



PROBLUE AND GENDER EQUALITY

THE CHALLENGE

Women make a significant contribution to oceanic sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture and to the processing and trading of marine products, as well as to waste management, coastal tourism, conservation activities, and coastal disaster-risk reduction. However, these contributions are often neither registered in official records nor recognized by society, and women are often marginalized in decision making. Furthermore, with limited access to education, training and financial support, women are prevented from playing more prominent and better recognized roles in oceanic sectors.

Implementing a blue economy approach without focusing on gender equality would preclude any hope of achieving long-term sustainability. The exclusion of women from decision-making processes contributes directly to the growing threats confronting oceans, and ignoring them also ignores key solutions to these problems.

- Women represent 47% of employees in the fisheries sector,¹ 90% of seafood processing workers,² and 54% of employees in coastal tourism jobs.³
- Increasing gender equality in the economy could add an estimated USD 13 trillion to global GDP by 2030.⁴

THE PROBLUE APPROACH

PROBLUE seeks to address inequalities in the Blue Economy by closing gender gaps and promoting women's empowerment in ocean activities. The PROBLUE Secretariat collaborates with World Bank teams to identify and enhance opportunities to integrate gender into activities.

To increase equity between women and men, PROBLUE supports training and capacity building, gender data collection and analysis, equal participation by women and men in stakeholder consultations, awareness raising, and the creation of dedicated economic opportunities.

More gender equality and social inclusion in seascape management requires:

- Analyzing the needs and interests of women and marginalized communities to unlock their potential as employees, leaders and decision makers
- Holding culturally sensitive and context-appropriate consultations
- Using existing groups and organizations to engage stakeholders
- Collecting and disaggregating data by sex and age.

Integration of gender analysis to achieve gender-responsive and -transformative policies, initiatives, and programs has been a cornerstone in the selection and implementation of PROBLUE-supported activities.

1 Globefish: https://issuu.com/globefish/docs/the_role_of_women_in_the_seafood_industry_-_grp_-_

2 FAO: <https://www.fao.org/3/i2727e/i2727e00.htm>

3 UNWTO: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284420384>

4 McKinsey : <https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/overview/in-the-news/dont-let-the-pandemic-set-back-gender-equality>

PROBLUE is producing a guidance note for World Bank task teams on advancing gender equality using three approaches:

- Influencing policy and country dialogue using data on gender disparities and inclusion in the Blue Economy
- Improving operations by intervening at early project stages and designing theories of change aiming at closing gender gaps
- Building a knowledge base and sharing knowledge effectively.

RESULTS

In FY21, **90%** of PROBLUE approved activities included gender-sensitive elements in their proposals, indicating that the proposals had identified gaps these activities are trying to address or narrow, what actions are needed to do so, and how these actions are measured.

Nearly all PROBLUE-financed activities consider the different needs of women and men, girls and boys, and the different ways in which they interact with the marine environment.

EXAMPLES OF GENDER INCLUSION IN PROBLUE ACTIVITIES

BANGLADESH: PROBLUE financed a gender study that identifies job opportunities for women in retrieving abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear, and is raising awareness and introducing ideas for business opportunities at the community level. The government will pilot the gender-equitable net recycling activities in two sites.

CARIBBEAN: The Caribbean Oceans and Aquaculture Sustainability Facility (COAST) aims to strengthen fisheries resilience to climate

events, thereby contributing to food security and livelihoods. The program encourages the inclusion and participation of women at all levels of the sector. The COAST operations manual predefines the list of beneficiaries, guaranteeing the inclusion of women who are involved mostly as fish vendors and processors.

GHANA: A study supported by PROBLUE examined how women in Ghana's coastal areas benefit from mangroves and what role they play in mangrove conservation. The study found that women use mangroves to support their livelihoods, including through cultivating mangroves, using timber for construction, fuelwood for fish smoking and cooking, and harvesting seafood and vegetation. The sale of mangrove fuelwood represents a primary source of income in some areas. Efforts by civil society groups have sensitized women to the importance of sustainably managing mangroves. For example, women have seen reduced airborne diseases in their communities thanks to the clean air that results from restored mangroves. They participate in restoration projects by planting seedlings, building a sense of ownership in keeping the mangroves healthy.

PANAMA: This is the first PROBLUE activity fully focused on gender. It aims to strengthen Panama's capacity to identify gender gaps in the marine and coastal sector and design appropriate policies to close these and ensure women's full participation in the country's climate change measures. Through a socio-economic analysis of women involved in fisheries and aquaculture, marine pollution, coastal tourism and decision-making processes, the activity will provide recommendations to increase their participation in both production and conservation activities through gender-inclusive policies.

GLOBAL: To promote sustainable and resilient tourism on small islands and in coastal destinations whose economies have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, PROBLUE is funding the development of guidelines on the circular economy and environmental sustainability, which will include gender-specific recommendations. Women are predominantly employed in the front lines in tourism businesses. This work will promote the advancement and protection of women workers and address the need for additional financing for women-owned businesses.