



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES:

IUCN RESEARCH TO INFORM STRENGTHENED, HARMONIZED ACTION AND RESULTS

Gender and Environment Statistics Expert Group Meeting – Bangkok, Thailand



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity.

It is rooted in structural gender inequalities, patriarchy, and power imbalances.

GBV is typically characterized by the use or threat of physical, psychological, sexual, economic, legal, political, social and other forms of control and/or abuse.

GBV impacts individuals across the life course and has direct and indirect costs to families, communities, economies, global public health, and development.



GBV IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

IUCN identified a knowledge gap at the intersection of GBV and environment, across issues and sectors.

A research process has aimed to gather information to fill this gap, establishing a 360-degree view of linkages and creating a knowledge base.

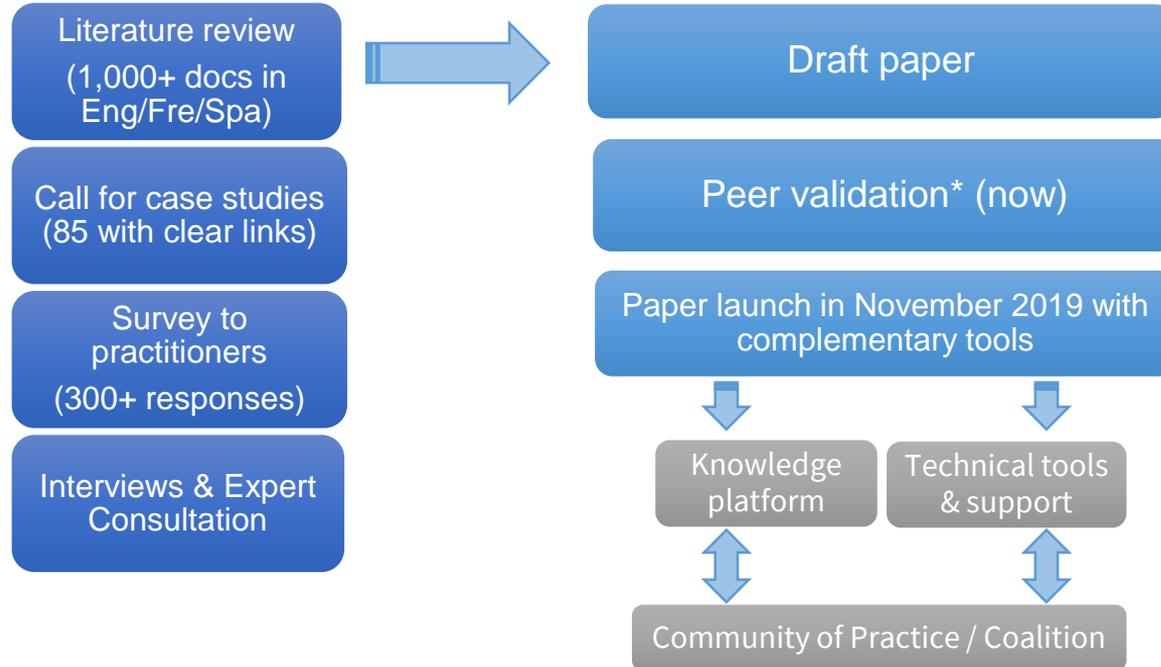
A paper will launch in November 2019, geared to:

- environment decision-makers and practitioners;
- gender equality and GBV experts;
- researchers; and
- the broader sustainable development community.

In the meantime and as a matter of urgency, action is needed.



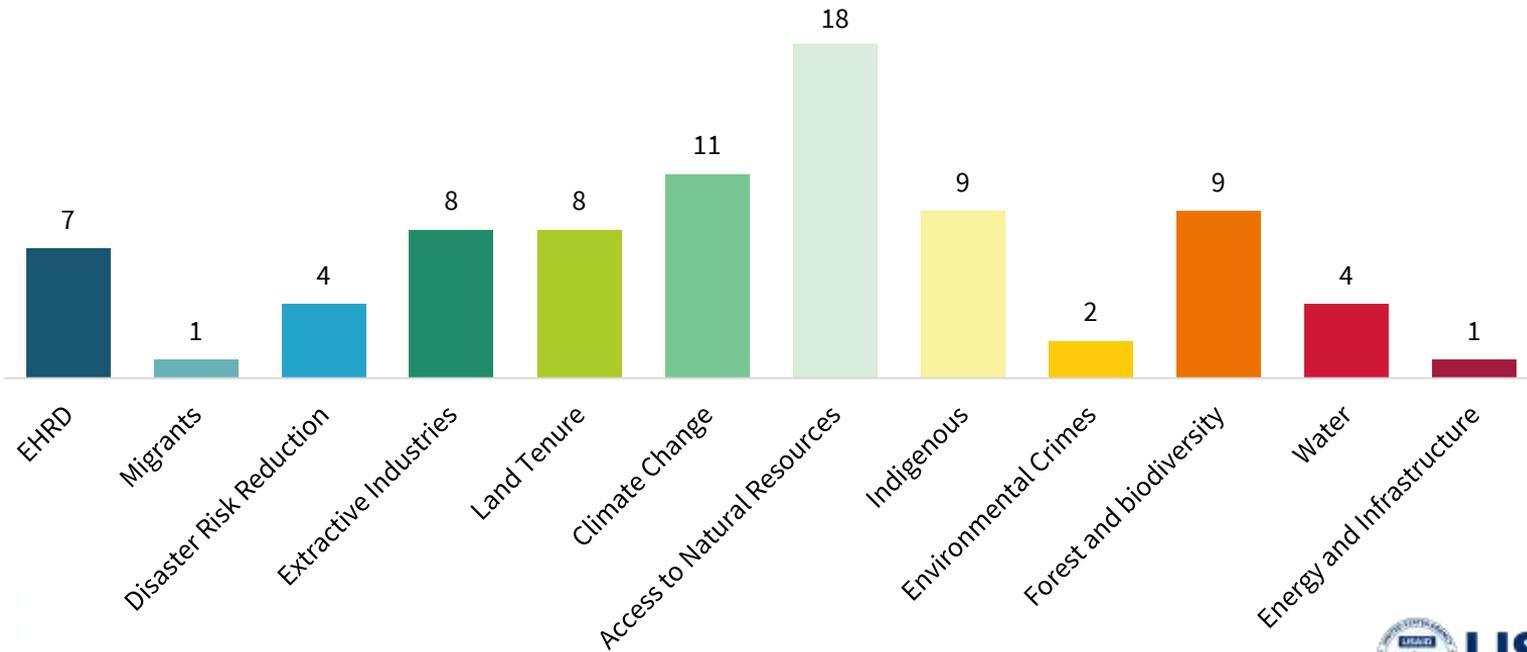
RESEARCH PROCESS





CALL FOR CASE STUDIES (APRIL-MAY 2018)

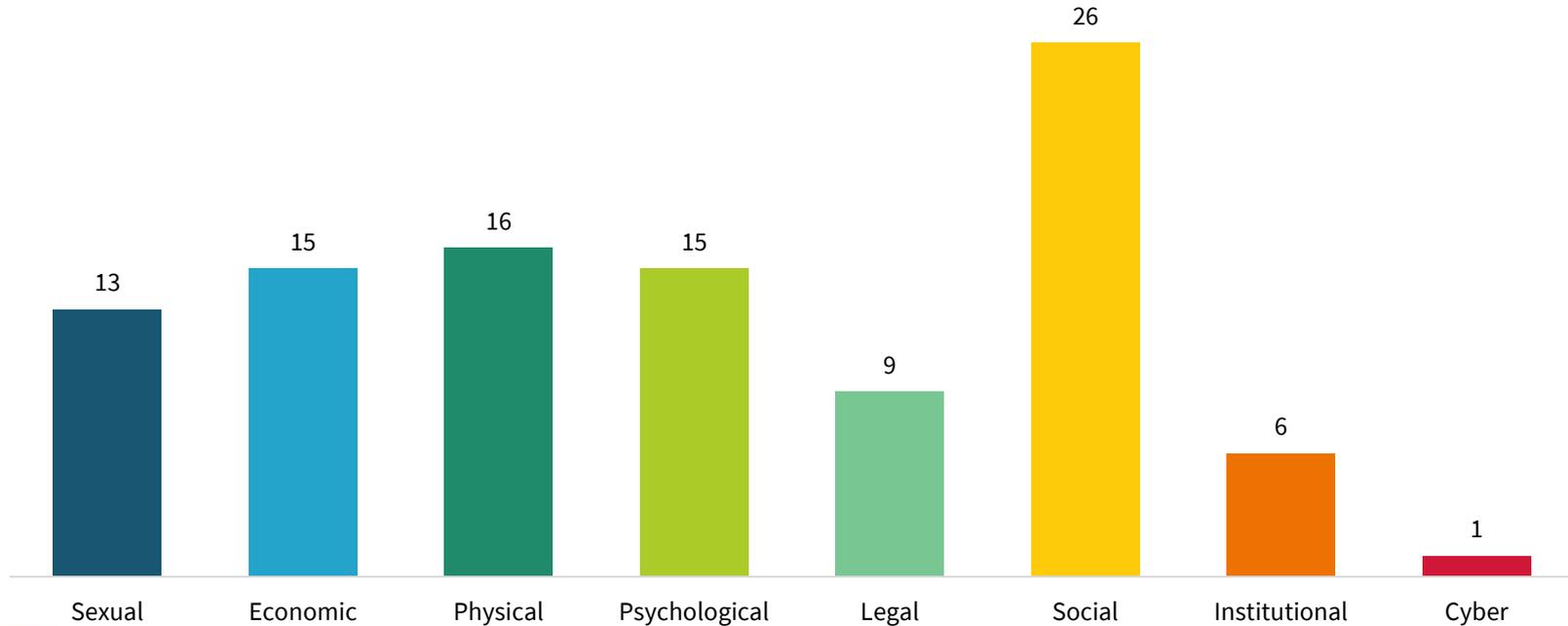
Thematic areas of cases submitted that demonstrated links





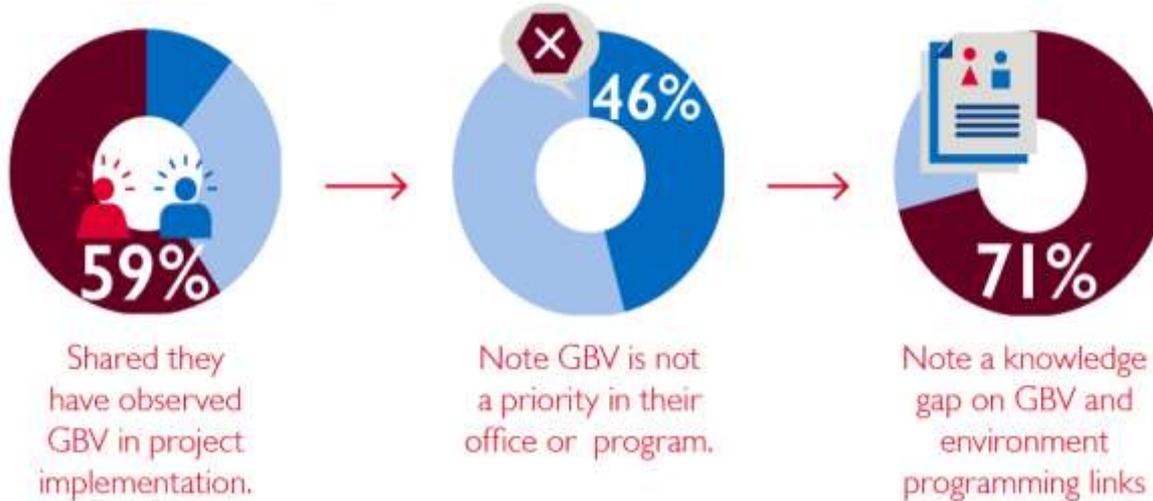
CALL FOR CASE STUDIES (APRIL-MAY 2018)

'Types' of violence mentioned in case studies



SURVEY RESPONSES FROM 300+ PRACTITIONERS

Researchers developed a survey disseminated to a wide network of gender and environment practitioners, specifically to gather information and insight into GBV-environment links. Analysis of responses included:



WHAT WE FIND

Across environmental sectors - as elsewhere – varied gender-based violence is employed as a form of socioeconomic control to maintain or promote unequal and gendered power dynamics relating to the ownership of, access to, uses of, benefits derived from and control over natural resources.

The potential for violence is particularly augmented in the face of stressors where the control over increasingly scarce or degraded resources and livelihood opportunities results in higher tension, increased negative coping strategies and reduced resilience for families and communities.



EXAMPLES

The following are illustrative examples of linkages across sectors found through the research process. Neither the examples nor sectors are exhaustive.



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LAND TENURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Examples

- Gender-based violence used to maintain discriminatory status quo related to land, property rights, and access
- Economic and other forms of gender-based violence employed in property and land grabbing
- Domestic violence and other forms of GBV take place during typically gendered tasks such as collection of water and fuelwood.
- Sex-for-fish arrangements, intimate partner violence, and trafficking are linked to fisheries.



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NATURAL DISASTERS, CLIMATE VULNERABILITY, CLIMATE-RELATED CONFLICTS

Examples

- Economic and social stress can increase domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Evidence exists that resource stress, scarcity and insecurity increases impunity
- Child marriage is seen as a post-disaster and scarcity coping mechanism or survival strategy
- Migration and displacement can lead to increased exposure to gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Violence is evident against climate refugees; shelters and evacuation centers can be unsafe for women and other traditionally marginalized people



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ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

Examples

- Gender-based violence is employed in the militarization of efforts to combat poaching
- Connections exist between violent conflict, gender-based violence and the illegal charcoal trade
- Gender-based violence is employed as a means to enforce gender norms in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Gender-based violence is used or exacerbated to fuel illicit mining activities
- Research is emerging on gender inequality, GBV and wildlife crimes



PHOTO: QUARTZ INDIA



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WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Examples

- The rise of women environmental human rights defenders is met with increasingly violent means of control
- Weaponizing gender norms is used in violent disputes over land and natural resources
- Indigenous women defenders experience heightened vulnerabilities



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PROMISING PRACTICES EXIST— (BUT ARE SCARCE)

Examples

- Varied organizations have adopted gender policies, safeguards or standards that specifically include means for and attention to addressing GBV
- Evidence from some countries suggests efforts to secure land rights reduces some forms of GBV
- Championing and support women's collective agency and action can improve their bargaining power and safety
- Empowering men, engaging them as partners, and providing resources to support their own experiences has shown to be an important catalyst for change across contexts
- Promising practice from across non-environmental sectors may be applicable to strengthen conservation and sustainable development decision-making and programming



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WHY THIS MATTERS – KEY TAKEAWAYS



Identifying and addressing GBV-environment linkages is crucial to meeting SDGs



Major knowledge gaps exist across specific environmental sectors; few tools, strategies, and promising practices identified to address GBV concerns



Documenting and reporting response protocols with specific procedures for GBV in environmental projects is urgent



Innovation and investment are required to bridge gaps

CALL TO ACTION

- The forthcoming paper will present challenges and opportunities for addressing GBV-environment linkages in programming, toward strengthened, harmonized results
- A GBV-Environment Links knowledge platform launches soon. Learn more and sign up for updates: Gender@iucn.org
- Continue to share information, tools and promising practice from across sectors, and case studies: Gender@iucn.org
- Stay tuned for more news from IUCN through it's partnership with USAID, called AGENT (Advancing Gender in the Environment), including on its webinar series: <https://genderandenvironment.org/advancing-gender-in-the-environment-agent/>



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