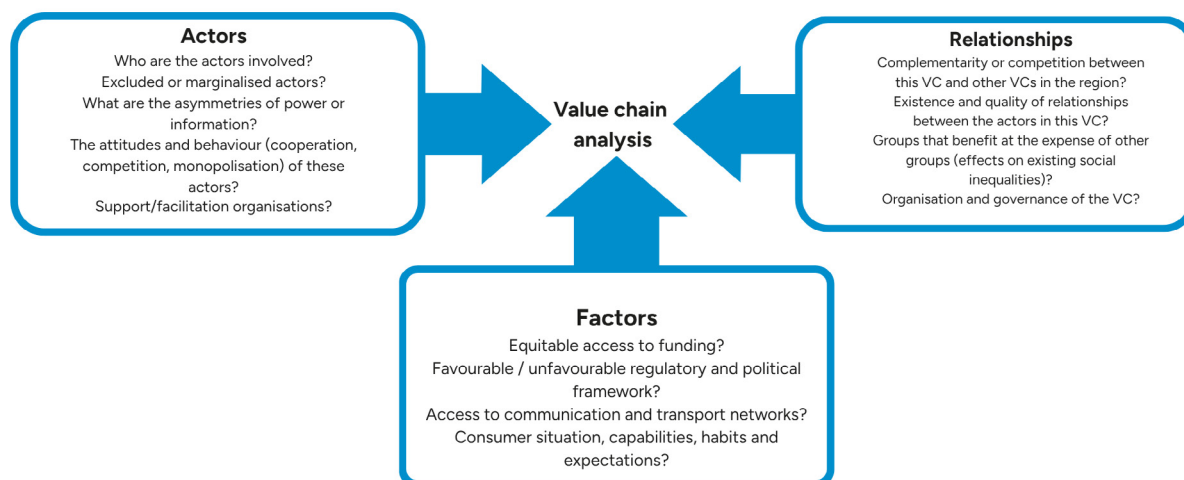
Conflict sensitivity and Value Chain (VC) promotion - 3 steps



²⁶ March, C., Smyth, I. and Mukhopadhyaya, M., A [Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks](#), OXFAM GB, 1999. See Section 2.2 Harvard Analytical Framework and People- Oriented Planning, pp 33-34.

For the first step, an analytical framework was proposed based on 3 dimensions (factors, actors and relationships).

Step 1: Understand the VC and its social context



Example of the milk value chain in Fada N’Gourma, Burkina Faso

In terms of inputs, the fodder essential for livestock feed is produced on land that can be a source of tension, as can the site for a storage facility for agro-industrial by-products. At the processing level, the same applies to the location of the dairy. The poor quality of dairy products can affect people's health and become a source of tension. Competition between dairies and micro-dairies can be a source of tension. At the marketing level, disparities in milk selling prices can also lead to tension.

Example of the raw pasteurised milk value chain in the Hamdallaye region of Niger

The raw pasteurised milk value chain involves a variety of actors, from the supply of inputs to the final distribution of dairy products. Key input suppliers include feed and fodder traders, as well as the local private veterinary service, which plays a crucial role in supporting local livestock farmers, who represent a mix of genders, including men, women and young people.

Fresh milk is collected mainly by motorbike collectors, covering an extended radius of 50 km, although some farmers deliver their produce directly to the collection centre. Once collected, the milk is pasteurised at the collection centre under the supervision of a manager, before being distributed. SOLANI, a private company, receives most of the pasteurised milk according to variable daily quotas, while surpluses are sold to local retailers or to the emerging dairy, MOKA.

This dynamic is not without **tensions**. Conflicts of interest arise between the private veterinary service and the state technical departments, while the production quotas set by SOLANI generate friction with the collection centre. According to national policy, collection centres are not allowed to process milk, which exposes the centre to the risk of losses if production exceeds the quotas imposed by SOLANI. The MOKA dairy offers an opportunity to reduce these potential losses.

Several support services play a crucial role in the value chain. National and international NGOs such as AREN, Karkara, RBM and VSF provide technical, financial and advocacy support. Technical livestock services facilitate access to inputs, while research actors, such as the National Genetic Improvement Program (PNAG), INRAN for fodder production, AGRHYMET and CNSE/E, contribute to improving agricultural and environmental practices.

Despite this support, environmental challenges persist. The national gender policy and regional initiatives to promote youth employment and local milk provide a favourable framework. However, obstacles such as the increasing masculinisation of the dairy value chain, the limited education of women, their absence from the governance of the collection centre, as well as competition with imported milk powder and the impacts of climate change, particularly droughts, represent significant challenges to be overcome.

Example of the pineapple value chain in the Atlantic region of Benin

In Benin's Atlantic region, the pineapple value chain for the local juice market is driven by a diversity of actors. Men largely dominate the input and production links, accounting for over 80% of workers, apart from harvesting, where women account for 60%. The Cotton Development Company (SODECO) plays a key role in the supply of inputs, a predominantly male domain.

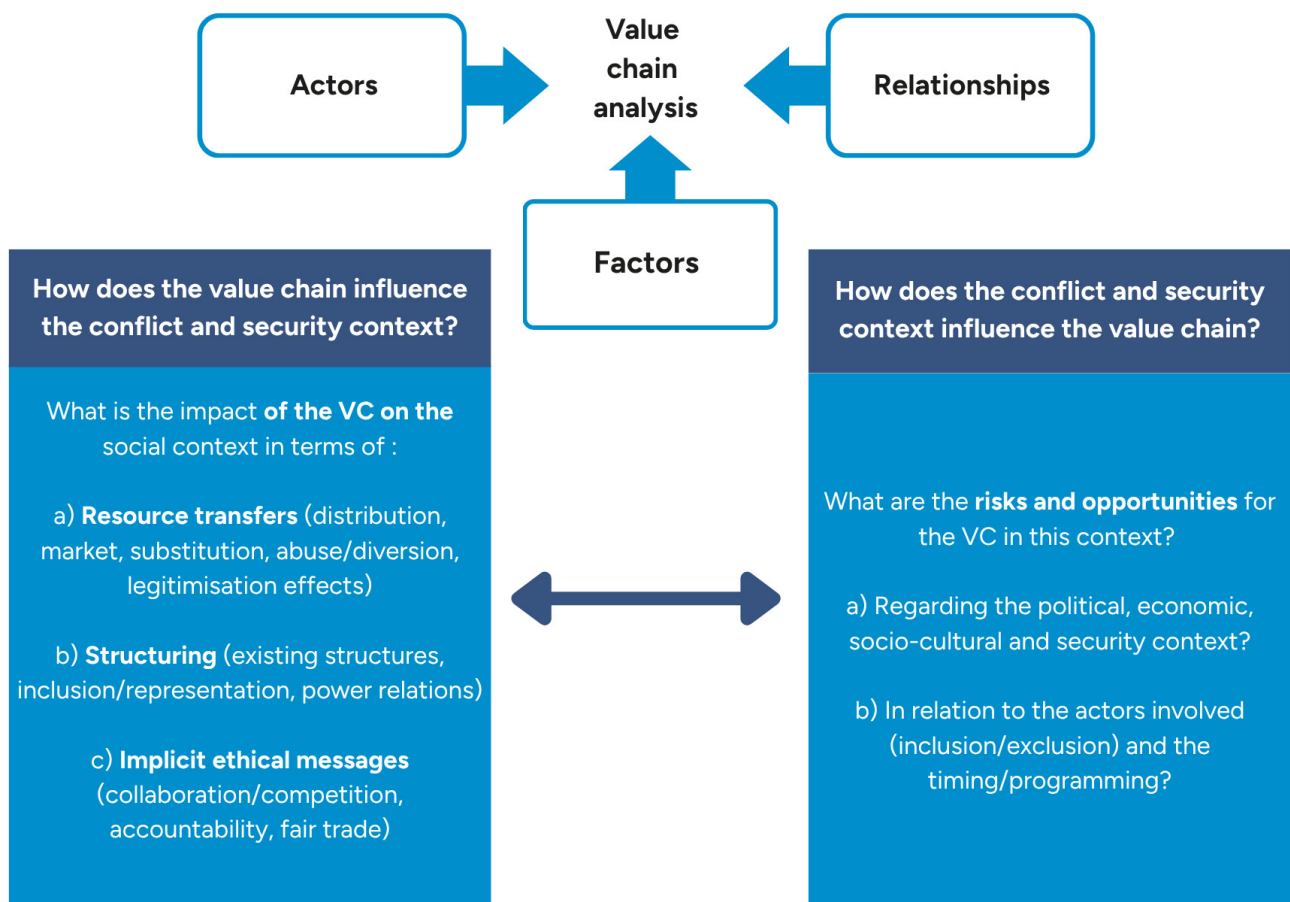
Pineapple growers are often grouped into cooperatives such as RÉPAB and FENACOPAB, although individual agribusinesses also exist. Most governance positions within cooperatives are held by men. Transport involves the use of trucks and buses driven by men, while women prefer more economical means such as pickups and tricycles.

There are two semi-industrial processing plants, Jus IRA and Jus FILOU, one of which is run by a woman. Artisanal processing is dominated by women, who account for 80% of workers in this sector.

In terms of marketing, there is a strong female presence in sales outlets (70%) and in retail sales by individuals (70%), but a smaller presence in supermarkets (50%). The final product is consumed both in households and in local restaurants.

Despite these harmonious interactions, **tensions persist**. Conflicts arise particularly from the failure to respect contractual clauses, such as delivery deadlines, and the distribution of profits along the value chain. Processors sometimes try to negotiate lower prices when buying pineapples, which creates friction with producers. Competition between small-scale and semi-industrial processing is also a source of debate, as economies of scale often favour the large processors. Furthermore, competition from imported products, which are generally cheaper, has an impact on local demand for locally produced pineapple juice.

Step 2: Identify the interactive impacts



For the 2nd stage, which involves identifying the interactive impacts between the value chain and the social context, the following matrix is proposed, using the livestock/meat value chain in Burkina Faso as an example.

Value chain Link	Impact of VC on the social context (type 1)	Impact of social context on VC (type 2)
Inputs	Herders often assimilated with armed groups or perceived as their accomplices because they occupy the same geographical areas (stigmatisation) Increased competition between herders and farmers for access to land and pastoral resources	Inaccessibility of certain strategic pastoral resources (areas declared to be of military interest where all human presence is prohibited) Adoption of laws restricting mobility (e.g., ban on cross-border transhumance by Benin and Togo)
Production	Animals (theft, zakat) used to feed armed group members and as a source of income to finance their activities Frustrated and vulnerable young pastoralists and agropastoralists are more inclined to take up arms and join the armed groups	Harmful effect on animal weight and destocking of herds Increase in thefts and losses of animals, as well as the Zakat (tax) imposed on herders by the armed groups Young pastoralists/agropastoralists more inclined to abandon their activity
Collection	The fact that stolen animals are difficult to identify and trace back to their owners fuels the illegal trade in livestock	Changes in the itineraries and movements of livestock producers and traders (sedentarisation, IDPs and refugees)
Transformation	N/A	Emergency slaughter is on the increase and contributes to the trafficking of livestock.
Marketing	Gatherings at livestock markets used by the Defence and Security Forces to hunt down alleged armed group «accomplices»	Kidnappings and murders are frequent at livestock markets: the climate of fear limits attendance and many have closed
Markets / Distribution		Transport on foot or by truck carries the risk of attack or improvised explosive devices (IEDs) Fall in exports to coastal countries

Concerning the impact of insecurity on the various value chain links

The supply of inputs to villages can be problematic due to the poor state of roads and the risk of attacks and security incidents. Production can be reduced when areas normally cultivated become inaccessible or when part of the land must be allocated to facilitate the reception and settlement of displaced persons. The concentration of producers in more secure areas can increase competition for access to natural resources and conflicts between users. Insecurity has an impact on the movements required to collect, transport and market products, which can lead to the cessation of activities, with repercussions, for example, the closure of dairies due to a lack of raw materials for processing. Finally, the context of insecurity affects market access, product availability and prices. It also increases the risk of cash transactions and the inability to repay loans taken out. These effects have repercussions on production, processing and sales, and therefore on household incomes and livelihoods.

Regarding step 3, in the light of the previous analyses, the aim is to identify adaptations or points for attention when implementing value chain support activities to mitigate negative impacts on the one hand and exploit opportunities and strengthen positive impacts on the other.

For example, the MOPSS program:

- Supports the development of a digital animal identification system to facilitate traceability and deter cattle theft
- Helps farmers obtain civil status documents to

facilitate their identification during inspections

- Facilitates access to livestock feed, through fodder production and the storage of agro-industrial by-products, to reduce the need to travel in search of pasture
- Supports the lobbying/advocacy initiatives of Regional Producer Organisations (RPOs) to lift bans on cross-border transhumance
- Contributes to the 2023-2025 agropastoral and fisheries offensive launched by the government of Burkina Faso, through the creation of jobs for young people (including IDPs)

Tips and tricks for conflict-sensitive support of value chains:

- Consider the interdependence and complementarity between value chains exercised in the same geographical area
- Work on a win-win basis for all stakeholders
- Promote the exchange of information and the creation of improved business links
- Develop trust and cooperation between value chain actors
- Pay particular attention to poor producers and workers (specific barriers, complementary social programmes, specific business models)
- Develop know-how and strengthen individual and organisational capabilities
- Help develop inclusive and conflict-sensitive business models
- Rely on model champions

- Facilitate coordination and ensure inclusive and efficient management (to ensure the sustainability of the costs of collaboration)
- Ensure that contractor selection processes are transparent
- Ensure competitive neutrality (avoid distorting the market)
- Promote the technology or a type of product (not a brand)
- Ensure clarity and shared understanding of the different roles of private and public actors and respect for the principle of subsidiarity
- Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements
- Ensure compliance with the 10 principles of fair trade

The 10 principles of fair trade (World Fair Trade Organisation, 2016)



Conclusion

Gender- and conflict-sensitive mapping is a decision-making tool: it highlights the links and activities where women are predominant, and the opportunities that enable them to engage in these activities, and the barriers that need to be addressed. Beyond the collection of age- and gender-disaggregated data, sound analysis is essential. For example, in the mapping of the dairy value chain, the processing and marketing links (small-scale and individual) appear to offer opportunities to support women processors and traders through equipment, organisational strengthening, capacity building, and related measures. As far as support services are concerned, a more in-depth analysis is needed of the extent to which these services consider the situations, constraints and needs of women and young clients. This can be carried out using diagnostic tools focused on service providers (such as a gender organisational scan). Finally, the differentiated impact of external factors (climate change, insecurity, demographics, infrastructure, etc.) on men and women, young people and the elderly should be considered and special measures planned, for example to adapt to the effects of climate change or insecurity.

As far as conflict sensitivity is concerned, mapping enables us to monitor 1) the points of tension along the various value chain links 2) the potentially negative effects of our interventions on the value chain

actors: by accentuating inequalities, excluding one group from another, etc., and 3) to understand the negative (dividing) and positive (connecting) effects of the social context (insecurity, cohesion) on our interventions. This is done with the aim of improving effectiveness, avoiding harm, and ideally to contribute to collaboration and equity between the actors along the value chain.

It is an iterative process of diagnosis at the start of the project, followed by monitoring and evaluation that requires systematic and constant data collection.

Finally, in more general terms, when a project seeks to determine the type of support to provide to a value chain, a key consideration is the existence of a market and effective demand for the product. There is little value in supporting a specific link in the chain, such as livestock producers, if the constraints to market access (i.e., the very existence of a viable market) are not addressed. We also need to know consumer preferences for a type of product (not specified in the mapping). Finally, a systemic approach is required to identify key bottlenecks and the actors best placed to address them sustainably (e.g., collection, conservation, quality, etc.) and, wherever possible, to ensure that solutions are endogenous to the system and require only minimal external intervention.

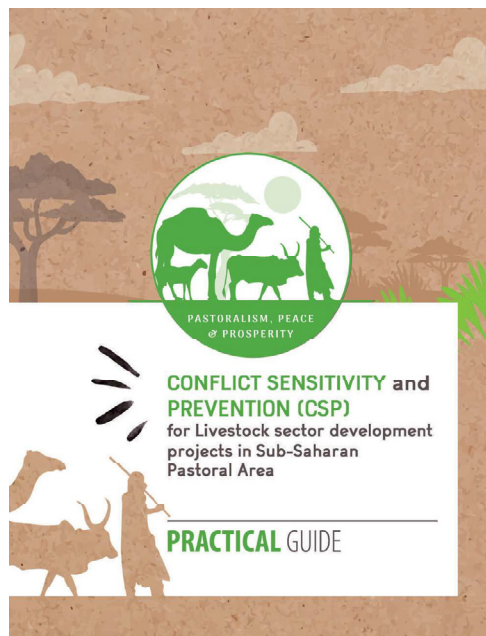
4.4 Sensitivity to conflict and GESI in social engineering

4.4.1 Background

Projects often include structural investments such as cattle tracks, livestock markets, vaccination pens, boreholes, grazing areas, storage warehouses, processing units, etc. The aim of these investments is to secure and perpetuate the economic activity in question. The construction and securing of structures and facilities must take place through consensus, involving a wide range of stakeholders. Structural investments can have a positive and/or negative impact on social cohesion and gender inequalities, depending on their purpose and the way in which they are implemented. This is why it is necessary to proceed upstream, with a social engineering process and negotiations leading to the signing of agreements with the landowners at the sites where these infrastructures will be established. Downstream, and to ensure the sustainable management and use of the infrastructures, inclusive management committees are set up. The aim is to put in place genuine «social engineering», understood as an intervention methodology aimed at defining and implementing projects in specific contexts, while ensuring community participation and the sustainability of outcomes.

A gender-specific analysis of the context shows that women are most often excluded from consultation and decision-making spaces due to social and cultural norms. This is particularly true regarding land ownership, which is traditionally considered a male prerogative. The «public» sphere is conventionally reserved for men, while women are confined to the private, domestic sphere and related tasks. The situation in the Sahel - characterised by increased demographic pressure, dwindling resources linked to climate change and tensions between herders and farmers against a backdrop of insecurity - has contributed to a deterioration in women's rights and their lack of access to resources²⁷. In this context, women face significant challenges in asserting their needs and interests in order to carry out their productive activities such as livestock fattening, poultry rearing, milk processing and agriculture, as well as their role as users of resources and infrastructure for domestic purposes, particularly water points. Failure to involve women and young people in social engineering processes can lead to inefficiency but also to tensions and, potentially, conflict.

The aim of the first workshop on GESI and CSPM in Burkina Faso was to better understand and consider the role, positioning, needs and interests of women in the design, implementation and management of pastoral infrastructure (social engineering). The workshop followed the principles and methodology of the Conflict Sensitivity and Prevention (CSP) toolkit developed by the Pastoralism and Stability in the Sahel and Horn of Africa (PASSHA)²⁸ project.



In this **practical guide**, social engineering is structured around eight key considerations:

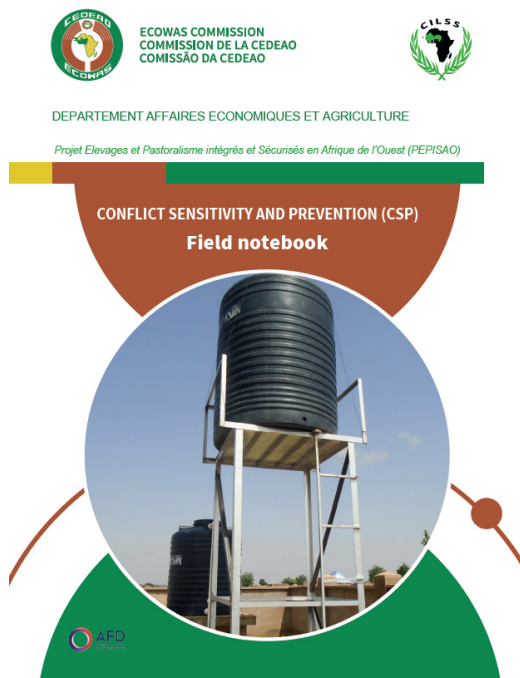
1. The goal/purpose
2. Technical choices
3. Site
4. Stakeholders (direct and indirect beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, project owners and contractors)
5. Environmental impacts
6. Economic issues
7. Social issues
8. Conflict sensitivity and prevention skills (CSP)

The expected deliverable was the development of clear guidelines to ensure the inclusion of women stakeholders in the social engineering process, so that pastoral infrastructures benefit them equitably, do not result in negative impacts, and include appropriate compensation measures where required.

²⁷ RPO position paper and proposals on the assessment of the legal framework for pastoralism and cross-border transhumance in West Africa and the Sahel.

²⁸ [Conflict sensitivity and prevention \(CSP\) for livestock sector development projects in Sub-Saharan pastoral areas – A practical guide](#), PASSHA, 2017

The reflection process was continued using the [field notebook](#) developed by CILSS/ECOWAS as part of the Integrated and Secure Livestock and Pastoralism in West Africa Project (PEPISAO).



This field notebook proposes three CSP checklists structured around the eight key considerations of the PASSHA practical guide: a) Before, b) During and c) After the implementation of a structural investment project.

For the time being, it is the first checklist (before) that has been revised to take greater account of GESI aspects.

Although these tools were developed by projects in the pastoral sector, they are relevant and can be adapted to any project making structural investments.

4.4.2 Project approaches

An initial case study from the MOPSS project highlights the points to be borne in mind to ensure the participation of women and young people throughout the social engineering process.

Pastoral borehole drilling in the Kénédougou area, as part of the MOPSS project

The social engineering process was carried out by a consultant whose mission was to support local actors, partner organisations ([RBM](#) and [APESS](#)) and the Regional Directorates for Animal and Fisheries Resources (DRRAH) of the Hauts-Bassins and Cascades regions of Burkina Faso.

Upstream in the process, women were consulted during the selection of villages for the installation of pastoral boreholes through village assemblies convened for this purpose. Downstream, they were also involved in the signing of social agreements. The project communicated to stakeholders on the need for women's participation and proposed quotas to this effect. However, these quotas were poorly respected as women's participation remained low and was not systematically documented. Women's perspectives were rarely expressed or visible during village assemblies, and there was little information on the roles or positions of the participants. Those invited were often leaders of farmers' organisations or women's associations, whose views may not necessarily be representative of all women, raising issues of legitimacy. As a result, the quality of their participation is not always guaranteed.

Barriers to women's participation in assemblies also represent a potential challenge, including time constraints, limited mobility due to insecurity or the costs and availability of transport, and social gender norms that restrict women's presence alongside men. The consultant's report does not mention what measures, if any, were put in place to identify or address these potential barriers.

To address both the quality and scale of women's participation in the social engineering process, parallel consultations were conducted through separate focus group discussions involving different social categories, alongside village consultations. These focus groups made it possible to better identify women's needs related to the use of boreholes, in order to inform site selection and technical choices in terms of accessibility, workload and cost. They helped clarify water needs for domestic use and drinking, as well as for livestock and agricultural activities.

For more information: [Case study: social engineering as part of MOPSS](#), December 2022, MOPSS Project

Based on the eight important considerations, project teams were asked to reflect on how the social engineering process was conducted in their respective projects as part of building an infrastructure. Below are a couple of examples from these reflections, concerning different types of infrastructure:

- A unit for processing shea butter at Torem in Burkina Faso (PGLRF)
- A livestock market in Gogonou, Benin (P-DIEM)

Construction of a shea butter processing unit in Burkina Faso as part of the Local Governance of Forest Resources Project (PGLRF)

The support for women shea producers in Torem, a village 5 km from Pô, the capital of Nahouri province, began with a technical and economic feasibility study conducted by the Albert Schweitzer Ecological Centre ([CEAS](#)). A consultancy firm also produced an environmental and social impact report to ensure that the pace of the producers' activities was considered. The producers are organised into two simplified cooperative societies which belong to the Ouézéna union for the marketing of shea kernels and butter. A management committee, set up with the support of SNV, supervises the fortnightly rotation of the women's work in the processing unit and ensures that profits are shared fairly.

The technical choice was guided by the operational status of the processing units of village forestry enterprises in the project area. The technological calibration of the processing units (PUs) was adjusted according to the women's capacities, and the operating mode of the management structures of these PUs was adapted accordingly.

The site chosen for the project is a former processing unit located within the Torem women's centre. This choice was influenced by the grievances expressed by the women during a visit by the Swedish embassy. The Pô municipality town hall facilitated the amicable transfer of the land for installation of the unit.

Actors: The direct beneficiaries of this project are the members of the two shea butter cooperatives in Torem. The project is managed by the municipality of Pô, which has delegated day-to-day management to a local management committee. Project implementation was entrusted to CEAS, which recruited a contractor for the construction of the building and supervised the manufacture and installation of the equipment. A monitoring committee, made up of representatives of the municipality, the two cooperatives, SNV and CEAS, was set up to ensure that the construction work was carried out smoothly.

The environmental and social impact audit considered all the risks associated with the project and proposed appropriate mitigation measures. The economic and social impacts were detailed in the techno-economic feasibility study and in the environmental and social impact audit. The process was facilitated by conflict-sensitive project management (CSPM) expertise within SNV, including a sociologist, an environmentalist and an economist.



Construction of the Gogounou livestock market in Benin as part of the Economic Infrastructure and Market Development Programme (P-DIEM)

In building the Gogounou livestock market, several considerations were taken into account to ensure the inclusion and participation of women, as well as to meet technical and environmental requirements.

Goal/Purpose

Women play an essential role in this infrastructure as livestock breeders and producers. They fatten sheep, produce and sell fodder, promote income-generating activities such as catering and petty trading, and collect funds for savings. They also pay taxes as users of the infrastructure.

Technical choices and site selection

To better meet the needs of users, the market was segmented according to animal type and activity, including dedicated areas for fodder and catering. The site selection was also strategic, favouring a flat, easily accessible area rather than a hilltop location.

Actors

The needs of users were considered right from the design stage of the livestock market, which is located close to the main market, facilitating access and enabling a wide range of activities. Women involved in livestock fattening, fodder production and trading, as well as catering, are direct beneficiaries. Those who provide services without physically accessing the market are indirect beneficiaries. Interconnection of the market with other surrounding markets was essential to maximise efficiency and meet the needs of stakeholders. A system was put in place to identify sellers and trace the origin of the livestock via a verification process based on receipts, thus ensuring security within the market. Women are represented through their associations and cooperatives, and the project management is entrusted to them. The project manager has the necessary skills to take their needs into account. Women also played an active role in collecting and transporting the materials needed to build the market.

Environment

The environmental impact study identified several potential nuisances, such as pollution from plastic bags, odours and noise, as well as the increasing scarcity of firewood, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and materials for pharmacopoeia due to their over-exploitation. To mitigate these impacts, it is planned to install litter bins and biodigesters, and to carry out reforestation and seedling production activities.

The group work revealed that the systematic participation of women actors, in their dual role as producers and as providers of «logistical support» within households, in the social engineering process around different infrastructures is more obvious, even natural when these infrastructures are linked to activities traditionally carried out by them or respond to needs that affect them directly. This is illustrated by the example of the shea butter processing units and by domestic water points and latrines, which are essential for maintaining female and family hygiene.

This participation is less evident in the case of pastoral infrastructure (boreholes, markets, and cattle tracks) that support «primary» economic activities such as cattle breeding and the various activities surrounding the meat and hide sector, which are largely the domain of men. Women are rarely invited to participate in meetings and various consultation frameworks surrounding these activities, as this «public» space is reserved for men, particularly when

issues such as land/ownership are discussed (see maps of the occupation of space).

However, women's economic role tends to be more significant in contexts where any so-called «supplementary» income becomes a resilience strategy and is essential to household well-being, food security, and even livelihoods. The rationale for considering women as fully-fledged economic actors should be internalized by SNV project teams, their implementing partners (consultants, research firms), and project stakeholders. Women's involvement should be seen as a guarantee of effectiveness, equity, and potentially, as a means of mitigating conflict risks.

In this respect, the participation of stakeholders upstream, during and downstream of social engineering must be ensured, as must that of young people and vulnerable populations (IDPs, for example).

4.4.3 Good practice

It is recommended that project teams use the eight key considerations from the PASSHA toolkit to guide the social engineering process and review the GESI and conflict sensitivity checklist (tool 11). This tool should be introduced at the scoping meeting with the consultant selected to lead the process where appropriate. Insofar as project partners are involved in this process, they should be at the same level of information regarding the proposed methodology.

The following points should be considered by the process implementation team.

Upstream:

When selecting the company responsible for building the infrastructure: give preference to local companies and use local materials and labour wherever possible. The measures planned by the company to ensure the health and protection of workers and people living near the site should also feature among the criteria in the scoring grid.

When selecting the consultant responsible for leading the social engineering: ensure that experience/skills in gender-based analysis/planning and conflict-sensitivity are a key criterion in the scoring grid.

During the scoping meeting with the consultant, the project team should clearly communicate the project's targets in terms of inclusion (women, young people, vulnerable groups) and insist on the systematic involvement of these categories throughout the process:

- Targeting villages likely to host infrastructure
- Stakeholder information meeting (village assembly)
- Social agreement validation forums
- Validation of site identification
- Monitoring the completion of the works (and sometimes carrying out the works by providing manpower)
- Acceptance of works
- Setting up management committees (women as members)

The following tools can be used to ensure the participation of young people in terms of numbers, quality and legitimacy:

1. A mapping of actors in the intervention area (village, municipality) indicating not only existing organisations and institutions but also women's and youth associations or groups with an economic focus or civil society organisations working on the defence and promotion of women's rights, as well as individuals or institutions

that may act as allies or as obstacles to women's participation.

2. Analysis of the positions, needs and interests of the actors involved (tool proposed in conflict-sensitive project management training).
3. When convening the village assembly, the consultant and the project team should communicate the importance of women's and vulnerable groups' participation both in terms of number and quality. To this end, a clear rationale should be prepared explaining the importance of women's representation both as actors and providers of household «logistical» support. This can be done by using visual tools and key messages.
4. The invitation process should be designed to reach women stakeholders and vulnerable groups. In this respect, the communication channels used are critical and should be accessible to women (e.g., town criers, local radio stations and places commonly frequented by women).
5. Barriers to the participation of women and vulnerable groups should be identified and addressed for example, by ensuring that transport is provided and/or paid for, and that the timing of village assemblies is adapted to women's schedules.

During the process:

- At village (municipal) assemblies, the consultant/project team should systematically record the presence of women/young people/other vulnerable groups such as IDPs using attendance lists that are disaggregated by sex/age/status/activity or socio-professional category.
- Holding separate focus groups with women and vulnerable groups is an effective way of gathering their point of view, by giving them access to a safe space where they can express themselves without any reservations about the presence of men, authorities, husbands, etc. As far as possible, women should lead the focus groups.
- It is important to assess whether the interventions, needs, interests, and aspirations of represented stakeholders are expressed and effectively considered. Where necessary, the process facilitator (consultant or project team) may seek their perspectives by addressing them directly or meeting with them individually and presenting their views in a plenary session.
- All stakeholders should be involved and a thorough context analysis conducted, in order to reach a genuine consensus on site selection.

- Once social agreements have been validated, the site should be formally registered to prevent future disputes or challenges.
- To ensure sustainability, a strategy should be established to secure funding for the operation of infrastructure management and monitoring committees.
- All this information should be included in the consultant's report. Where necessary, a dedicated section addressing these issues should be predefined in the reporting template.
- Throughout the process, attention should be paid to the same points outlined above. These groups should benefit from capacity building to facilitate their participation.
- Particular attention should be paid to the impact of infrastructure choices, site selection, technical and human resource choices during implementation, as well as their environmental and social impact on different social groups (women and young people in particular) to ensure that these choices do not have a negative impact and do not lead to or exacerbate conflicts.
- Inclusive, legitimate and representative monitoring committees should be established to ensure the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure.
- The consultant should pay attention to all these aspects and include the relevant information in their various reports.
- Teams should monitor and document the impact of social engineering processes on cohesion, inclusion and gender equality to demonstrate their added value.
- They should also ensure that social engineering experiences are capitalised on to improve the approach and enhance its impact.

Downstream:

- Women and vulnerable groups should be involved in the management, maintenance and accountability of infrastructure, including through their involvement in management committees.

Construction of two pastoral boreholes in the municipalities of Sindou and Loumana in the Cascades region of Burkina Faso as part of the MOPSS project



Good practice

- **Goal/purpose:** Understanding and respecting the uses of the various stakeholders is a prerequisite for the success of the social engineering process. It is therefore necessary to determine the social groups of actors entitled to use the borehole (women, sedentary herders, transhumant herders, brickmakers, etc.) and to consider their specific needs. This process requires community and village general assemblies to inform these audiences of the project's objectives, while involving local authorities and technical services. At first, farmers were not included in the process, and they set up market gardening near the borehole. The same problem arose with the brickmakers. These users had not been considered, so certain rules had to be introduced, such as not setting up too close to the borehole to avoid disturbing other users.
- **Technical choices:** Compliance with siting criteria is essential when constructing boreholes, while respecting the perspectives of the various stakeholders regarding organisational and management aspects. Initially, the boreholes were equipped with livestock troughs only, with no provision for standpipes to enable domestic use. This omission was subsequently corrected.
- **Site selection:** Sociocultural aspects (sacred sites, places of worship, etc.) and accessibility for the various user groups were considered during site selection, which was validated by consensus. The various site handover reports were drawn up. The case of a borehole malfunction, the cause of which was difficult to determine (lightning strike or a technical problem during installation), highlighted the importance of accountability by both the project and service providers in managing frustrations.
- **Stakeholders:** Most users were involved from the start of the process (IDPs, people living with disabilities, pastoralists and agropastoralists, transhumant herders). Management and monitoring committees were set up, with attention paid to gender balance in their composition. Management tools and rules were developed and validated by the communities, and management protocols were formulated and validated between the municipality and the committees.
- **Environmental issues:** initially, this aspect was not specifically addressed, but an environmental notice was later developed, specifying the need to avoid destruction of vegetation and rare species and, where necessary, to replant trees.
- **Economic issues:** In the case of MOPSS, land transfers were carried out voluntarily and documented through signed village assembly minutes. There has been an increase in the number of transhumant herders, which benefits the community in terms of increased tax revenue, and temporary employment opportunities were created around the infrastructure.

The Anié livestock market in Togo as part of PREDIP²⁹ and the Fada N’Gourma livestock market in Burkina Faso built with the support of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

Good practice

Considering the GESI/CSPM criteria, the following positive points should be noted for the two cattle markets:

- **Goal/purpose:** In addition to the flagship activity of selling livestock, women are given the opportunity to carry out related income-generating activities (selling milk, cereals, etc.) and help to boost the market.
- **Technical choices:** separate toilets for men and women; hangars and facilities were provided for women caterers. These facilities are essential to the life of the livestock market, as they allow traders to eat without having to leave the market site.
- **Site selection:** for both markets, the choice of site was well thought out, with the involvement of all the actors, enabling both markets to become places where people from different backgrounds can mix and bond, because every market day sellers and buyers from the surrounding localities and neighbouring countries meet there.
- **Economic issues:** given the significant contribution made by women to the municipality's tax base, meetings are regularly organised between the municipality (tax and duties department) and women with the aim of improving the conditions under which their catering and related activities are carried out.



²⁹ PREDIP: Regional dialogue and investment project for pastoralism and transhumance in the Sahel and coastal countries of West Africa

4.5 Advocacy and lobbying actions sensitive to GESI and conflict

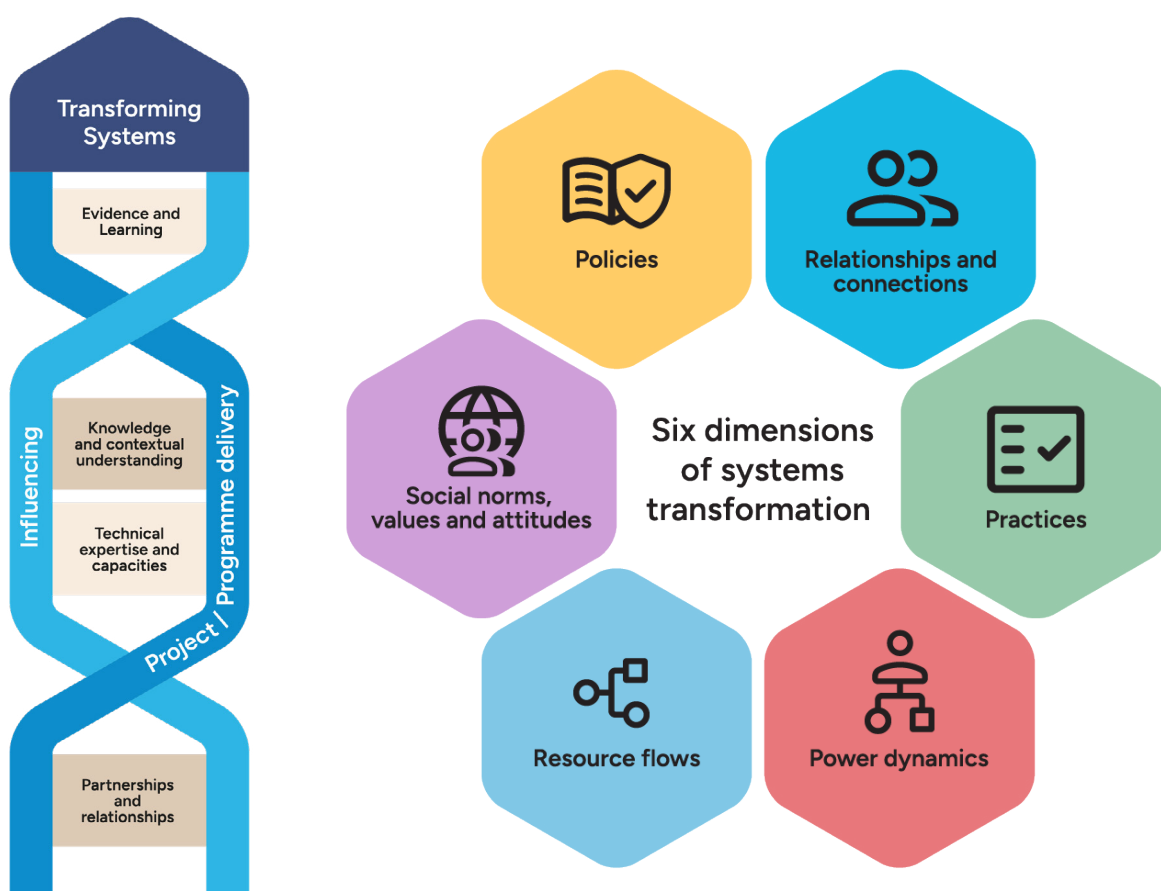
4.5.1 Background and definitions

SNV's priority is to achieve **transformational change** in the agrifood, energy and water supply **systems** - thus leading to more sustainable and equitable living conditions for all. To achieve this, work focuses on the interaction of two key levers for change:

- The excellence and effectiveness of the projects and programmes implemented, an integral part of which are the relationships and partnerships, the facilitation approaches and the sharing and strengthening of technical skills and capabilities.

- Using knowledge, evidence and contextual lessons from our projects and programmes to influence the policies, practices and actions of partners, peer organisations, governments and local, national and global institutions.

SNV is committed to clearly defining and measuring its contribution to systemic transformations, by verifying how our programs and our influence strategy for change together have a positive impact on six dimensions:



Advocacy and lobbying are therefore important aspects of most SNV projects. For example, one objective within the MOPSS project is to strengthen the influence of its partners, the regional professional organizations (RPOs) and promote the rights and responsibilities of their members (farmers, herders, agropastoralists) with local, national, and regional authorities to ensure peaceful transhumance.

From a gender equality and conflict sensitivity perspective, this involves collecting gender-specific evidence while considering intersectionality (the accumulation of multiple vulnerability factors), developing tailored advocacy messages, identifying target audiences and events to disseminate these messages, and fostering leadership, particularly among women and young people, who are key message carriers.

For all these reasons, it is important to get project teams to:

- Understand the principles of GESI and conflict-sensitive advocacy/lobbying on the one hand and advocacy/lobbying for gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion on the other.
- Analyse the strengths/weaknesses of their advocacy actions in relation to GESI and CSPM to improve the way these cross-cutting aspects are considered.
- Identify and plan advocacy/lobbying strategies that specifically target gender equality, inclusion, social cohesion and stability.

Clarification of concepts

Advocacy is a dynamic and relational process that enables the introduction of one or more significant changes, the resolution of a major problem affecting a group or community, through a concerted decision on the request, with the participation of those concerned and the assistance of committed partners. It involves taking public action to influence a target audience (individual, governing body) to understand their position on an issue, in order to change a policy, law, or program in a particular sector. Advocacy can be used wherever change is needed.

Lobbying encompasses the influence practices employed by a more or less formal group of actors from a professional sector or those sharing common interests (pressure group), formed to defend their interests against institutions or individuals who may make decisions likely to affect them. It is a method that consists of directly or indirectly influencing decision-makers and all those who have influence over public opinion and the decision-making process related to the management of public affairs. It involves forging alliances to exert pressure on decision-makers and achieve the desired results: a decision favourable to the interests of a group (community, etc.)

Links between advocacy and lobbying

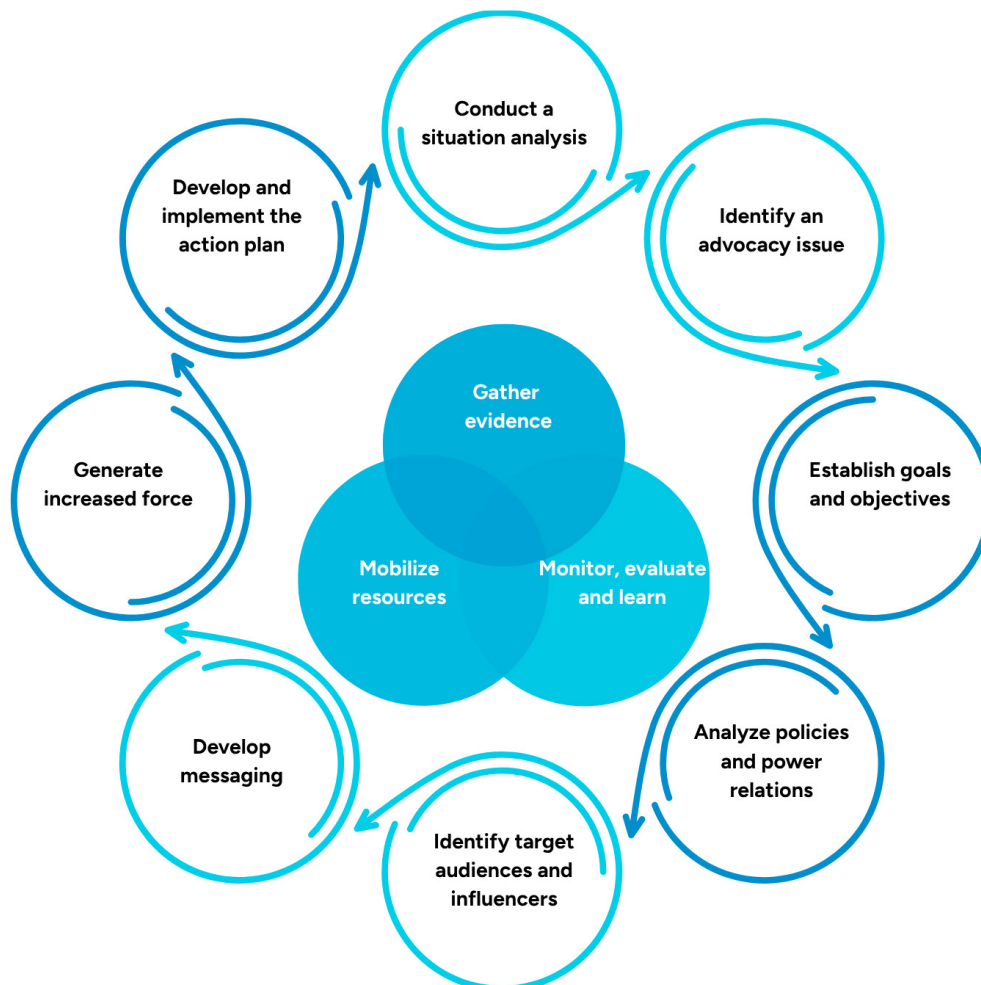
Advocacy and lobbying share several characteristics. These processes are built around an important cause to defend, requiring deep commitment, trust, and conviction. Their main objective is to bring about significant change in society.

To succeed, it is crucial to define clear objectives and collect relevant data. Formulating and disseminating strategic messages are essential to raising funds and influencing decision-makers.

These efforts require building strong alliances and identifying potential allies. By targeting specific decision-makers, it is essential to appeal to their concerns and convince them of the relevance of the proposed actions. The active participation and engagement of those affected are also crucial.

Finally, advocacy and lobbying materialise through concrete actions undertaken by a group, thereby strengthening the impact of the initiatives. By integrating a conflict-sensitive perspective and promoting gender equality and social inclusion, these processes become even more powerful and effective in achieving lasting and equitable change.

The advocacy cycle

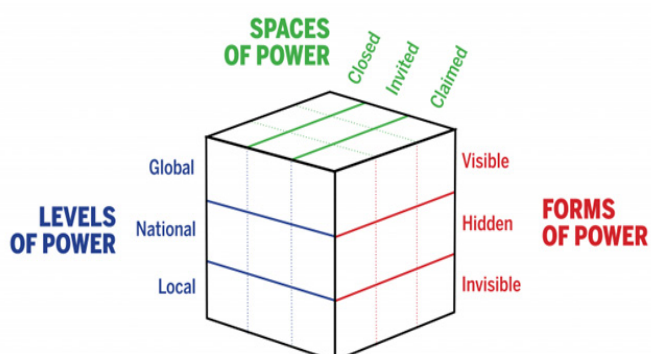


There is a link between advocacy and leadership development, insofar as it requires individuals who are knowledgeable about the issue to be brought before decision-makers, and who have the capacity to influence. This is why MOPSS aims to identify and build the capacities of young leaders (men and women), within dedicated spaces, so that they can take leadership roles within their organisations and represent and defend the interests of their constituencies before decision-making bodies at various levels.

4.5.2 Lobbying, GESI and conflict sensitivity

When undertaking advocacy and lobbying actions, three challenges must be considered:

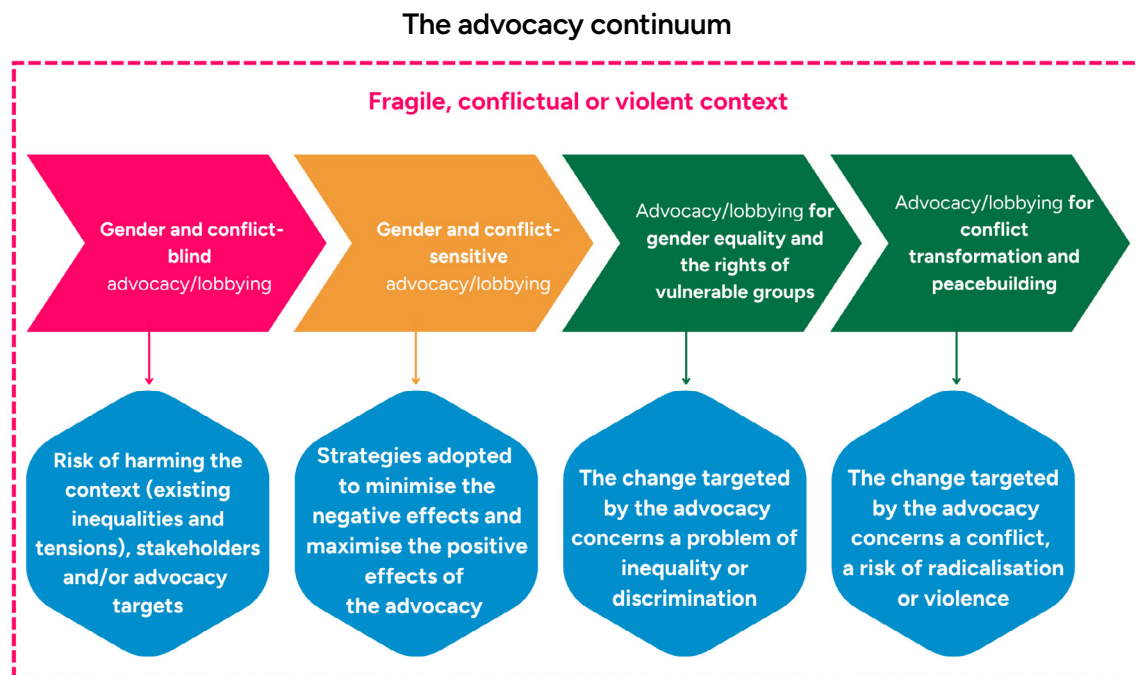
- First, advocacy efforts should be coordinated at **different levels**: global, national, and local, for greater effectiveness.
- Then we need to understand and act on the **hidden and invisible forms of power**.
- Finally, it is essential to **create spaces** where the participation and voice of citizens (especially vulnerable or marginalised groups) can be heard and where they can exert influence.



Integrating GESI and conflict sensitivity into project advocacy and lobbying

The diagram below illustrates the continuum of advocacy actions and the extent to which they

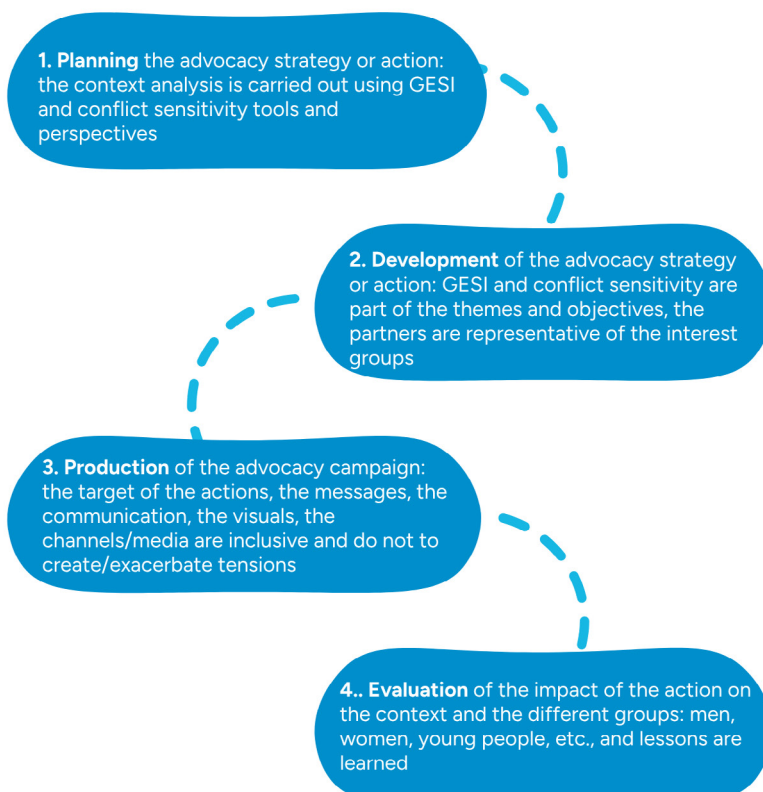
integrate - or fail to integrate - gender equality, social inclusion and conflict sensitivity considerations.



SNV teams should situate their projects and programming in relation to advocacy-lobbying actions on the continuum. Where possible, these actions should not be «blind» to GESI and conflict sensitivity, otherwise they may be detrimental to stakeholders.

At the very least, projects should adopt a GESI and conflict-sensitive approach in their support for advocacy actions by respecting the principles below (see the example of the MOPSS project).

Principles of GESI and conflict-sensitivity in advocacy work



Some advocacy actions within projects may aim to address discrimination (related to gender, age, or vulnerability) to avoid exacerbating tensions, prevent conflicts, and maintain peace, as is the case for internally displaced persons (IDPs) regarding access to land and the risks of tensions with host communities within the RESCOM project (see box). Projects may also seek to address the issue of violence against women in a conflict context, or to build upon peace initiatives led by women and youth.

Finally, advocacy and lobbying actions may have the primary objective of preventing conflict and radicalisation and contributing to peacebuilding. In this case, the level of advocacy must be adapted to the nature of the conflict:

- **Local level:** the aim is to help resolve local conflicts and prevent wider escalation.
- **Intermediate level:** this level is often essential for the implementation of agreements and policies at national level.
- It is also necessary to combine top-down and bottom-up advocacy for a balanced and inclusive approach.

Whatever the primary objective of the advocacy-lobbying campaign, the considerations specific to one or other of the cross-cutting approaches should be applied by following the advocacy cycle.

Advocacy and lobbying in fragile contexts

Whatever the primary objective, when considering advocacy-lobbying actions in a fragile context marked by conflict and violence, there are some important points to bear in mind:

- When analysing conflict sensitivity, it is important to identify the risks of activities encouraging violence or their potential to promote peace. This step is crucial in guiding actions to minimise the risks and maximise the opportunities for peace.
- Analyses of power and stakeholders are particularly complex and delicate in situations of conflict, where power can be exercised violently by certain actors and threats are not always visible or obvious. It is therefore essential to carry out these analyses with great caution and to have a clear vision of the desired change in power relations.³⁰

- Survivors of violence and advocates are often at risk of reprisals, sometimes violent. Protection measures must be put in place to ensure their safety and well-being. The creation of advocacy networks and coalitions is an effective strategy for increasing opportunities to influence power while reducing the risk of individual exposure to reprisals or political manipulation. These networks make it possible to pool forces and share responsibilities, making advocacy work more robust and resilient in the face of the challenges posed by conflict situations.

In conclusion, a conflict-sensitive, gender-equality- and socially inclusive approach to advocacy and lobbying requires precise adaptation to local dynamics, protection of vulnerable actors, and a collective strategy to maximize the impact and safety of actions undertaken.

As part of the reflection and action research workshops held in Burkina Faso (September 2022) and Benin (March 2024), a tool³¹ in the form of a checklist was designed to focus on the design, implementation and evaluation of an advocacy-lobbying campaign or action to influence behaviours and decision-making by integrating the two cross-cutting perspectives.

The checklist has four sections:

- Analysis of the context and planning of the advocacy strategy
- Development of the advocacy strategy and objectives
- Implementation of the advocacy campaign
- Evaluation of the advocacy campaign

³⁰ See Tool 12 in the toolbox

³¹ See Tool 13 in the toolbox. This tool is largely based on «[What works for conflict and gender-sensitive media campaigns Case study from Central Asia](#)», by Myrzagul Baialieva & Aisalkyn Botoeva, Search for Common Ground, October 2023.

Each section contains questions that apply depending on the nature and ambitions of the advocacy action:

Nature/ambition of the advocacy	Planning	Development	Implementation	Evaluation
Action or campaign sensitive to GESI and CS (minimum standard)				
Action or campaign specifically aimed at social inclusion and gender equality				
Action or campaign to transform conflicts and promote peace				
Action or campaign carried out in a context of conflict or violence				

4.5.3 Project approaches

The first step involved gaining a better understanding of the advocacy activities undertaken by projects in Burkina Faso through workshop discussions. Participants were divided into groups by project. They were asked to identify the advocacy initiatives carried out by their project, briefly describe the advocacy strategy used, and finally, identify the strengths and

weaknesses of their advocacy initiatives regarding their sensitivity to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and conflict. They were then asked to assess the impact (positive and/or negative) of these advocacy initiatives on gender equality, inclusion, and social cohesion, and to formulate recommendations for improving the integration of these cross-cutting themes.

Example of an action aimed at conflict transformation and peacebuilding

Advocacy for a favourable political and legal environment for pastoralism (MOPSS project)

This initiative is led by the inter-RPO (Regional Producers' Organisations) framework comprising APSS, ROPPA and RBM, with a rotating presidency. It is carried out in collaboration with technical partners such as Hub Rural and SNV, with the support of financial partners such as IFAD and Sida. Advocacy and lobbying activities include meetings, awareness-raising campaigns and discussions with the ECOWAS Director of Agriculture and Rural Development (DADR). ECOWAS is targeted as the main decision-maker, and the action is carried out at regional level within the ECOWAS area.

The advocacy aims are many: to improve equity in access to natural resources, combat poverty and promote peaceful cohabitation, while contributing to regional economic integration. It also aims to boost the profitability of mobile livestock systems and their adaptability to the political, economic, social, security and climatic changes underway in the region.

An in-depth analysis of the context was carried out to enable the development of appropriate advocacy strategies. This included an analysis of the impact on different groups and a review of the results of the study commissioned by ECOWAS on the revision of Decision A/DEC³² to promote the application of regulations on pastoralism and transhumance at regional level. The RPOs then held grassroots consultations to gather proposals, which were presented in a joint position paper drawn up by the RPOs entitled «*Position paper and RPO proposals regarding the evaluation of the regulatory framework for pastoralism and cross border transhumance in West Africa and the Sahel*»³³. The note was then validated by stakeholders and circulated to the target groups: local authorities and ECOWAS.

Among the positive aspects regarding GESI issues, there was a roadmap specifying gender and age quotas for consultations. The views of women and young people were gathered through focus groups. The note acknowledges that «*recent economic and socio-political developments have contributed to a deterioration in the rights of women herders/agropastoralists. Competition for resources has led to their gradual exclusion from access to productive assets, at a time when their social and economic responsibilities are growing in importance*». The two key advocacy points concerning these target groups are, firstly, improving the representation of women and youth by supporting women's and youth spaces within producer organizations and strengthening their capacities so they can play their role in decision-making bodies. Secondly, the professionalization of the dairy and meat sectors, and more specifically, literacy and vocational training for women, by supporting them in the milk processing sector.

³² Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 provides a regional framework for cross-border transhumance, and Regulation C/REG.3/01/03 concerns the implementation of rules relating to transhumance, in particular the possession of an International Transhumance Certificate (ITC), aimed among other things at protecting the health of animals.

³³ ECOWAS Commission. Evaluation of the regulatory framework for pastoralism and cross-border transhumance in West Africa and the Sahel. 2020. <https://bibliocliss.paris.net/files/original/e89cd8ca4d2335be0739d22a5751f36fa4e91ab7.pdf>, accessed 10 December 2025.

In addition, 24 young men and women received leadership training, in the hope that they would carry the voice of those they represent. However, the specified quotas were not always respected, and women and young people were not invited to general assemblies by the RPOs during inter-OPR consultations. Furthermore, it was difficult to track the participation of women and youth due to a lack of appropriate tools. The views of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people with disabilities were not gathered. Partnerships were established with women's rights organizations such as WILDAF (Women in Law and Development in Africa). Consultations in local languages at the country level allowed for the analysis of sources of tension and opportunities to mitigate them. Twenty-three multi-stakeholder consultations on conflict and endogenous conflict resolution mechanisms were held. These consultations enabled GESI and conflict-sensitivity issues to be considered in the objectives and messages conveyed.

However, implementation of the advocacy-lobbying strategy revealed several shortcomings. Firstly, the messages conveyed do not adequately reflect the situations, interests and aspirations of women and vulnerable groups. In addition, the content of these messages does not seem to be enriched by the experiences of women role models, and the media used do not always give a voice to women, young people and other marginalised groups, thus limiting their visibility and contribution.

Regarding the evaluation of the advocacy-lobbying action, it was noted that there has not yet been any monitoring-evaluation of the impact on gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups. Similarly, there has been no monitoring and evaluation of the impact on the conflict context. However, some positive impacts were observed, such as the introduction of local basic education and vocational training schemes focusing on the employability of young people and the promotion of women's empowerment. In addition, the cross-border cooperation mechanism has been strengthened as part of the holistic approach promoted by ECOWAS for the prevention and management of conflicts linked to transhumance. Finally, an early warning and response system for security and climate shocks has been set up in the pastoral zone.

Recommendations were made to remedy these shortcomings, such as the inclusion of specific chapters on gender and conflict sensitivity, the organisation of advocacy initiatives at national level by the women's colleges of the three PROs, and the capitalisation of best practices in livestock farming that take these issues into account.

Finally, particular attention should be paid to the specific challenges of advocacy in the context of violent conflict, with recommendations for minimising the risks for the actors involved and adapting the level of advocacy according to the nature of the conflict.

Examples of actions to promote gender equality and social inclusion

Advocacy for access to land for internally displaced persons (IDPs), women and young people in Burkina Faso (RESCOM project)

Insecurity in Burkina Faso is forcing people to leave their villages and move to host communities. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) include many vulnerable young people and women who have lost their livelihoods. The aim of our advocacy work is to give IDPs access to land, so that they can maintain their livelihoods, become more self-sufficient and achieve greater food security.

One point to bear in mind regarding conflict sensitivity is not to create tensions with the host populations, who may feel aggrieved because they do not benefit from the support or have been forced to give up their land. Another potential source of tension is the dynamics within beneficiary households, where spouses may also feel excluded from the support.

The main advocacy targets are customary leaders (village chiefs, land chiefs, landowners), local authorities and administrative authorities at various levels: villages, municipalities, provinces and regions. The advocacy strategy consisted of collecting data (number of IDPs, available land, etc.) and building the case. Meetings were held beforehand with traditional leaders to get them on board. Then councillors at local authority level were approached individually to turn them into allies. Hearings with the administrative authorities were negotiated. The municipal council sessions were an opportunity to pass on the advocacy messages. During the advocacy campaigns, all the groups concerned (IDPs and host populations) were involved in the process to avoid creating tensions, and the conditions of access to the land were explained clearly and transparently: the difference between access and ownership, whether it was permanent or temporary, etc.

These actions have enabled 53 IDPs, including 37 women, to gain access to land in the various project intervention areas.

Advocacy for the leadership of women and young people in Say, Niger (Pro-ARIDES project)

The advocacy action is carried out by the partner AREN (Association for the Revitalisation of Livestock Farming in Niger) and aims to help women and young leaders emerge. This is a local initiative in the commune of Say, targeting local authorities (traditional, customary and religious) and women's and youth associations. This commune is affected by insecurity linked to violent extremism, particularly because of its proximity to the Parc du W, which is a refuge for Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG). This is an advocacy initiative targeting GESI, which is being implemented in a fragile/violent context.

The analysis of the context identified the actors who resort to violence and threats but did not attempt to understand their motivations. Moreover, the complementary analysis of vulnerability was not carried out. As a result, the situations, needs and aspirations of vulnerable groups are only partially known.

The development of the advocacy strategy and objectives considered the specific context (an area of strong religious influence which is home to an Islamic university) and its impact on women is considered in the theme of the action (women's leadership). The advocacy target is inclusive and representative of different categories. The project works with community groups and organisations at various levels. Capacity-building for partners on safety tools, the «do no harm» principle, and the reporting system (feedback and complaints mechanism) have helped to protect them from pressure and reprisals.

During the advocacy-lobbying strategy, the messages conveyed represented women's situations, interests and aspirations, but the content of the messages was not informed by the experiences of women role models.

The evaluation of the advocacy-lobbying action made it possible to collect data and disseminate the results in a gender-disaggregated way. Advocacy has effectively increased the number of women in decision-making positions. The existence of a mechanism for continuous monitoring and analysis of the conflict and security context has made it possible to adapt advocacy strategies, messages and dissemination channels accordingly.

4.5.4 Good practice

Planning the advocacy strategy or action

As part of an advocacy effort integrating gender equality, social inclusion (GSE) and conflict sensitivity, several essential analyses must be carried out. Firstly, it is crucial to carry out an in-depth analysis to understand how the advocacy issue affects men and women, as well as vulnerable or marginalised groups, differently. This analysis should reveal specific impacts by gender and group, identifying sources of tension and opportunities for peace in relation to the advocacy issue and scale.

In the case of a strategy or action aimed specifically at social inclusion and gender equality, several steps need to be taken to ensure a thorough understanding of and an adequate response to the needs of the different populations concerned. A contextual analysis of the main gender inequalities and discrimination should be carried out. This analysis must identify the specific situations, needs and aspirations of women, particularly young women. In addition, it is essential to identify vulnerable groups and carry out an analysis of their vulnerability and a detailed assessment of their situations, needs and aspirations. With this information, advocacy efforts can be better targeted, more inclusive and truly sensitive to the realities of all stakeholders involved.

As part of an action aimed at transforming conflicts and promoting peace, an in-depth contextual analysis must be carried out, including the types of conflict, the actors involved, the underlying causes, as well as the dividing and connecting elements. This analysis should identify the deep-rooted causes or drivers of conflict, enabling the dynamics at work to be understood. The analysis should also reveal the impacts of the conflict context on different groups, considering gender, age and socio-professional categories. A clear understanding of these impacts will enable actions to be more targeted and effective. In addition, the analysis should identify existing conflict prevention and management mechanisms, assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the influential players in this field. Finally, the analysis should highlight the potential of women and young people in building peace. Their role and influence are often underestimated, yet they can play a crucial role in transforming conflicts.

When working in a situation of conflict or violence, it is essential that the analysis identifies the actors who resort to violence and the threats they represent. Understanding their motivations is essential for developing appropriate conflict prevention and management strategies. Finally, assessing the risks for the protagonists of the advocacy action is a crucial step in ensuring their safety and the effectiveness of the actions carried out.

Development of the advocacy strategy or action

For advocacy actions that integrate conflict sensitivity and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), it is crucial to consider several aspects. The theme of the action should integrate the needs, challenges and aspirations of the various vulnerable segments and groups. It is also essential to assess the specific conflict context and its impact on women and vulnerable groups, considering historical grievances, power dynamics and cultural factors.

The objectives and expected results of the action should not undermine gender equality and social inclusion. It is important to check whether the activities linked to the advocacy action are likely to encourage or provoke violence. If so, appropriate measures to mitigate these risks should be identified and included. Finally, the opportunities offered by advocacy activities for social cohesion and peace should be identified and exploited, including appropriate measures to maximise these opportunities.

For advocacy actions that specifically aim at gender equality, social inclusion and the promotion of the rights of women and vulnerable groups, these objectives must be explicit in the advocacy action or theme, which includes the fight against gender-based discrimination, sexist stereotypes and gender-based violence. In addition, advocacy actions should consider and convey the voices, perspectives and experiences of women and vulnerable groups.

For advocacy actions aimed at conflict transformation and peace, it is crucial that conflict prevention, the search for dialogue, reconciliation and peacebuilding are specific objectives of the action. It is also important to ensure that the level of advocacy is appropriate to the nature and scale of the conflict, specifying its nature and the level at which it takes place. Consequently, advocacy actions should be articulated at different levels (local, national and regional or international), to ensure a coherent and effective approach.

It is also important that advocacy actions address hidden and invisible forms of power, specifying which forms of power are targeted. Finally, advocacy actions should create spaces where the participation of citizens, particularly marginalised groups, is ensured and their voices heard so that they can exert influence, thus ensuring equitable representation and inclusion in the process of conflict transformation and peace.

When working in a situation of conflict or violence, it is crucial to frame longer-term objectives in terms of positive peace, aiming for justice and equitable development, rather than simply negative peace, which is limited to the absence of direct violence.

Protective measures should be put in place for survivors of violence to ensure that they are not adversely affected by, or because of, advocacy actions. These measures can include safe shelters, psychological support, and reporting and rapid response mechanisms. It is also essential to put in place protective measures for advocacy protagonists, such as anonymity for participants, secure communication channels, and risk management training, to minimise the risks to which they may be exposed.

Building alliances and partnerships and identifying advocacy targets

For advocacy actions that integrate conflict sensitivity and GESI, it is crucial that the advocacy target is inclusive and representative of the different categories concerned. It should be clear who is being targeted and why. In addition, it is essential to ensure that advocacy partners have expertise in GESI and conflict sensitivity. If these skills are lacking, capacity-building measures should be planned and implemented.

For advocacy actions aimed at gender equality and inclusion, it is essential to work in partnership or coalition with organisations that promote the rights of women and vulnerable groups. It is important to mention these organisations, whether they are professional groups or movements such as [#HeForShe](#).

In advocacy for conflict transformation and peace, it is crucial to work with organisations dedicated to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, naming them specifically, and then engaging a wide range of actors across the spectrum of conflict to increase the number of voices heard and to help create an environment conducive to dialogue and reconciliation. Advocacy partners should command the respect of all stakeholders in the conflict, and it is essential to ensure that this respect is maintained at all appropriate levels. Working with media that apply the principles of Conflict Sensitive Journalism (CSJ) is also important, and examples of such collaborations should be provided.

When working in a situation of conflict or violence, protection measures should be provided for partners who may be subject to pressure or reprisals, and these measures should be mentioned. Finally, it is crucial to ensure that collaboration does not involve media that engage in hate speech or propaganda journalism, thus ensuring that advocacy efforts do not contribute to heightened tensions or spreading harmful information.

Development of advocacy campaigns: messages, visuals, language, dissemination

For advocacy actions that integrate conflict sensitivity and GESI, it is essential to ensure that the messages conveyed represent the situations, interests and aspirations of women and vulnerable groups, while taking care not to generate feelings of exclusion or discrimination. The process of producing messages and visuals must be impartial and inclusive in the choice of language, duration, music and visuals used. All groups should be represented in a non-stereotypical way, and the channels and media used should be inclusive and appropriate. These may include social networks, radio, posters in public places and/or television. Messages should be disseminated in languages appropriate to the target audience, using inclusive and conflict-sensitive communication (tools 1.a and 1.b), with particular attention to language that is non-partisan, inclusive, impartial and positive.

For advocacy actions aimed at gender equality and inclusion, the content of messages must be informed by the experiences of female role models and encourage the support of male «allies».

For advocacy aimed at conflict transformation and peace, advocacy materials should present a balanced view of the situation, giving a voice to women, young people and other vulnerable or marginalised groups. Messages should encourage constructive communication, empathy and understanding between different stakeholders, and be informed by the experiences of role models in conflict prevention and management.

When working in a situation of conflict or violence, the messages conveyed should contribute to improved safety, justice, and well-being for affected populations, help mobilize direct support to survivors, and denounce perpetrators of violence. The campaign should use a combination of public-facing and private advocacy (multi-pronged approach): public awareness campaigns using mass media, community events, and cultural performances which can raise public awareness and mobilize support; and private dialogue with government officials, judicial branches, and other powerful actors which can influence policy and practice directly.

Evaluation of the advocacy campaign

For advocacy actions that integrate conflict sensitivity and GESI, it is crucial to put in place a system for monitoring and evaluating the impact (positive/negative) of advocacy on gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups. The results should be collected and disseminated in a disaggregated manner according to gender and vulnerable groups. It is also necessary to monitor and evaluate the impact of advocacy on the conflict context.

For advocacy actions aimed at gender equality and inclusion, it is important to check whether the advocacy has influenced the equitable access to resources, decision-making power, freedom of choice, self-confidence of women, young people and vulnerable and/or marginalised groups, as well as their participation, networking and capacity to influence communities and systems of governance.

For advocacy actions aimed at conflict transformation and peace, it is important to assess whether advocacy has influenced personal attitudes and behaviour towards greater mutual trust, communication, inclusion and cooperation, improved relations between actors, and made systems and structures more transparent, inclusive, participatory and equitable. The influence of advocacy on the culture of the target community or society should also be analysed, particularly in terms of the rejection of violence and exclusion, and the development of a culture of peace and social justice.

When working in a situation of conflict/violence, a mechanism should be put in place to monitor and analyse the conflict and security context on an ongoing basis. Advocacy strategies, messages and dissemination channels should be adapted accordingly, as should risk assessment and management. A communication mechanism should be in place to dispel rumours and set the record straight, by collecting data and evidence from reliable and recognised sources. The effective protection of partners and advocacy targets should be verified. Finally, it is important to assess whether advocacy has reduced the levels of conflict and violence observed, improved the situation for the survivors of violence, and brought more justice to perpetrators of violence and those who violate human rights.

Example of the “My milk is local” campaign (MOPSS project)

The «My milk is local» promotional campaign features various advocacy and lobbying actions such as meetings, round tables, awareness-raising campaigns, marketing actions and initiatives targeting certain stakeholders. The campaign is run by the three Regional Producer Organisations (RPO) (APESS, RBM and ROPPA) and their allies, in partnership with [OXFAM](#), [ECOWAS](#), and research groups such as [INRAE](#) and [GRET](#). The main objective of this action is to promote the consumption of local milk, while aiming for gender equality and social inclusion. Governments, particularly legislative assemblies, are the decision-makers targeted by this initiative, which is being rolled out at regional, national and local levels to ensure that the promotion of local milk is integrated into local authority policies.



Context analysis and advocacy strategy planning consider all aspects of gender equality, social inclusion and conflict transformation. However, it should be noted that disaggregated data and evidence on vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, are not sufficiently considered in these initiatives. The development of the advocacy strategy and objectives aims to avoid any negative impact on gender equality and social inclusion, taking care not to generate violence. The advocacy actions are adapted to the level of conflict involved, i.e., the management of natural resources, which can be resolved at local level. The campaign is organised at both local and national level, with grassroots RPO branches, and it is building alliances with various target partners, including associations of women lawyers and civil society organisations such as CRUS³⁴, CRA/CNA³⁵, RECOPA³⁶, ANOPER³⁷ or Balai citoyen. The [#HeforShe](#) campaign is also indirectly supported by SNV.

The implementation of the advocacy-lobbying strategy considers all points relating to social inclusion and gender equality. Evaluation of the action reveals that advocacy has helped to structure women in the various initiatives, and the RPOs are now working more closely together with clearly defined responsibilities.

The campaign's strengths include the building of solid alliances, a strong political will, a wide range of committed actors, a convincing argument and strong support from partners such as SNV and OXFAM. The campaign also adapts well to changes in the political and security context, as demonstrated by the ongoing collaboration in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso despite political shocks, regime changes, the creation by these countries of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) and their withdrawal from ECOWAS. Messages are carefully reformulated, and civil society organisations are very cautious in expressing their views on certain issues such as access to grazing land. Alternatives are being sought to deal with security challenges, particularly in the dairy sector (drop in production at dairy processing units, disruptions to the cold chain, etc.)

An encouraging step is that ECOWAS has defined a regional strategy for the promotion of local dairy value chains in West Africa («Milk Offensive») accompanied by a Priority Investment Programme (PIP)³⁸. Since April 2023, the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food ([RAAF](#)) has been implementing a Milk Offensive Support Project in West Africa ([PAOLAO](#)) with financial support from AFD.

The «My milk is local» campaign has not only increased the participation of family farms, but it has also rallied the region's dairy industries (small and medium-sized dairies) to the cause. As a result, in January 2022 the «Regional Multi-Stakeholder Platform to Support the Promotion of Local Milk in West Africa and the Sahel» was born, a cooperation tool for improving the business environment in the sector and facilitating access for family farms and private companies to high-quality human, financial and technological resources. Advocacy with governments, regional commissions and technical and financial partners is the Platform's main field of action.³⁹

However, challenges remain, particularly regarding the representation of women and young people, which is still low. To remedy this, it is recommended that their advocacy and lobbying capacities be strengthened.

For more information, consult the “Mon lait est local” Facebook page https://web.facebook.com/monlaitestlocal?_rdc=1&_rdr# (accessed 10 December 2025).

³⁴ CRUS - Regional Council of Sahel Unions

³⁵ CRA/CNA – Regional and National Chambers of Agriculture

³⁶ RECOPA - Pastoralism Communication Network

³⁷ ANOPER - National Association of Professional Organisations of Ruminant Breeders in Benin

³⁸ ECOWAS, Regional Offensive for local milk value chains promotion in West Africa - Priority Investment Programme Document, June 2020, https://ecowap.ecowas.int/media/ecowap/_file/document/2020_PIP_-_Regional_Offensive_Local_milk_EN.pdf, accessed 10 December 2025.

³⁹ Press release for World Milk Day 2024.

PART 5 GENDER- AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FOR ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

5.1 Background

SNV projects in the Sahel all aim to achieve a lasting improvement in the living conditions of vulnerable impact groups: increased resilience, the protection of livelihoods, food security, peaceful transhumance, social cohesion and stability, gender equality and inclusion. However, most of these projects operate in fragile and therefore volatile contexts. With the dual objective of avoiding the exacerbation of existing tensions or the creation of new ones (do no harm), and of safeguarding project teams, partners and impact groups, continuous monitoring of the context, of interactions between the context and the project, and of mitigation actions is required to enable adaptive management. Gender inequalities and/or the exclusion of vulnerable groups, which can be potential sources of tension or even conflict, should also be included in this monitoring. This «flexible» approach, which goes beyond the sole use of the logical framework and predefined or «expected» results, also seeks to highlight unanticipated outcomes, both positive and negative. It requires human and financial resources and skills, and it should be incorporated into the project from the planning stage onwards.

The aim of the sixth reflection workshop in Burkina Faso was to help improve the way in which gender equality, social inclusion and conflict sensitivity are considered by teams as part of monitoring-evaluation-learning (MEL) and adaptive project management.

Participants were expected to familiarise themselves with:

- GESI and conflict-sensitive monitoring, evaluation and learning principles
- GESI and conflict sensitive indicators
- Quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies to ensure adaptive, gender-specific and conflict-sensitive project management

The projects represented shared examples and experiences of GESI- and conflict-sensitive MEL based on the analysis of their projects' performance monitoring frameworks and theories of change. This helped to identify areas for attention and to formulate recommendations for improving the GESI and conflict sensitivity of their projects' MEL systems.

5.2 Monitoring changes

To achieve its objectives – such as improved living conditions and increased resilience – the project seeks to generate sustainable, inclusive and equitable change by influencing key actors, institutions and enabling conditions within the political, social, economic and cultural systems that shape the living conditions of impact groups.

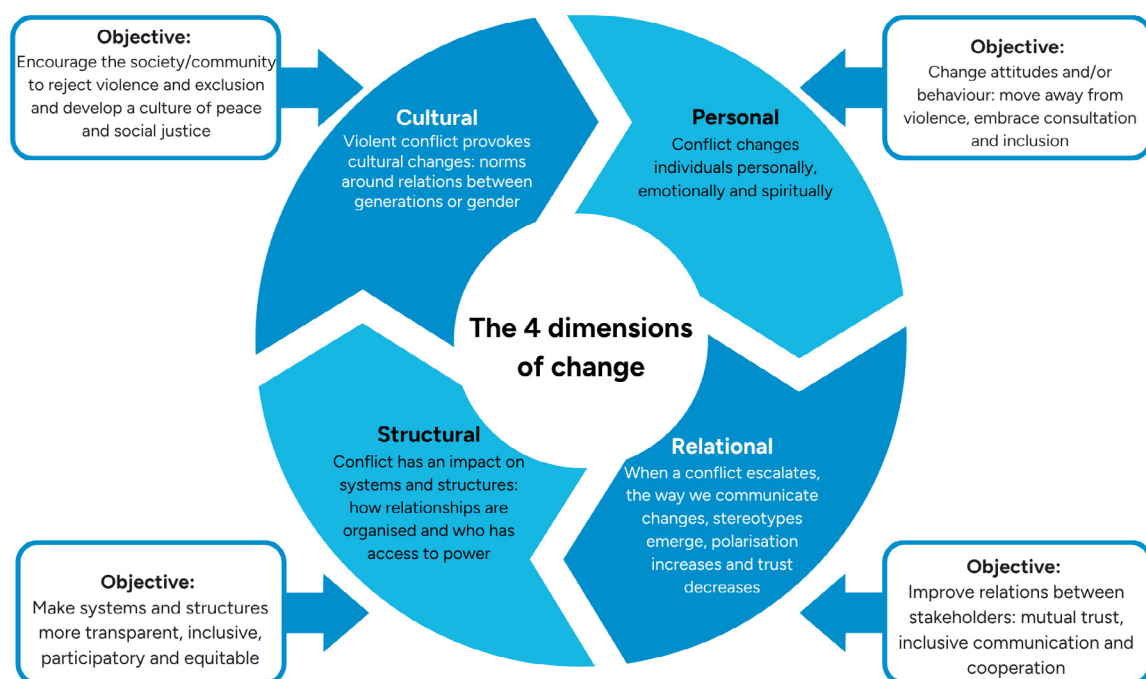
The project's interventions will bring about changes at several levels:

- Individuals
- Power relations between individuals
- Organisations and institutions
- Relationships between organisations
- Environmental factors

Thus, a theory of change is constructed by moving from the sphere of control to the sphere of influence and the sphere of interest. These expected (spheres of control), desired (spheres of influence) and hoped-for changes (spheres of interest) are «logical» consequences of the project, or interconnected outcomes linked through an intervention logic defined during project design and regularly revised during its implementation through flexible and adaptive management.

When a project specifically aims to support peacebuilding and conflict transformation, the four dimensions of the desired change – personal, relational, structural and cultural – can be summarised as follows:

The four dimensions of change in peacebuilding and conflict transformation



5.3 Objectives of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation have multiple objectives:

- Report and communicate to the donor, stakeholders and target audiences on progress towards expected and achieved results.
- Monitor the proper use of technical and financial resources to ensure accountability and efficiency.
- Gather information on a regular basis on key issues to readjust interventions and adapt to a changing context.
- Build the capacity of teams, partners and stakeholders for learning purposes.

5.4 The value of conflict and gender sensitivity in monitoring and evaluation

A project implemented in a gender- and conflict- blind manner focuses only on delivering expected results to achieve the intended changes. It does not pay attention to its possible contributions (positive and/or negative) to gender equality, social inclusion and peace, nor to unexpected or unintended changes. This increases the risk of inadvertently causing harm in these areas and may even compromise the achievement of the desired results and changes.

On the other hand, applying a gender- and conflict-sensitive perspective in MEL can improve programme quality and make interventions more effective

in promoting peaceful, inclusive and equitable development. Gender and conflict-sensitive MEL places emphasis on unexpected results and changes, to ensure that the intervention does no harm and contributes as much as possible - within its mandate - to gender equality, social inclusion and peace. These contributions are examined and systematically documented through the monitoring and evaluation system.

When a project explicitly aims to promote gender equality, inclusion and/or social cohesion, it will necessarily monitor progress towards its objectives in these areas by highlighting its contribution to addressing key drivers of conflict, exclusion and gender inequalities. However, interventions may still generate unexpected effects (positive and/or negative). It is therefore essential to be alert to these unforeseen results to avoid inadvertent harm and to make adjustments or adaptations that maximise positive impact.

Every project should therefore take a critical look at its own actions. The degree to which conflict sensitivity and GESI are considered in project monitoring and evaluation is summarised in the following diagram:

Monitoring and evaluation along the GESI/CSPM continuum

	Intervention Gender and conflict "blind"	Intervention Gender and conflict "sensitive"	Intervention 'for' gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion
Focus	Achieving the expected results	Taking account of unforeseen/ unexpected results Greater emphasis on monitoring	Achieving the objectives of gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion AND unexpected results
Goal	Improve the achievement of targeted changes	Ensure that the intervention does no harm (and contributes to peace, inclusion and gender equality where possible)	Improve the contribution of intervention to gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion AND ensure that the intervention does not harm
Contribution	Ignores the potential contribution of the intervention to peace, inclusion and gender equality and risks harming	Examines any contribution to peace, inclusion and gender equality	Examines whether an intervention affects the main causes or drivers of conflict, exclusion and gender inequality

It is useful for projects to situate themselves on this continuum in relation to their GESI/CSPM ambitions and their monitoring-evaluation practices. Of the six projects participating in Workshop 6 in Burkina Faso, five consider that their interventions aim to bring about change towards greater gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion, and none consider themselves to be «blind» to GESI and conflict. In fact, all of them are aiming for at least one change linked to one of these two objectives.

Objectives towards GESI and conflict sensitivity (CS) - SNV projects in Burkina Faso

MOPSS :

- GESI: Businesses, cooperatives and groups have access to new urban markets and support for women and young people.
- CS: Agropastoral and pastoral households and host communities take appropriate measures to improve the prevention and constructive management of community conflicts related to pastoral mobility.

ECDD

- GESI: Systematic involvement of all social strata in the implementation of project activities within the local water committees (LWC): social engineering, meetings, borehole construction work.
- CS: Users turn to endogenous mechanisms to resolve their disputes.

PGLRF

- GESI: Local forestry enterprises (LFEs) are developing value chains for non-timber forest products at regional level - bearing in mind that most of these products, including shea, are exploited by women.
- CS: The development of relevant tools that can be used by stakeholders at community and local level for the consensual management of local forest resources.

MODHEM+/DDC

- GESI: Peaceful, equitable and participatory management of pastoral resources.
- CS: Strengthening stakeholders' capacity for dialogue

5.5 Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles

From now on, we need to monitor several factors: changes in the context, the results of the intervention disaggregated according to actor dynamics, and the effects of our intervention on social cohesion. Monitoring itself can also cause harm, as it constitutes an intervention in its own right: selecting people to interview may expose them to risk, create frustrations for those who are never consulted, and respondents may experience survey fatigue when they are primarily concerned with meeting basic needs, such as securing food.

Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is broken down into four components, each with corresponding indicators:

1. Monitoring and evaluation of social cohesion:

- Example: What is the level of tension between farmers and herders over access to land and livelihoods?
- Indicators
of incidents of farmer/herder conflict
% of respondents who report tensions between farmers and herders in the target area

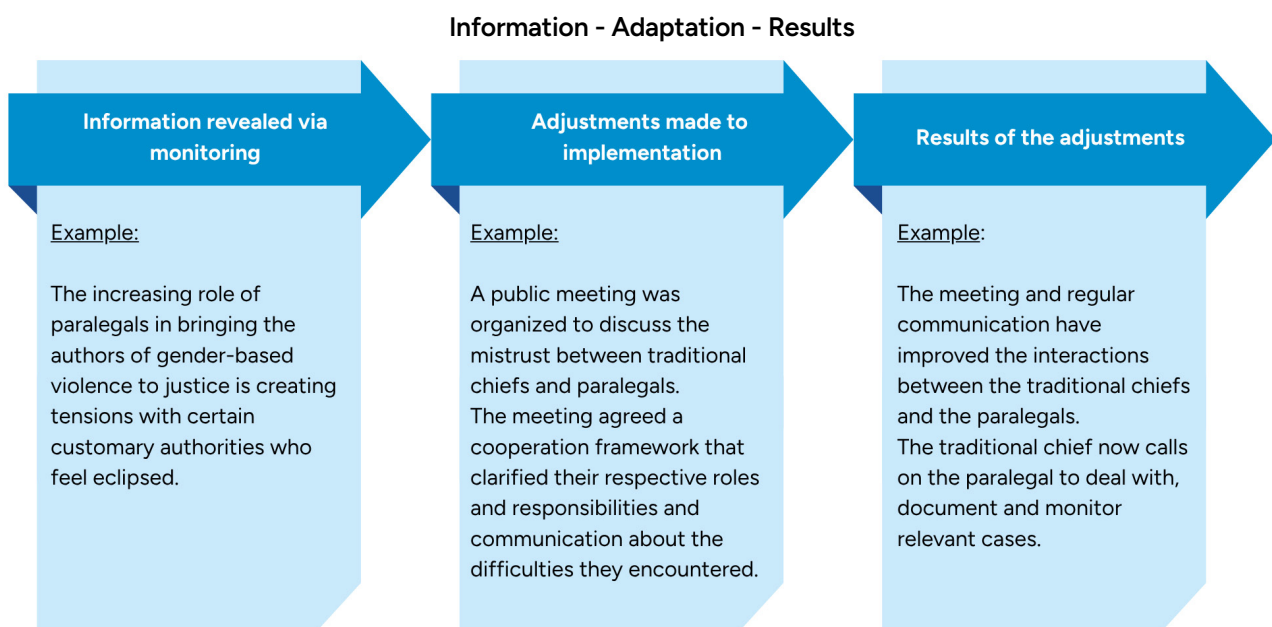
2. Monitoring and evaluating the effects of the context on the intervention

- Example: Are project staff able to visit all project intervention areas?
- Indicators
of missions postponed due to security incidents
% of accessible intervention municipalities

3. Monitoring and evaluating the effects of the intervention on social cohesion

- Example: To what extent is the project perceived as benefiting livestock herders rather than farmers (and reinforcing division)?
- Indicators
% of farmers and herders who perceive the project as benefiting both communities (broken down by group and by beneficiary/non-beneficiary)

4. Monitoring and evaluation of the adaptation process to minimise negative effects and maximise positive effects: what were the effects of the corrective measures taken, as in the example below:



Finally, it is important to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation process during data collection, surveys for example, does not create or accentuate tensions.

Projects should pay particular attention to the following aspects:

- Project **resources** can have a positive impact by saving lives, creating jobs to build resilience or bringing together antagonistic stakeholders to manage a new resource. However, they can also create unhealthy competition between local actors and encourage aid dependency by failing to ensure sustainability.
- The project may undermine or strengthen local **governance structures**: water committees, land commissions, transhumance management committees, agribusiness clusters, etc.
- Positive **ethical messages** include how the project treats all stakeholders as important by being inclusive. However, negative messages are communicated if the project creates or favours elites, reinforcing existing inequalities.

It should also be noted that:

- The more open the conflict, the less reliable the information that circulates (fear, uncontrolled dissemination on social networks). Setting up solid, secure informal channels becomes crucial, and personal safety becomes a priority.
- As stakeholders in the context, our interpretations of events are themselves biased by our experiences, beliefs, thoughts, influences, etc. It is therefore important to be aware of and manage our prejudices/stereotypes about the actors in our intervention context.
- We often prefer to hear and say that «everything went well,» whereas a conflict-sensitive approach calls for valuing that «the context changed, and we managed to adapt so as not to cause harm.» It's a change of perspective.

Organisations' codes of conduct provide guidance on how to behave with partners or impact groups. Individual teams can reflect on the responsible behaviour they should adopt, especially in contexts that are already fragile.

5.6 Indicators, GESI and conflict sensitivity

A monitoring-evaluation system is usually built to track changes and the achievement of results described in the project's logical framework and theory of change. Any gender and conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system should include indicators to measure the achievement of results in terms of gender equality, inclusion and social cohesion, and to monitor the interactions between the context and the project's interventions.

The collection of accurate information (statistical data) on target populations makes it possible to establish a baseline. **Quantitative indicators**, expressed in various forms such as percentages, proportions or average score, are used to monitor and assess progress towards results. Data are collected by project teams and field partners using appropriate tools and surveys and are centralised within the MEL system. Monitoring change can also be supported by **qualitative indicators** and data based on observations, perceptions and judgements. They aim to capture changes in attitudes, beliefs, motivations and behaviours among different actors. This data is collected through interviews, focus group discussions, or by collecting testimonials or stories of significant change.

With a view to adaptive management, regular monitoring should also reveal unintended and/or unforeseen impacts of the intervention on the context on the one hand, and of the context on project performance on the other. This enables corrective measures to be taken to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

Indicators for monitoring GESI

There are two types of indicators to measure progress towards more GESI:

- **Gender-specific indicators** are specific to women or men: for example, the maternal mortality rate, the fertility rate for women, or the incidence of prostate cancer in men.
- **Disaggregated data** are statistics that separate information by gender, age, ethnic group and socio-professional category.

Indicators can be disaggregated according to age, gender, socio-professional category or any other vulnerability factor relevant to the context at a given point in the life of the project. The gaps between a category of vulnerable or excluded people and the rest of the population targeted by the project will be compared. The aim is to reduce or even eliminate these inequalities.

Indicators and CSPM

Standard indicators can provide useful data for identifying both changes in the conflict context and interactions between the project and the context. However, they are not a panacea:

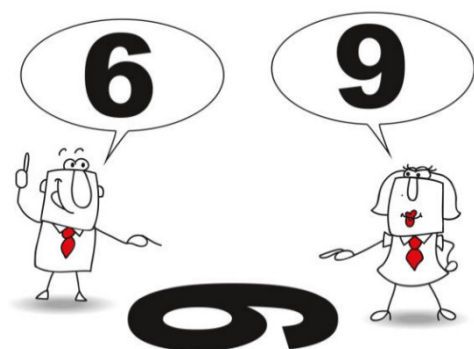
- Indicators are designed a priori and focus on the targeted/expected change. They are therefore unlikely to capture the unexpected.
- Indicators can help to identify whether a conflict-sensitivity problem exists, but they will not be sufficient to determine causality, or to identify actions to mitigate the problem. The same reasoning applies in the case of gender inequality or increased discrimination.

Disaggregation by social group or geographical area

can enable standard indicators to provide information on the potential distributive effects of a strategy and highlight potential negative effects: for example, one group benefits at the expense of another.

Perception-based indicators

- Knowing the perceptions of the various stakeholders is essential to understanding the effects of the project on conflict, inclusion and gender roles/relationships.
- Perception indicators make it possible to determine the extent to which the results are a source of grievance and/or exacerbate inequalities.
- The data on perceptions reflect the way in which personal, relational, structural and cultural changes are perceived by different groups.

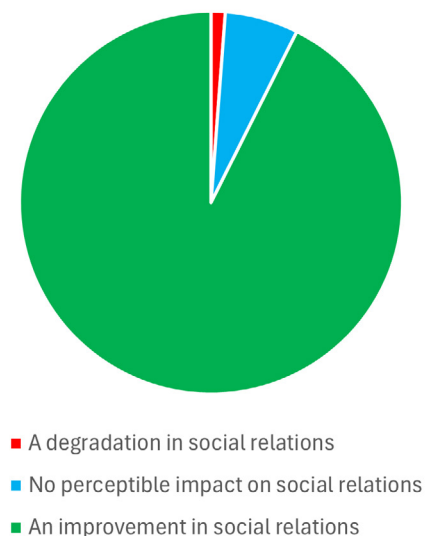


Example: Survey on the impact of MOPSS activities on the social relations of young entrepreneurs

- What impact has MOPSS support had on social relations within your household?
- What has changed in your household in terms of social relations and tensions?

The survey targeted young entrepreneurs only. It would be interesting to know whether the perceptions of other members of their household are consistent or inconsistent.

What was the impact of MOPSS support on social relationships within your household? (81 responses)

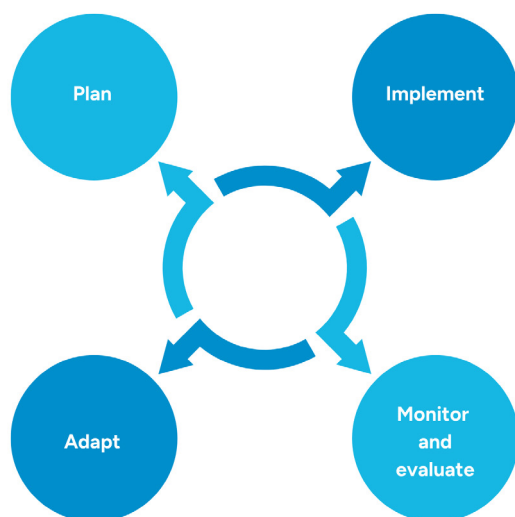


Examples of GESI and conflict sensitivity indicators proposed by some SNV projects in Burkina Faso:

Indicateurs	PGLRF	MODHEM+/DDC	RESCOM	MOPSS	ECDD
Changes in the cohesion/conflict context	Number of municipalities affected by the security crisis	# Conflicts between farmers and herders in the programme's intervention regions	Degree of acceptance of IDPs by host communities	Number of decisions taken for or against cross-border and internal pastoral mobility	% of conflicts between users linked to water resources
Impact of the context on the project	Number of village forestry enterprises with access to forest resources	Number of field missions reprogrammed or cancelled Number of inaccessible municipalities	% of activities not completed on time due to insecurity	Number of inaccessible municipalities Number of activities relocated or postponed due to insecurity	% of activities relocated or modified due to the context in the intervention communities
Impact of the project on the cohesion context	Number of functional forest area management structures Communities' perception of their level of involvement in forest resource management	Level of appreciation of mobile payment by project partners (disaggregated by gender and age) Perceptions of the project's contribution to conflict resolution (disaggregated by socio-professional category)	% of men, women, young people, IDPs and hosts who are confident in their relations with other members of the community	Number and % of vulnerable pastoralist and agropastoralist households, by sex and age, using protection and constructive conflict management services % of households that report satisfaction with how the needs of their group are considered	% of users, disaggregated by sex and age, who feel that the project contributes to the peaceful and equitable management of water resources
Impact of the project on GESI	Number of village forest enterprises created or consolidated (disaggregated by gender and age)	Proportion of women participating in local consultation frameworks for pastoralism and natural resource management	% of households (hosts, IDPs), including those headed by women/young people, having increased their income thanks to new jobs and market access	Number of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises run by successful women that are involved in the production, trade and sustainable consumption of foodstuffs	% representation of users in positions of responsibility within local water committees (LWC) Number or % of women in positions of responsibility within LWCs

5.7 Tools for monitoring and evaluating unforeseen changes and adaptive management

Monitoring and evaluation that is sensitive to GESI and conflict pays particular attention to unexpected changes, as this information is essential for **adaptive management**.



The context is dynamic and evolves during the implementation period. Its evolution can influence the feasibility and relevance of the project.

The changes identified through the monitoring and evaluation system may reveal unexpected effects - positive and/or negative, intended or unintended. These impacts, which are often difficult to capture and attribute to the project, require the introduction of measures to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

To achieve this, it is necessary to move beyond the linear and predictable nature of the logical framework and adopt more qualitative and systemic monitoring and evaluation methods. This requires a genuine paradigm shift.



This orientation, and the shift it entails, is particularly relevant in dynamic and fragile contexts that require constant adaptation. It is also highly relevant in social contexts where it is not possible to predict how different actors will respond to interventions.

The approach is based on abduction: a type of reasoning that consists of establishing the most likely cause of an observed fact and stating as a working hypothesis that the fact in question probably results from this cause.

It is a participatory process involving both core and contributing actors, fostering learning, reflection, capacity building and empowerment. It is a decision-making tool.

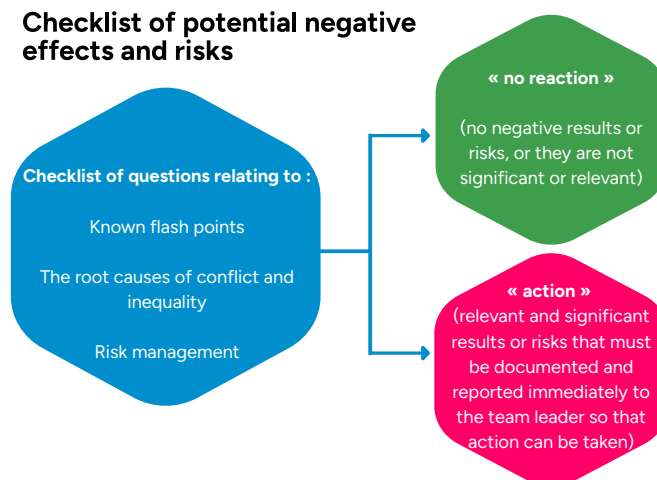
The following tools are interesting in this respect:

- Checklist of potential adverse effects and risks
- Feedback and complaints mechanisms (FCM)
- Scenarios
- Outcome mapping
- Most significant change (MSC) methodology

5.7.1 Checklist of potential adverse effects and risks

This method involves the regular review of a set of questions, but without the formal establishment of a baseline or formal data collection. The questions focus on potential negative effects and possible risks, including safety risks to teams, partners and impact groups.

Checklist of potential negative effects and risks



Examples of questions in relation to **known flash points**:

- Do the targeting criteria coincide with the dividing lines of a specific ethnic, economic, religious or political group? What tensions exist regarding targeting and selection processes?
- Are there any perceptions of bias in the distribution of project aid or services?
- Are there any ways in which our programming has become embroiled in conflict over territorial or land claims?

- What cultural norms are challenged by the intervention? Who supports these changes and who opposes them?
- Are we representing a particular group in the conflict? Are we representing our ideals of gender equality and social inclusion?
- How do our purchases affect the local economy? How does this affect conflict and/or gender inequality?

Examples of questions relating to the **root causes** of conflict and inequality:

- Have Group X's claims to and control over resources been strengthened or legitimised because of the project?
- Has working with displaced communities legitimised or helped to make their forced movement permanent? How does this affect their relations with host communities?
- Have corrupt practices been reinforced by the project, or have good governance practices been used and demonstrated?

Examples of questions relating to **risk management**:

- Have any of the project's assets been destroyed or looted?
- Has the infrastructure created by the project been abandoned, vandalised or destroyed?
- Was there reduced efficiency or effectiveness?
- Has the coverage of the project been affected or restricted?
- Have links with stakeholders and project coordination been affected?
- Has there been any impact on the reputation of those involved?

5.7.2 Feedback and complaints mechanisms

These mechanisms are used to gather feedback from communities, to demonstrate accountability to stakeholders and inform project adaptation where necessary. They can provide useful real-time data to highlight areas of tension and how the project is contributing to conflict or social inequalities. Users of the mechanism need to know how the feedback is handled and receive a response detailing how their feedback or complaint has been dealt with and acted upon: changes to interventions, for example in the selection of impact groups, investigations into sensitive complaints, etc.

Receiving and managing a complaint - Example from the PGLRF project in Burkina Faso

The Local Governance of Forest Resources project (PGLRF) was implemented by the consortium comprising [TREE AID](#) (lead), SNV and [UNCDF](#) in 20 of the country's communes. SNV contributed to objective three, namely the development of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), shea in particular, to empower women collectors and processors. The support process involved raising awareness in villages around the forest massifs, assisting organisations with a view to formalising them in accordance with the [OHADA](#) act⁴⁰, capacity building and financial support to enable village forest enterprises (VFEs), the first level of structuring, to access the market through their business development plan (BDP), the development plans of the umbrella organisations, support through the construction of processing units and storage warehouses for NTFPs (shea, liana, etc.) and support for the organic certification of NTFPs. The municipality served as the entry point for all these initiatives.

The process for providing financial support to VFEs was as follows:

- Support in drawing up business development plans
- Radio broadcasts by the Regional Chamber of Agriculture (RCA) in several languages for at least one week
- Set up of a selection committee made up of the municipality, the RCA, the environmental services, the municipal technical agents, the rural entrepreneurship resource centres (CREER) and the SNV team, and the definition and validation of the selection criteria
- Submission of BDP applications to the municipality
- Meeting of the BDP selection committee
- Selection of the BDPs and display of results
- Signature of a co-financing agreement between the VFE and SNV for management of the grant
- Funding (management training, account opening, cheque handover by the municipality, support and monitoring to rebuild working capital)

⁴⁰ Act for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa

- After the BDPs had been selected in one commune, and before the results had been published, the SNV team received a letter from the municipal officer in charge of day-to-day affairs. The letter reported the dissatisfaction of village X, whose BDP had come third in the selection process. The complaint stemmed from the fact that the first two selected VFEs belonged to the same family. In response, the SNV team wrote a letter explaining the process, clarifying certain inconsistencies in the information that had circulated and attaching all documents shared since the beginning of the process. A meeting was subsequently organised in Ouahigouya to allow the actors involved to exchange views and harmonise their positions. The complaint was managed and resolved by the Selection Committee and a representative of the complainants. A consensus was reached based on the municipal officer's proposal to replace one of the initially selected VFEs with the VFE from village X, before the results were published.

Lessons learned

Despite a participatory process, the premature disclosure of selection results by committee members before their official publication revealed a weakness in the process. To avoid similar disputes that could potentially escalate into conflict, the following points of attention should be considered in the future:

- Conduct more thorough background checks on VFEs to prevent situations of perceived unfairness or conflict of interest.
- Have selection committee members sign confidentiality and conflict of interest declarations to prevent information leaks before the results are released.
- Ensure clear and proactive communication about the selection process while remaining flexible and triangulating information received, to prevent misunderstanding and tensions.
- Reinforce the role of the municipality as the primary entry point for the project and communicate this clearly to all local stakeholders.
- Strengthen communication and coordination between consortium members for this type of process.
- Ensure that project management is promptly informed in the event of a complaint and seek the advice of conflict management experts so that situations can be properly assessed and appropriate resolution strategies adopted.

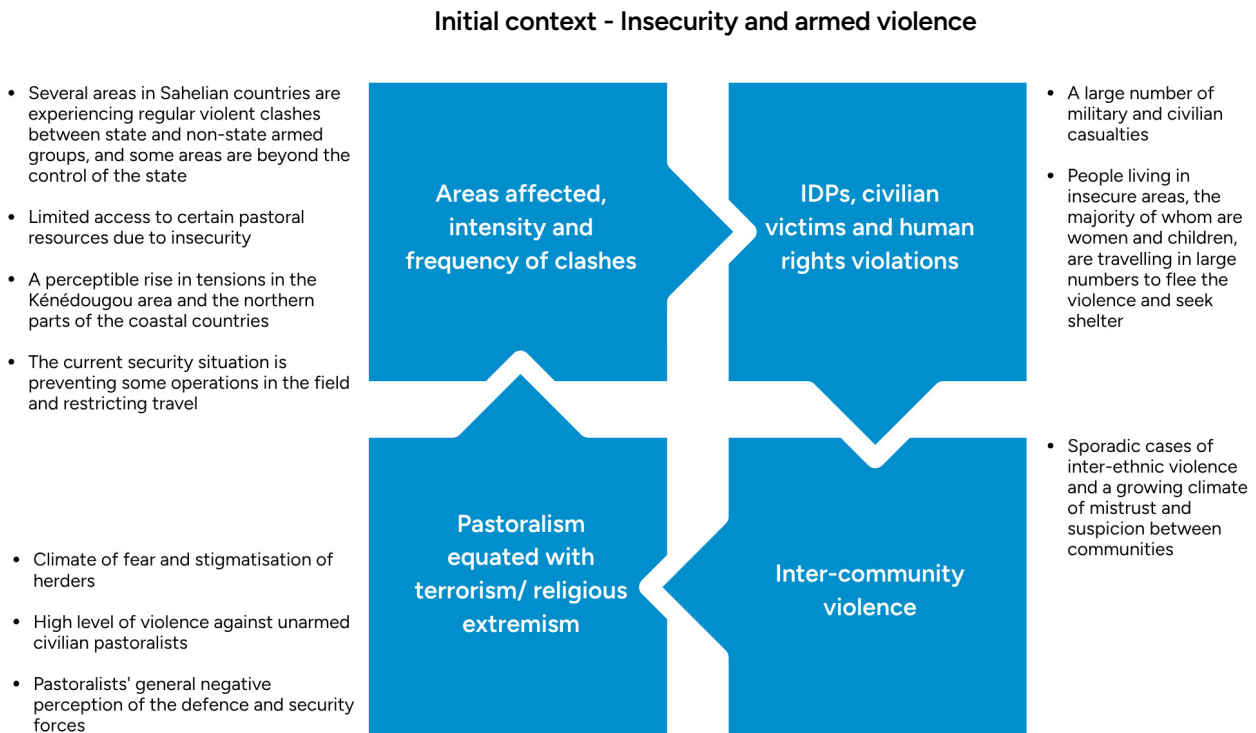
5.7.3 Scenarios

In an uncertain and unstable environment, it is necessary to anticipate possible futures and prepare for them in the present. Scenarios provide a means of checking whether strategic and operational decisions remain relevant. By regularly reviewing these scenarios, it is possible to decide whether operational or strategic plans need to be revised.

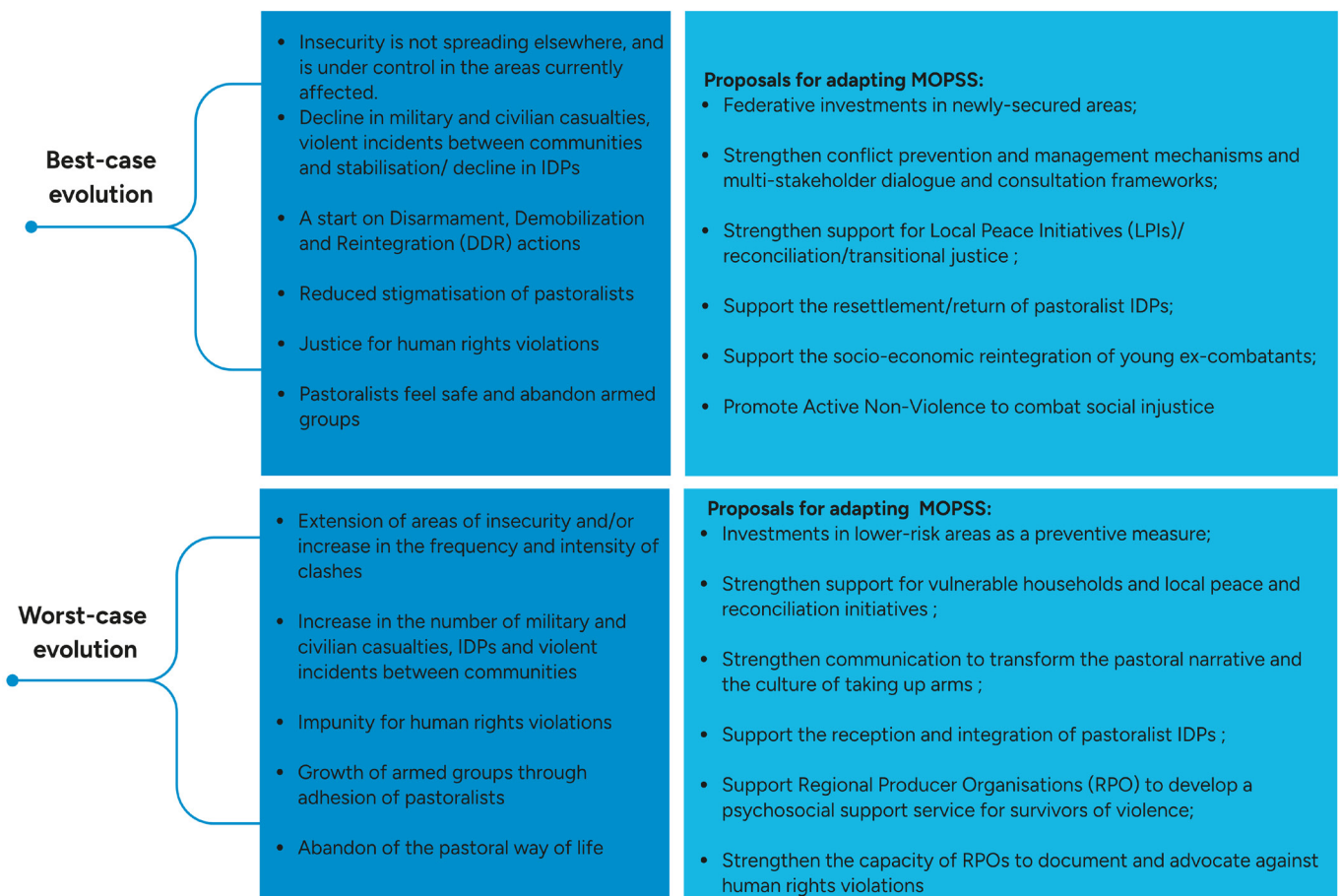
Based on the initial analysis of the context, two questions should be asked:

- How might the context change (positively and/or negatively)?
- If these changes were to occur, how could the project adapt to remain relevant and effective?

Example of a scenario developed as part of the MOPSS project:



Scenario regarding insecurity and armed violence



5.7.4 Revision of the theory of change

A review of the theory of change can highlight not only ineffective interventions, but also cases where projects inadvertently contribute to conflict or gender inequality. The process involves a close examination of all expected outcomes and their corresponding theories of change.

The guiding questions are as follows:

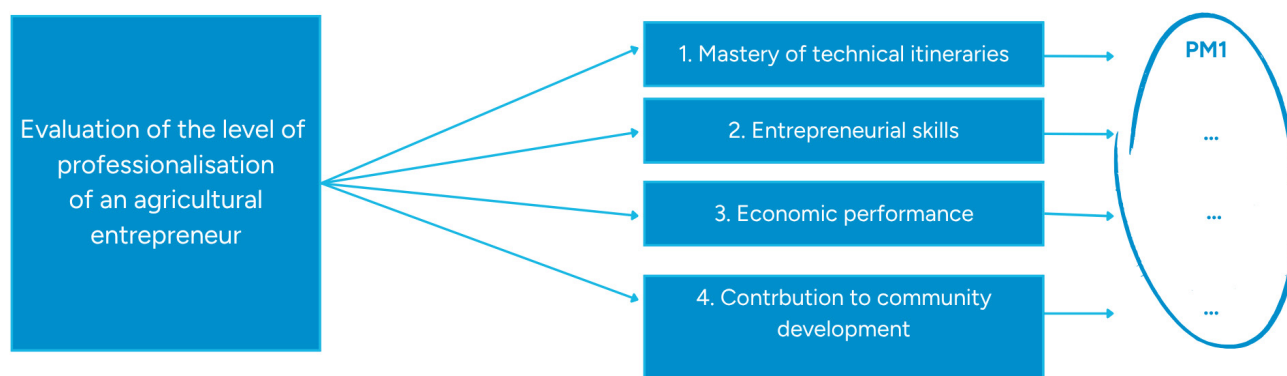
- How does the theory of change contribute to related results in the results hierarchy?
- What is the proof of the result?
- Have the activities and results at the lower level led to the results expected at the higher level?
- Have there been any changes in the context?
- What other external factors could have contributed to the result?
- What could have made this theory of change and/or the results more successful?

5.7.5 Outcome mapping

Outcome Mapping is a planning, monitoring and evaluation method. It is based on a positive projection of the desired change in terms of vision and mission and the induced changes or outcomes required among the intervention's direct partners (the boundary partners). Outcomes are defined as changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities or actions of individuals, groups and organisations with whom a development intervention works directly.

Outcome Mapping enables an intervention to measure its influence on the progression of change. It can be done prospectively, by tracking and monitoring predefined changes or signals that characterise the gradual achievement of the targeted changes among direct partners, using progress markers.

Examples of progress markers (PM)



Source: EJASA Project, SNV Benin

It can also be carried out **retrospectively** to learn lessons, for example through workshops bringing together the project team and direct partners, by assessing the changes achieved by areas of change and by the actors involved, their relevance in relation to the project's objectives and the project's contribution, to draw lessons learned. In this case, the approach is

referred to as "outcome harvesting". It also helps to rethink and adapt action strategies and organisational practices, for example, towards greater gender equality in relations between men and women, better access to resources and a more equitable sharing of task and responsibilities.

Outcome mapping

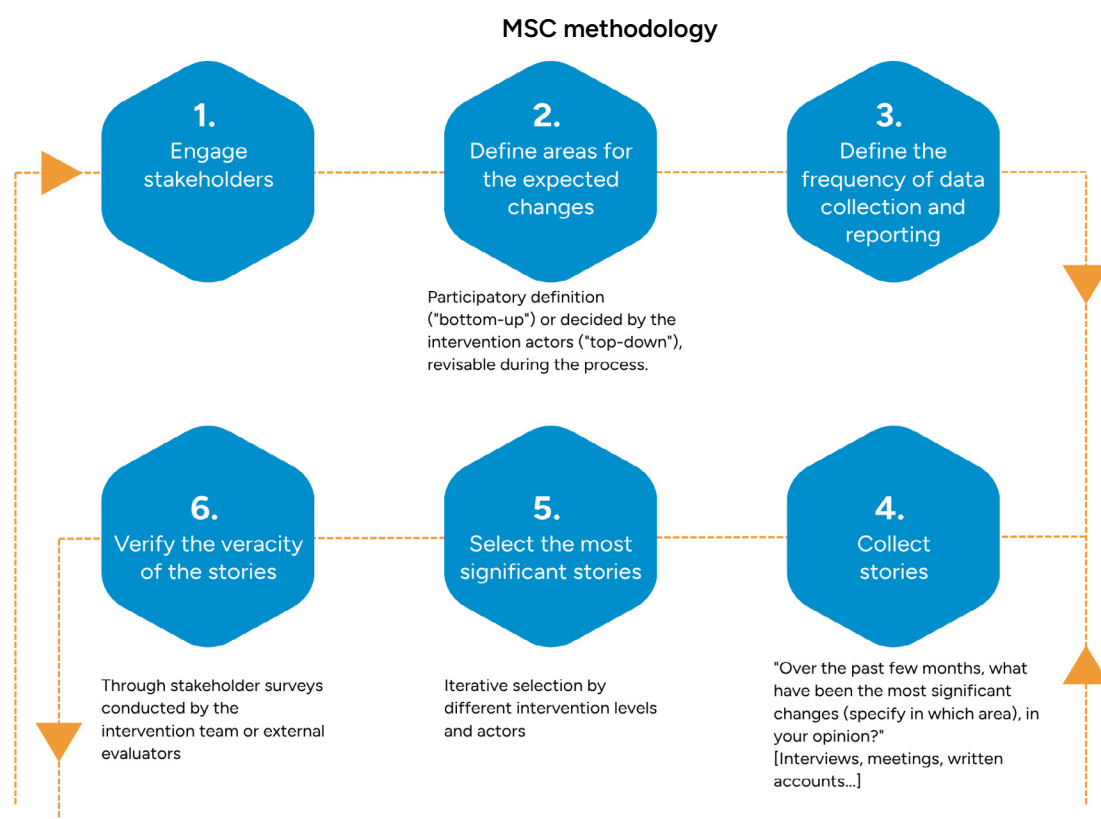


Source : *Taking action for change: a methodological guide to supporting complex change processes: analyze, plan, monitor and evaluate* (F3E/COTA April 2014)

5.7.6 Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology

This is a participatory monitoring and evaluation approach, that involves multiple stakeholders in deciding which types of changes should be documented and in analysing the information collected. The MSC methodology does not use predefined indicators, particularly those that are meant to be counted or measured. It consists of collecting «stories» from partners or impact groups about who did what, when, why, and why this change is considered significant.

The stories are prompted by a guiding question such as "Over the past few months, what have been the most significant changes [specify in which area], in your opinion?" and can be collected through interviews, meetings, or focus groups. These stories are gathered by the intervention team or external evaluators. The stories are then shared with partners or impact groups for validation, then reviewed and selected through an iterative process to retain only the most significant ones.



Source: F3E Guide, April 2014. See also Rick Davis and Jess Dart, *The "Most significant change" (MSC) technique – a guide to its use*, April 2005

5.8 Good practice

A reflection on good practice in gender- and conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation can be carried out within project teams. The key points to bear in mind are as follows:

For gender equality and social inclusion (GESI):

- **Systematically integrate clear, realistic and sufficiently ambitious targets into the expected changes:** % of women, young people within the target population. A specific target should be defined for each vulnerable group.
- **Define measurable expected results in relation to GESI:** for example, reduction of inequalities in a specific sector, better access to resources and services, greater autonomy, enhanced influence and decision-making power, etc.
- **Integrate these areas of change into the logical framework,** the Theory of Change (TOC).
- **Define the desired (qualitative) changes for a particular stakeholder:** e.g., more balanced sharing of tasks and decision-making within a household, services (agricultural advisory, financial services) better adapted to the needs, constraints and interests of women and young people, more favourable policies and regulations for these groups, etc.
- **Include disaggregated and gender-specific indicators** systematically at all levels of expected results.

- **Develop specific tools to monitor this change:** e.g., the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).
- **Plan for qualitative methodologies and indicators** (such as progress markers or MSC) to monitor changes in attitudes, behaviours, relationships, etc.

For conflict sensitivity (CS) :

- **It is not necessary or feasible to demonstrate attribution** in assessing the degree of conflict sensitivity of an intervention: demonstrating the contribution is sufficient.
- For conflict sensitivity, **it is important to understand the causal mechanisms** both to decide how to mitigate negative effects and to improve future practices.
- Indicators are useful for monitoring conflict-sensitivity but are not the only source of information or evidence. **Indicators are not suitable for identifying unintended and unforeseen consequences.**
- To identify the unintended and unforeseen effects of a programme, **an open survey with a range of targeted and non-targeted groups** is appropriate (e.g., through a more open feedback mechanism).
- It is important to **monitor the results of adaptations made** to minimise negative effects and maximise positive ones.

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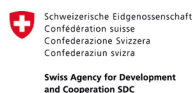
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