

Terms of Reference

Title of Project: How do forest NGOs deal with gender in their work?

Background and rationale:

For over twenty years, Fern has been campaigning to shape and use EU policies for the benefit of forests and the communities who live in and use them. Our campaigns are shaped by five values; collaboration, inclusion, being evidence-based, challenging (offering solutions as well as pointing out problems), and independent.

Fern works closely with forest and rights NGOs around the world; some large, some small. Some work directly with communities, some work to shape national or international policy.

Fern is aware that the gender aspect of our work has not been given a high enough priority. We want to put that right and, in line with our values, are keen to ensure that any work to help Fern improve also supports the rest of the movement working to protect forests and the rights of communities who rely on them. Fern is therefore seeking an expert consultant to research how efforts to improve gender justice can be integrated into the work of forest NGOs.

Aim of the report:

Gender issues are essentially about power imbalances, and this is as true in forest activities and forest policies as any other sphere. There already exists a large body of literature about gender and forests (most recently this [report from CIFOR](#)). There is less readily accessible information about the extent to which the academic literature has been translated in to action by forest campaigning and advocacy organisations.

This report aims to fulfil an internal need within Fern while simultaneously shedding new light on how concern for gender issues are integrated (or not) across the forest NGO community, with a view to informing practice in the future.

The desire is to move beyond assessing the extent to which organisations record gender-disaggregated data in their work, and examine how (and if) organisations consider the gendered implications of their advocacy positions, their strategies and their work in general. Ideally it would also include examples of where this has led to improvements in gender justice.

Research content:

The study should look at a number of NGOs active in different aspects of forest campaigning (primarily drawn from Fern's partners, but if there is time and agreement between Fern and the consultant, this could be extended). Respondents must include at least two NGOs active in each of the following:

- Forest community engagement
- Public facing campaigning
- Policy advocacy/campaigning.

The study should aim to answer the following questions:

- To what extent are gender issues integrated into strategic planning and practice in different kinds of forest NGOs?
- Do forest NGOs see gender issues as relevant to their work?
- Are there any structures, systems or practices which NGOs use to ensure they are not 'gender blind'?
- To what extent do forest NGOs engage with gender-focussed NGOs in joint campaigning/advocacy?

The report should offer conclusions/recommendations for forest NGOs seeking to better integrate gender into their work.

Methodology:

To be agreed between consultant and Fern. It is anticipated that the research will include a desk review as well as key informant interviews (over skype). It is not anticipated that this work will involve travel except to one of Fern's offices (Belgium/UK).

Deliverables:

- A draft work plan outlining timeline, refined methodology, clarification of conceptual framework.
- A final paper incorporating findings and recommendations, addressing each of the key questions outlined above.
- A presentation to Fern staff on the core findings and recommendations of the study.

Indicative timeline:

15 days full time work, with a draft report delivered by mid July 2017.