



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
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**Coastal zone management & equality between
women and men**

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What gender equality issues are relevant in coastal zone areas?

A complex set of environmental, economic and social issues underlie the future of coastal zones. Estimates vary, but some organisations point out that the percentage of the world's population living in these areas could be as high as 65%. According to the FAO, "unless appropriate action is taken by governments and users of coastal resources, population pressures and associated levels of economic activity will further increase the already evident overexploitation of coastal resources and environment degradation of many coastal habitats."^{*}

An understanding of a specific coastal zone is incomplete without a clear understanding of the differences and inequalities between and among women and men – their priorities, activities, resources, and access to decision-making.

- **Women and men tend to do different work in coastal zones.** There is generally a marked gender division of labour in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism and other economic activities in coastal areas.

One of the most documented differences between the work of women and men in coastal zones is the segregated nature of the fishing industry. Studies show that men tend to fish offshore or in major inland water bodies, while women tend fish close to shore. As well, women tend to be more involved than men in post-harvest activities, particularly in small-scale fisheries. These differences are important, as women's tasks have often not been counted in economic analyses or not received the same level of investment (for example, in terms of technological support, credit, or training)

Women's economic activities may also be more difficult to categorise than men's. Women tend to juggle multiple activities (such as combining aquaculture with vegetable gardens or fish smoking), whereas men's work is often clearly focused on one set of inter-related activities.

- **Women tend to have less access than men to formal decision-making authorities and be**

less involved in local decision-making

structures. They may have less contact and experience dealing with local governments or ministry officials. This imbalance may mean that women are not consulted on coastal plans or that they may have difficulties in ensuring that their interests are represented.

Although women's political participation tends to be higher at local rather than national levels, women are still the minority decision-makers in political processes.

- **Women and men have different access to and control over land and water in coastal zones.**

Although all generalisations should be tested and confirmed in each situation, there is a tendency for men to have more secure land and water rights than women. There may be conflicts between use rights and legal rights or traditional tenure and formal tenure. Women tend to have access to both land and water through male family member (husband, father, or brother) rather than hold titles in their own names. Tenure has proved to be important as it influences who can make formal decisions about land use, who is consulted on development plans, and who has access to other supportive services (credit and extension, for example).

- **Women and men tend to have different domestic responsibilities.** It is women more than men who tend to balance responsibility for the home (for example, food preparation, childcare, and cleaning) with their responsibilities to earn incomes. These responsibilities may limit the time women have available to pursue opportunities as well as their mobility. They also influence what women define as priorities for local investment (women may put clean water ahead of road construction, for example).

- **Other, more general, differences and inequalities between women and men may also be relevant.** Depending on the specific circumstances, it may be important to understand and investigate other gender equality issues. For example, biases in the educational system may mean that illiteracy is more prevalent among women than men. This could make it more difficult for women to participate in training activities. Or there may be cultural restrictions on women's mobility that could also limit participation.

^{*} FAO (1998). *Integrated Coastal Area Management and Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries*. Environment and Natural Resources Service. Available at <http://www.fao.org/sd/epdirect/epre0048.htm>.

Research and Research Gaps
<p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development Studies Unit (1995). <i>Women, Men and Living Aquatic Resources: A Gender Perspective on Development of Coastal Areas</i>. Gender Discussion Paper Series No. 2, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University. ▪ The Food and Agriculture Organisation has sponsored research on women in the fishing sector (with a focus on Africa). See their website: <http://www.fao.org/gender>. <p>Gaps</p> <p>Despite research on gender equality issues in fields such as fisheries, there are major gaps in information that would assist in the application of a gender equality perspective across the breadth of coastal zone management initiatives. Two types of research are important: 1) attention to gender equality issues in all studies, and 2) specific research on gender issues. Specific areas could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sida has identified case studies as a research priority ("To bridge the experience and methodological gaps in participatory research and project implementation, more social research and methodology development, particularly tied to case studies, is required."). All case studies should include sex-disaggregated data and incorporate a gender equality perspective. ▪ Research in specific sectors could also support greater understanding. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender-sensitive urban planning and coastal conservation. For example, sewerage from coastal cities is a serious threat to the coastal environment. Can a gender perspective assist in the understanding of this issue and in the development of solutions? There may be a gender division of labour in how coastal water resources are used. - Gender relations and the use of mangrove forests, coral reefs and seagrass beds. Do women and men use these resources differently? How can strategies for more sustainable use be improved through an understanding of the work that women and men do and an appropriate targeting of training and communications messages? - Ecotourism: Are women and men involved in different activities? Is it appropriate to target conservation messages? ▪ Women as stakeholders in coastal zone management: Sida documentation clearly highlights the importance of participatory processes, yet evidence now clearly shows that women and men face different obstacles if they are to participate in a meaningful manner. There is a need for research into strategies to ensure that all voices are heard.

Gender Equality Issues Priority Areas	
Priority areas identified in the Sida publication <i>Marine Coastal Zone Initiatives</i> (1997)	Gender Equality Issues
<p>Increasing understanding and awareness of coastal zone issues: "Political commitment as well as public awareness are essential elements to improve coastal and marine resource management."</p>	<p>Given the differences between and among women and men, communications messages should be specifically targeted to ensure they reach the intended audience. For example, if a programme seeks to end the dumping of raw sewage into a creek, it will have to reach to people (women or men) who are actually doing the dumping.</p>
<p>Legal and incentive frameworks: "It is particularly important to develop legal and incentive frameworks which impel stakeholders to 'internalise externalities.'"</p>	<p>Where local communities are involved in monitoring and enforcing regulations, an understanding of the gender dynamics within the community may be useful (for example, who makes what decisions and who does what work)</p>
<p>Institutional framework and capacity: "At the sectoral level, the key is to break down sectoral barriers by getting sector agencies to recognise their impact on other sectors, communities and the environment by taking a broad sector approach. This requires coastal zone and environmental impact training, as well as mandates and incentive frameworks which drive agencies to consider sectoral issues from a more integrated ... perspective."</p>	<p>An important aspect of institutional capacity that is often overlooked is the capacity to work with a gender perspective. How can ministries and community organisations gain experience and the tools they need to understand when and how gender differences and inequalities are relevant and then how to develop strategies to deal with these issues?</p>
<p>Information and communication: "Improving communication between scientists, managers and resource users, and collecting key information remain two of the most important challenges to effective coastal management... Several organisations... are designing rapid assessment techniques, which include resource assessments by local users, to quickly provide key information to decision makers."</p>	<p>Research into socio-economic aspects has been identified as a priority. The sectors (and tasks) dominated by women often do not receive the same level of consideration or investment.</p> <p>As mentioned above, it is now clear that participatory methodologies require special attention to gender differences and inequalities to ensure that both women's and men's views are heard.</p>

Prepared for Sida by B. Woroniuk and J. Schalkwyk, December 1998

Sida Equality Prompt # 12: Coastal Zone Management and Equality Between Women and Men