Gender Assessment

FP324: GCF Results-Based Payments Mexico 2018–2019 aimed at Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livestock

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Gender Assessment and Action Plan

For the GCF-FAO Project "GCF Results-Based Payments Mexico 2018-2019 aimed at Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livestock"

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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
ANP	Protected Natural Area
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNDH	National Human Rights Commission
CONAF	National Forestry Council
CONAFOR	National Forestry Commission
CONANP	National Commission for Protected Natural Areas
CONAPRED	National Council to Prevent Discrimination
CONEVAL	National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy
DOF	Official Gazette of the Federation
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFM	Women Forest Enterprises
ENADID	National Survey of Demographic Dynamics
ENAREDD+	National REDD+ Strategy
ENDIREH	National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships
ENIGH	National Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ENOE	National Occupation and Employment Survey
ENGISF	National Gender and Inclusion Strategy for the Forest Sector 2025-2030
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESOP	Environmental and Social Operational Procedure
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FESM	Framework for Environmental and Social Management
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GA	Gender Assessment
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GAAP	Gender Assessment and Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GT-REDD+	REDD+ Working Group
ILO	International Labour Organization
INECC	National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics and Geography
INMUJERES	National Institute of Women
INPI	National Institute of Indigenous Peoples
LDRS	Sustainable Rural Development Law
LGCC	General Law on Climate Change

LGDFS	General Law on Sustainable Forest Development
LGEEPA	General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection
LGISMH	General Law for Equality between Women and Men into the General Law for Substantive Equality between Women and Men
MAC	Citizen Attention Mechanism
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NREF	Forest Reference Emission Level
OAS	Organization of American States
OIC	Internal Control Body
PAGeREDD+	Gender Action Plan for REDD+ Mexico
PECC	Special Climate Change Program
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PND	National Development Plan
PNF	National Forestry Program
PROIGUALDAD	National Program for Equality between Women and Men
RAN	National Agrarian Registry
RBP	Results-Based Payment
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SEMARNAT	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SHCP	Ministry of Finance and Public Credit
SIAC	Citizen Information and Attention Service
SIDEC	Comprehensive Citizen Complaint System
SIG	Gender Indicators System
SIS	Safeguards Information System
SNIEG	National System of Statistical and Geographic Information
SNMF	National Forest Monitoring System
UAIM	Women's Agricultural and Industrial Unit
UGI	Conafor's Gender and Inclusion Unit
UIGs	Gender Equality Units
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

1. Introduction

This annex constitutes the 'Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan' (GAAP, hereon), a dedicated annex to Mexico's Results-Based Payment (RBP) Proposal and its dedicated Environmental and Social Management Framework, the ESMF. Under the umbrella of the project's ESMF, this GAAP elaborates further on issues regarding women, gender equality and the prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) in the context of the REDD+ readiness in the country, as well as reflects on women's participation in stakeholder engagement and consultative efforts. Moreover, this GAAP reflects on gender equality and GBV in the context of this RBP proposal, including to inform the design, implementation, and monitoring of on-the-ground activities to be implemented with the use of proceeds.

Accordingly, this GAAP is part of due diligence assessments conducted in preparation of this RBP proposal, and has informed Annex 4.1 to the RBP proposal on:

i) the extent to which the activities undertaken in the past, which contributed to the achievement of the REDD+ results for which results-based payments are sought, were consistent with the GCF Gender Policy and FAO Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 6; and
ii) the extent to which women were identified, informed, and consulted in the context of those activities, as well as the manner in which they participated, and whether grievance redress mechanisms accessible to women were available.

The GAAP also describes: i) potential risks and impacts relevant to women and GBV in the context of activities to be supported by the RBP and defines how they will continue to be identified, assessed and managed throughout project implementation; outstanding considerations and proposed measures to ensure stakeholder consultations undertaken during the design of, and due diligence on, the activities to be supported by the RBP proceeds include women and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Following the application of FAO's risks assessment and screening checklist, and consistent with the RBP's ESMF and its risks management matrix, this draft GAAP elaborates on potential risks relevant to women and GBV and associated commensurate management measures.

As underscored throughout Mexico's RBP Proposal and its ESMF, given the high-level and strategic nature of the REDD+ Strategy, potential environmental, social and governance issues associated to on-the-ground interventions, particularly those relevant to women, will ultimately depend on how REDD+ programs are designed and implemented. Therefore, during the inception period is envisioned to further refine technical details prior to starting on-the-ground implementation, including through analytical, participatory, and consultative efforts, as detailed in the Annex 4.2 to the RBP. Said inclusive and participatory process will also inform the refinement of environmental, social and governance potential risks identified in the ESMF into a comprehensive and actionable Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), and this GAAP will be refined as necessary. Ultimately, this will allow to inform the terms, conditions and standardized operational procedures that guide the design, implementation, and monitoring of gender-responsive on-the-ground activities to be implemented with the use of proceeds. Consistent with FAO's zero-tolerance policy on GBV and SEAH, measures to prevent, mitigate and respond to these risks will be implemented throughout the project and incorporated into relevant project documents and operational instruments.

Implementation of the ESMF, this Gender Action Plan and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP, Annex 5 to the RBP), will be responsibility of the full-time safeguards and gender specialists to be hired as part of the Project Management Unit (see section 9 in the ESMF). Should additional potential risks relevant to women be identified at any time through project implementation, the gender specialist will be responsible to keep both this planning framework risks and management measures matrix and the Exclusion List up to date, ensuring regular feedback loops in an adaptive management approach trough monitoring and reporting activities.

1.1. Approach and methodology

Overall, as an integrated document, the GAAP is based upon a comprehensive review of available data from studies conducted by the Government of Mexico, key development partners and multilateral organizations, civil society, and research organizations. Also, stakeholder consultations were conducted with government and non-government agencies to validate the findings from document review and triangulate data for the GAAP. This included consultation workshops to provide local stakeholders a platform for the participatory identification of risks, benefits, mitigation measures, and participation mechanisms, including those relevant to gender, and to disseminate information on available grievance redress channels, including for SEAH/GBV-related complaints. Both the institutional and local engagements foster open dialogue with stakeholders and created a space for sharing feedback, concerns, and recommendations to strengthen the RBP proposal's design and future implementation, including the definition of this GAAP.

The key methods used include:

- For the diagnosis of gender gaps, priority was given to the use of primary information sources, including specialized surveys, censuses and information systems produced by governmental institutions. These sources were further complemented with administrative records and official statistics allowing disaggregation by sex, state, and type of locality.
- Documentary review of secondary information sources related to the forest, climate change and livestock sectors.
- Review of national priorities and aspirations as established in the national policies and plans related to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Review of REDD+ project reports with lessons learned and gender equality assessments conducted in Mexico, as well as other international good practices developed by UN agencies, development organizations, and research organizations.
- Review of reports and documentation from previous stakeholder consultations undertaken in the context of REDD+ readiness, the ENAREDD+ formulation, and other relevant initiatives in the forest and livestock sectors.
- Stakeholder consultations with government agencies to triangulate secondary information with key informant sources for finalizing the GAAP. Consultations were held with the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP).
- Consultation workshops with local stakeholders including ejidos, communities, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Mexican population, and small landholders to obtain feedback on key aspects of the RBP proposal (e.g., activities) and allow the participatory identification of potential risks, benefits, mitigation measures, including those related to gender and SEAH/GBV.

1.2. Overview of the REDD+ Strategy and the RBP proposal

National Context

Mexico is a federal, representative, democratic, and secular republic composed of 32 federal entities, including 31 states and Mexico City. In 2026, the country's population reached approximately 134 million people. Around 52 percent of the population are women, while 48 percent are men. In 2020, an estimated 79 percent of the population lived in urban areas. Approximately 11.8 million people self-identify as Indigenous, representing 14.8 percent of the national population, and 6.7 percent of national population speaks an Indigenous language. In addition, 2.1 percent of the national population self-identifies as Afro descendant (World Bank, 2020; UN DESA, 2024; INEGI, 2020).

Mexico covers a continental area of 1.96 million km², of which 44.7 percent consists of mountainous and volcanic regions, and a maritime area of 3.1 million km². The country's topography is dominated by extensive mountain systems, with elevations ranging from sea level to nearly 5,000 meters above sea level. Mexico hosts an exceptional diversity of ecosystems, with approximately 46 percent of its continental territory designated as protected natural areas (ANP), covering nearly 183 protected areas and close to 90.9 million hectares.

The country spans two major biogeographic regions: the Nearctic region, characterized primarily by temperate species, and the Neotropical region, which includes numerous tropical species originating from the Amazon Basin. Mexico's broad range of climates, landscapes, geology, and hydrological systems has generated remarkable ecosystem diversity and high levels of biological richness. As a result, the country is internationally recognized as one of the world's megadiverse nations, ranking fourth globally in terms of species richness and genetic diversity of both wild and cultivated species (CONAFOR, 2024b).

Forests occupy approximately 45 percent of Mexico's territory, equivalent to around 88.1 million hectares[1], and provide essential ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, and economic benefits. While forests contribute about 0.6 percent to national GDP, they play a much larger role at the local level, particularly in rural areas, where forest resources support livelihoods and community well-being. An estimated 11.8 million people live in forested regions, many of whom face conditions of poverty and marginalization. Indigenous communities account for roughly 5.9 million people and are highly dependent on forests and biodiversity for their livelihoods, cultural continuity, and social cohesion. Forest ecosystems are therefore critical not only for environmental sustainability, but also for sustaining local identities, traditions, and community resilience (World Bank, 2019).

In 2023, approximately 51 percent of Mexico's forest lands were under collective ownership, primarily managed by ejidos and Indigenous communities (CONAFOR, 2024b). These governance systems are recognized globally for promoting the sustainable management of forests and biodiversity. However, many ejidos and forest communities continue to face significant challenges, including limited technical capacity, restricted access to markets, and insufficient financing mechanisms. Their social, economic, and cultural activities remain closely interconnected with forest ecosystems.

REDD+ in Mexico

1 In accordance with the types of vegetation classified as forestlands under the FREL. This definition of forests covers low dry deciduous forests, coniferous forests, and some types of xeric shrublands.

Forests are a national priority for the Government of Mexico, reflecting the country's long-standing tradition of forest management and the recognized role forests play in supporting environmental sustainability and rural livelihoods. However, deforestation and forest degradation remain among the principal drivers of natural capital loss in the country, largely linked to the expansion of agricultural activities and the unsustainable use of natural resources, including those associated with livestock production. According to national land-use data, approximately 70 percent of deforestation is related to cattle ranching, as forest areas are converted into pasturelands and increasingly integrated into livestock production systems, particularly in dry and sub-humid tropical regions.

Mexico's livestock sector plays a major role in the national economy and rural livelihoods. The country has an estimated cattle herd of more than 32 million heads and is among the world's leading producers and exporters of beef. Livestock production supports food security, generates employment, and provides income for more than 800,000 producers, many of whom are smallholders. However, despite its economic importance, the sector's current production model remains environmentally unsustainable and highly vulnerable to climate-related risks. Extensive grazing systems continue to drive deforestation and ecosystem degradation, particularly in tropical forest regions, while low productivity, insecure land tenure, poverty, and limited access to technical and financial support constrain the adoption of more sustainable practices.

In response, the Government of Mexico has promoted an integrated landscape management approach aimed at addressing deforestation through improved coordination across sectors. This approach seeks to strengthen the economic value of forests through sustainable management and productive activities that generate local income while conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services. Within this framework, REDD+ has become a key mechanism to materialize the Government of Mexico's vision of an integrated landscape approach, providing a framework to address the underlying drivers of forest loss beyond the forestry sector.

In 2017, Mexico finalized its National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+) as the main policy instrument guiding REDD+ implementation in the country. The objective of ENAREDD+ is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, while conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks, promoting sustainable forest management, and safeguarding biodiversity. These objectives are pursued within the framework of sustainable rural development, through the alignment of public policies and with full respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-Mexican peoples, as well as adherence to social and environmental safeguards and applicable national and international legal frameworks (CONAFOR, 2017a).

Through ENAREDD+, REDD+ was positioned as a strategic instrument to advance sustainable rural development, while contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This approach reflects the Government's recognition that addressing deforestation requires integrated, territorial interventions. The same vision was subsequently incorporated into Mexico's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), further reinforcing the role of REDD+ as a key mechanism to achieve zero deforestation and promote a landscape-based approach.

Importantly, REDD+ in Mexico has not developed in isolation. It builds upon and strengthens pre-existing government efforts to address deforestation, which at the territorial level have been primarily implemented through CONAFOR's public incentive programs under established Operating Rules. These

programs constitute the main vehicle for implementing REDD+ actions on the ground, contributing to forest conservation and sustainable management while addressing the underlying drivers of deforestation.

Overall, over more than 15 years of REDD+ development, the Government of Mexico—supported by multiple financing sources and initiatives—has consolidated a comprehensive national REDD+ framework, including all core elements required by the UNFCCC (ENAREDD+, SNMF, NREF, SIS). This process has generated critical knowledge, pilot experiences, and institutional capacities that informed the development and implementation of ENAREDD+. It has also contributed to strengthening Mexico's policy and legal framework and improving on-the-ground program implementation, thereby supporting the transition toward a more integrated, territorial, and landscape-based approach to addressing deforestation and forest degradation.

Overview of Mexico's RBP Proposal

Mexico will reinvest the results-based payment into a transformative program that seeks to address one of the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation: the expansion and persistence of extensive livestock systems in forest–grassland transition zones. The reinvestment will promote productive restoration in transition zones, forest conservation and sustainable livestock production through silvopastoral and agrosilvopastoral systems, strengthened territorial management, sustainable finance, and improved monitoring and traceability systems. This approach to reduce deforestation from cattle production and scale sustainable livestock solutions across forest–grassland frontiers.

The RBP Proposal will focus on priority landscapes in forest–livestock transition zones in dry and sub-humid forests in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, and Yucatán. Jalisco and Chiapas rank as Mexico´s second and sixth-largest cattle producer, respectively. Meanwhile, Yucatán and Quintana Roo are emerging as potential dairy production hubs. All these states have been identified with a multicriteria analysis using land cover and land use data, land use change, risk of deforestation, agricultural boundaries, cattle existence, livestock production units, and restoration priority. Mexico's RBP Proposal will support four mutually reinforcing outcomes:

Outcome 1. Increased adoption of climate-resilient silvopastoral systems and diversified sustainable livelihoods in forest–livestock transition zones. The project will support demonstrative productive reconversion models, including silvopastoral and agrosilvopastoral systems, regenerative grazing, improved fodder production, field schools and productive restoration in priority transition zones. These actions will strengthen producer capacities, improve productivity and resilience, and reduce pressure to clear forests.

Outcome 2. Increased economic incentives and access to finance for forest sustainable management, conservation, and forest-compatible production systems. The project will strengthen deforestation-free value chains and market-access mechanisms, including producer organization, demand-side engagement and traceability. It will also support PES mechanisms with ejidos and communities and harmonize financial products that enable investment in sustainable practices, productive restoration and deforestation-free livestock systems.

Outcome 3. Improved inclusive territorial governance and coordinated landscape management for forest conservation, productive restoration and women's leadership. The project will strengthen territorial agents, support territorial planning and coordination among ejidos, communities, producer organizations

and local actors, and promote women-led productive and income-generating initiatives. This will help align individual production decisions with collective forest conservation and restoration objectives.

Outcome 4. Enhanced institutional capacities, coordination and monitoring systems to sustain REDD+ implementation and climate-resilient landscape management. The project will strengthen the capacities of institutions, territorial actors and technical staff to support silvopastoral systems, productive restoration and project formulation. It will also strengthen monitoring systems to track land-cover change, restoration, grazing plans, forage production, livestock carrying capacity, land clearing, agricultural fires, traceability of deforestation-free production and greenhouse-gas emissions linked to project-supported practices.

The target beneficiaries of Mexico's RBP proposal include a wide range of local stakeholders, notably rural populations (men and women) living in forest–livestock transition zones within ejidos and communities, as well as territorial agents, local organizations, and technical service providers. At its core, the proposal promotes a model that combines forest conservation—supported through Payments for Environmental Services (PES)—with the development of silvopastoral systems (SSP), as productive restoration mechanism, in forest frontier areas and implemented with technical support from territorial agents (local public institutions or civil society organizations) and service providers, with the aim of strengthening sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent peoples and communities.

To this end, 58 percent of RBP resources will be channeled through CONAFOR to finance the implementation of SSP and PES activities on the ground, through public subsidy programs implemented under Operating Rules via the Mexican Forest Fund. Financial resources and inputs will be transferred directly to ejidos and communities that choose to participate on a voluntary basis, thereby promoting fair, equitable, and effective access to benefits derived from RBP.

The benefit-distribution mechanism implemented through CONAFOR's Operating Rules, recognizes the contributions of local and community stakeholders to the integrated management, restoration, and conservation of Mexico's forest landscapes. It has progressively evolved to be inclusive of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Mexican communities, and other vulnerable groups that actively contribute to sustainable forest development within their territories. Beneficiaries may also include forest dwellers regardless of their land tenure status.

The RBP resources (18 percent) operated by FAO, will support the effective adoption of silvopastoral systems through Farmer Field Schools (ECA) as a key capacity-building approach. A competitive process will be conducted to select and contract qualified service providers responsible for facilitating these field schools and delivering technical assistance. In parallel, 5 percent of the resources will be allocated to strengthening territorial governance by supporting the operation of Territorial Agents and/or organizations with a presence in intervention areas. This will also be implemented through competitive calls under CONAFOR's Operating Rules.

The RBP proposal is expected to generate significant impact in forest conservation and sustainable management, while strengthening sustainable livelihoods and territorial governance. The proposal will support the productive transformation through the establishment of 1,600 silvopastoral systems (SSP). Capacity development will be a central component, with 1200 Farmer Field Schools (ECAs) implemented

over the project period, reaching approximately 12,000 (men and women) and promoting the adoption of sustainable production practices.

The RBP proposal will contribute to forest conservation and climate resilience through the implementation of Payments for Environmental Services (PES) across 205,000 hectares to support 20,000 beneficiaries (men and women) in adopting innovations that enhance forest conservation and resilience to climate change under the PES schemes. In addition, the RBP proposal will strengthen landscape governance by supporting 25 Territorial Agents. Collectively, these results will strengthen integrated landscape management, promote inclusive and equitable access to results-based payments, and enhance the long-term sustainability and resilience of forest-dependent communities. The project aims to support directly benefiting 21,720 producers (men and women) engaged in income-generating practices.

The RBP proposal will also generate several social, environmental and governance non-carbon benefits (NCBs). Social NCBs include the delivery of benefits in terms of improving the generation of income for indigenous peoples and local communities and in terms of gender equality, including the promotion of productive activities led by women and the development of gender-responsive technical assistance and skills development schemes. Regarding Governance, the RBP proposal will deliver benefits in terms of improved territorial and landscape level governance. Environmental NCBs include the delivery of benefits in terms of expanding the areas implementing ecosystem payment schemes to promote forests' ecosystem services provision, including biodiversity conservation.

The proposed NCBs are embedded within the long-term implementation framework of CONAFOR and aligned with ENAREDD+ objectives, ensuring that benefits generated through RBP reinvestment can be sustained beyond the duration of the project. Beyond meeting Cancun Safeguards requirements, the proposal seeks to generate durable environmental, social, and governance benefits through strengthened territorial governance, expanded PES schemes, livelihood diversification, and gender-responsive approaches that reinforce the permanence of emission reductions while improving resilience and well-being among forest-dependent communities. Monitoring of these benefits will be integrated into the Project's results framework and annual reporting processes.

2. The Gender Assessment

2.1. Gender dimensions and inequalities in Mexico

In Mexico, approximately one in every five women (21.1 percent) lives in localities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants, which are classified as rural areas (INEGI, 2020). This proportion highlights the demographic, territorial and productive relevance of rural women within the country's social and economic structure.

Although Mexico has made important progress in gender equality, political participation and the strengthening of normative frameworks, significant structural inequalities continue to affect rural, Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women in differentiated ways, particularly in forest territories and regions with high climate vulnerability. These inequalities are reflected in unequal access to agrarian rights, land tenure, productive resources, financing, technical assistance, education, formal employment and representation within territorial governance and decision-making spaces.

In rural and forest contexts, women play a fundamental role in agricultural production, natural resource management, forest use, food security and community care activities. However, their participation continues to take place under conditions characterized by disproportionate unpaid domestic and care workloads, lower levels of economic autonomy and limited representation within agrarian and community governance structures. These conditions constitute important barriers to women's effective participation in forest governance mechanisms, rural development programs and benefit-sharing processes associated with REDD+ initiatives.

Although normative and institutional frameworks aimed at promoting substantive equality and women's participation have strengthened over recent decades, rural, Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women continue to experience significant statistical and programmatic underrepresentation in areas related to territorial development, natural resource management and climate policy. This situation limits the generation of disaggregated information and hinders the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies grounded in gender equality, interculturality and territorial approaches (Vizcarra Bordi & Garay Tacuba, 2023).

These inequalities acquire particular relevance in the context of climate change. Rural women face higher levels of vulnerability to droughts, environmental degradation, agricultural productivity losses and extreme climate events due to persistent limitations in access to productive resources, financing, social protection, technical training, and adaptive capacities. Various studies indicate that rural households headed by women tend to experience greater economic losses associated with adverse climate-related events. Likewise, in many rural and forest territories, women play a central role in the daily management of water, food production, household fuelwood supply and community care and social reproduction strategies, responsibilities that often intensify under conditions of environmental crisis (FAO, 2024; UNDP, 2023).

In this context, the structural inequalities faced by rural and Indigenous women represent a significant challenge for the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives and benefit-sharing mechanisms associated with sustainable forest management and emissions reduction efforts. Persistent gaps in access to land, community representation, technical assistance and participation in governance spaces may limit women's effective access to the economic, social, and environmental benefits derived from these programs.

Strengthening the participation of rural, Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women in territorial governance, community forest management and decision-making processes therefore constitutes a strategic element for promoting more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable territorial development processes. From a gender equality and climate resilience perspective, reducing the structural inequalities affecting rural women is not only a matter of social justice and human rights, but also an enabling condition for strengthening community adaptive capacities, the sustainability of rural livelihoods and the governance of forest territories in the face of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with climate change. The following sections analyze different dimensions intended to orient and contextualize Mexico's RBP proposal in this regard.

2.1.1. Global gender gap index and international rankings

The Global Gender Gap Report 2025 published by the World Economic Forum ranks Mexico 23rd out of 148 countries evaluated, with an overall gender gap closure score of approximately 77.6 percent. This represents significant progress compared to previous years and an increase of ten positions compared to the previous edition. The report identifies Mexico as one of the countries that has advanced most rapidly toward gender parity since 2006.

Nevertheless, the report also shows that progress has not been homogeneous and that important structural inequalities persist. Although Mexico has strengthened normative frameworks—including the constitutional reforms on substantive equality discussed in Section 3 of this document—and expanded women's political representation through affirmative electoral measures, material inequalities continue to limit women's adaptive capacities, access to resources and resilience in the face of unexpected events such as climate change.

One of the principal advances identified by the report corresponds to the political sphere. Mexico is among the few countries in the world to have achieved parity in national parliamentary representation. This outcome reflects decades of electoral reforms and affirmative actions that have increased women's political participation in legislative and decision-making spaces. However, the report itself warns that political representation does not automatically translate into substantive equality, particularly where structural inequalities persist in economic access, care systems and territorial participation.

In the economic sphere, the report shows that gender gaps remain profound globally, and Mexico is no exception. Although women have increased their participation in higher education and professional spaces, significant inequalities persist in income levels, access to leadership positions and labor force participation. The report highlights that women continue to be overrepresented in lower-paid sectors and care-related activities, while remaining underrepresented in economic leadership positions and strategic sectors. These findings directly reflect conditions observed in Mexico's rural and forest territories, as further discussed in the following sections.

The report also warns that global economic transformations, geopolitical risks, and technological transitions may deepen existing inequalities if gender and inclusion perspectives are not adequately incorporated. In the Mexican context, this is particularly relevant given the growing pressures on forest ecosystems, rural migration dynamics, the expansion of agro-industrial and extractive activities, and the differentiated vulnerability of women and communities to climate change.

Another key issue highlighted by the report concerns the relationship between care economies and women's labor participation. Globally, women are more likely to interrupt their labor trajectories due to caregiving responsibilities, with direct consequences for income, social protection, and access to leadership positions. This situation has critical implications in rural and forest contexts, where women simultaneously sustain productive activities, household water and food management, family care and unpaid community work. These burdens often intensify in the face of extreme climate events.

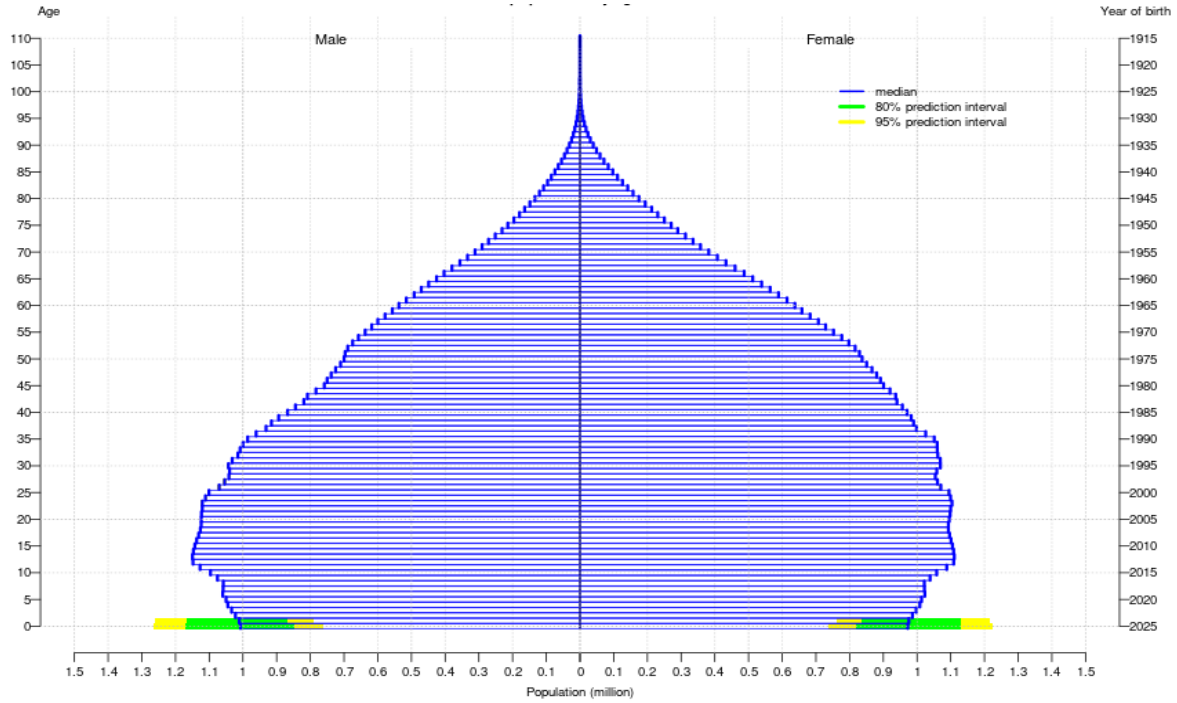
Overall, the Global Gender Gap Report 2025 demonstrates that Mexico has made important advances in political representation and institutional equality frameworks, while continuing to face structural challenges related to economic autonomy, equitable access to resources and the reduction of territorial inequalities. From a REDD+ and climate resilience perspective, these findings suggest that adaptation and mitigation policies must incorporate an intersectional gender approach that recognizes the differentiated conditions affecting rural, Indigenous, Afro-descendant and forest-dependent women in order to support the effective implementation of regulatory, institutional, and public policy frameworks related to substantive equality and the reduction of structural gender gaps.

2.1.2. Demography, social inequality, and vulnerability to climate change

Population structure and life expectancy

Demographic projections for Mexico (UN DESA, 2024) indicate that the country is undergoing a profound structural transformation characterized by population aging, sustained fertility decline and significant changes in its age and sex composition. These processes are particularly relevant in the context of climate change, as demographic characteristics can influence gender inequalities and adaptive capacities, resilience, and access to resources in different ways. In rural areas, where many ejidos and communities are experiencing population ageing and the outmigration of younger generations, demographic dynamics may affect the availability of labour, the transmission of traditional knowledge, participation in community decision-making processes, and the capacity to respond to environmental and socioeconomic stresses associated with climate change.

Figure 1. Mexico population by age and sex, 2026

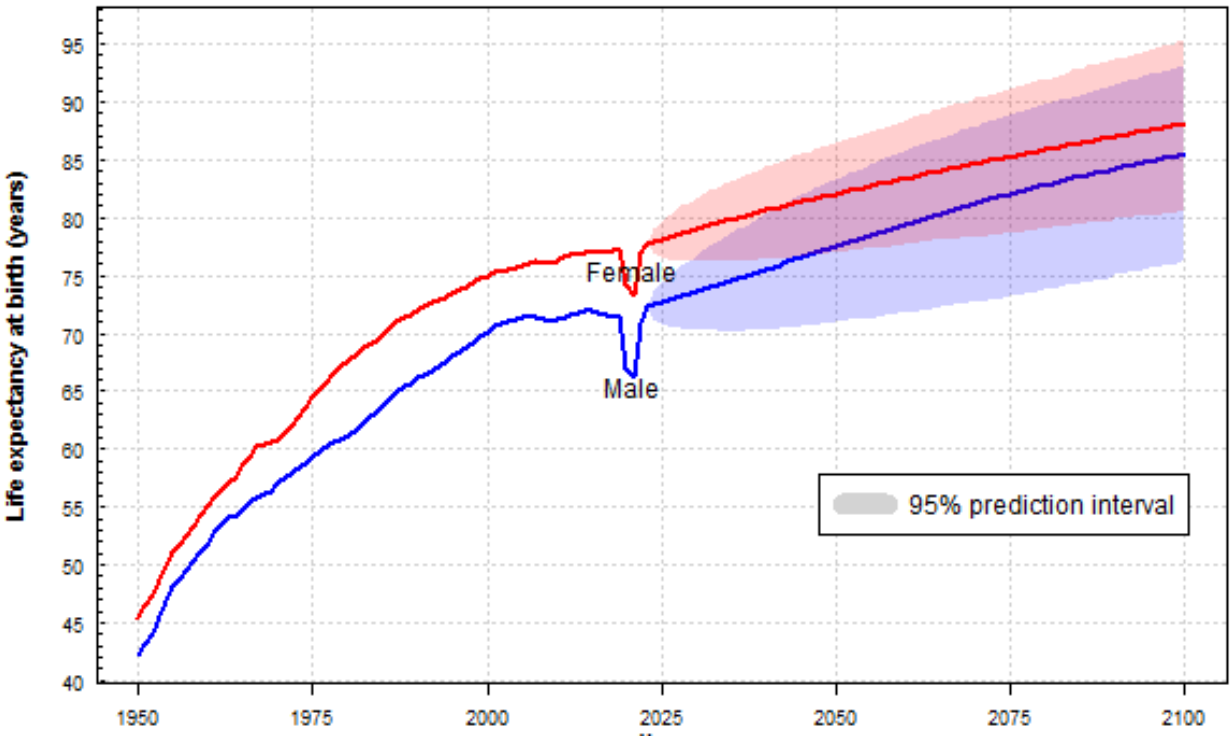


Source: World Population Prospects, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024.

Mexico's population structure reflects the transition toward a progressively aging population. Unlike the expansive population pyramids observed in previous decades, the current demographic structure shows a reduction in younger age groups and a greater concentration of population within youth and adult age cohorts. This pattern is associated with sustained fertility decline linked to processes such as urbanization, increased female educational attainment, women's growing participation in paid employment and broader transformations in reproductive and family patterns.

The gender dimension becomes particularly relevant when analyzing population composition at older ages. Women have a higher life expectancy and, consequently, constitute the majority of the older adult population. The feminization of aging represents one of the country's principal demographic and social challenges. Although women tend to live longer than men, they frequently do so under conditions of greater economic vulnerability, lower access to contributory pensions and higher levels of dependency associated with labor trajectories characterized by informality, the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work, and persistent wage and labor inequalities.

Figure 2. Mexico life expectancy at birth by sex, 1950-2100



Source: World Population Prospects, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024.

Life expectancy trends in Mexico show a sustained increase in population survival throughout much of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, largely as a result of improvements in sanitation, expansion of health services, vaccination programs and reductions in infant mortality. However, the decline observed during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the fragility of these advances and the persistence of profound structural inequalities. The reduction in life expectancy was more pronounced among men, reflecting patterns of excess mortality associated with violence, chronic diseases, accidents, and socially constructed forms of risk-related masculinities.

By 2026, life expectancy at birth in Mexico is estimated at 75.9 years nationally. Nevertheless, significant differences persist by sex and territory. Women are estimated to have a life expectancy of 79.2 years, while for men it is estimated at 72.7 years, representing an approximate gap of 6.5 years. This difference reflects not only biological factors, but also social and gender inequalities associated with labor conditions, exposure to risks and structural dynamics of inequality. At the same time, although women experience higher levels of survival, many face life trajectories marked by labor informality, poverty, and disproportionate unpaid domestic and care workloads, particularly at older ages.

Table 1. Mexico life expectancy at birth by federal entity and sex, 2026

	COUNTRY	MEN	WOMEN
MEXICO	**75.9**	**72.7**	**79.2**
Chiapas	73.4	70.3	76.9
Guerrero	73.5	70.4	77
Jalisco	76.4	73.4	79.7
Michoacan	74.5	71.4	78
Oaxaca	73.7	70.5	77.2
Quintana Roo	76.4	73.4	79.6
Yucatan	75.4	72.3	78.7

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), Life expectancy at birth by federal entity and sex, National System of Statistical and Geographic Information (SNIEG) 2026.

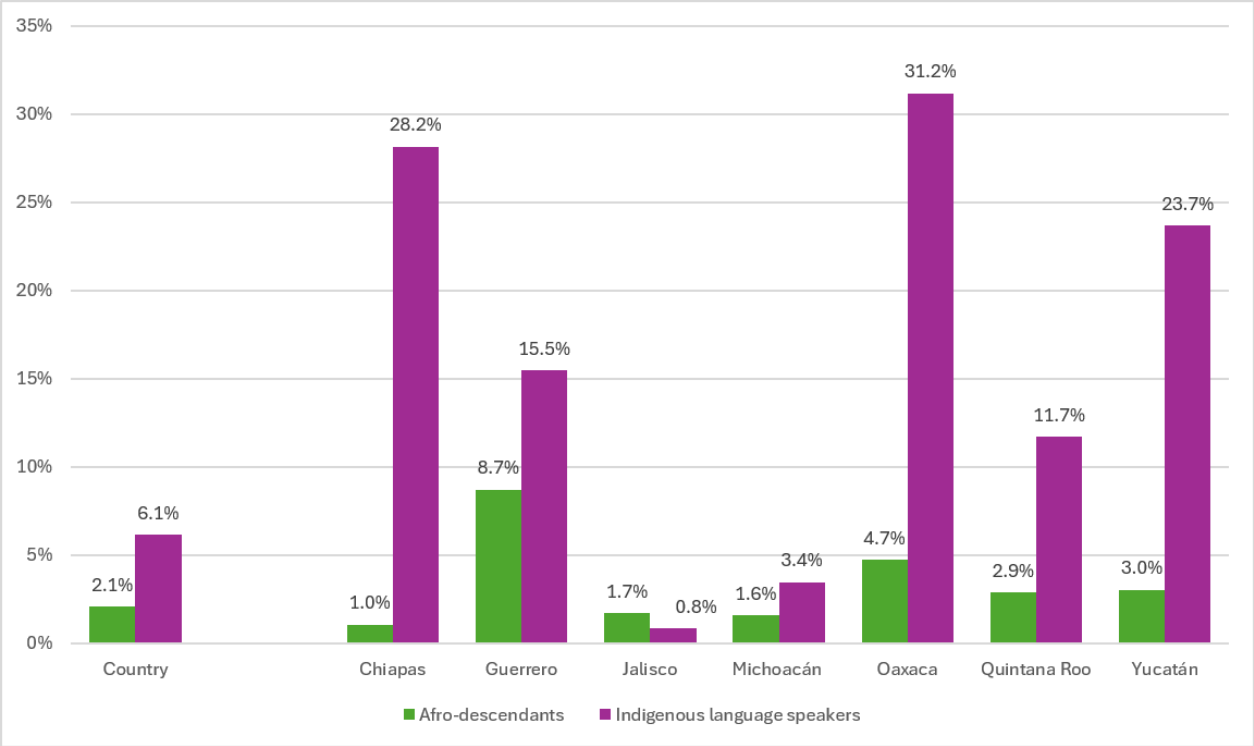
Territorial differences further reveal persistent structural inequalities across the country. Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca register the lowest levels of life expectancy for both men and women. These states concentrate high levels of rural poverty, significant Indigenous populations and longstanding deficits in health infrastructure and access to basic services. In contrast, Jalisco, Quintana Roo and Yucatan present some of the highest life expectancy levels among the states analyzed, while Michoacán occupies an intermediate position, although affected by contexts of violence and insecurity that particularly impact male mortality.

Ethnicity

Mexico is a multicultural nation. Article 2 of the Political Constitution recognizes the country's cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as the State's obligation to preserve and strengthen the identities of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Afro-descendant populations (see Section 3 of this document). Mexico also presents a deeply heterogeneous population composition. At the national level, approximately 2.1 percent of the population identifies as Afro-descendant and 6.1 percent speaks an Indigenous language, with only minor differences between men and women. However, when the information is analyzed at the state level, significant territorial heterogeneity becomes evident in the distribution of these population groups.

The presence of Indigenous language speakers is concentrated primarily in the southern and southeastern states of the country. Oaxaca (31.2 percent), Chiapas (28.2 percent) and Yucatán (23.7 percent) stand out as states where a significant proportion of the population continues to use Indigenous languages. Guerrero also presents an important share (15.5 percent), while in states such as Quintana Roo (11.7 percent) and Michoacán (3.4 percent) the proportion is lower. In contrast, Jalisco registered very low levels (0.8 percent).

Figure 3. Percentage of the population aged 3 and over by ethnicity status, 2020



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, Population and Housing Census 2020. Basic Questionnaire.

Regarding the Afro-descendant population, although proportions are comparatively smaller, an important geographic concentration is also observed. Guerrero (8.7 percent) and Oaxaca (4.7 percent) present the highest percentages, followed by Yucatán (3.0 percent) and Quintana Roo (2.9 percent), while Chiapas and Jalisco register lower Afro-descendant population shares.

Although not exclusively, Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations are concentrated particularly in the southern and southeastern regions of the country. These territories also coincide with higher levels of social marginalization, poverty, and climate vulnerability, demonstrating that ethnic and territorial dimensions constitute central factors for understanding the structural inequalities that persist in Mexico and their implications for climate resilience, access to resources and the implementation of forest and rural development policies.

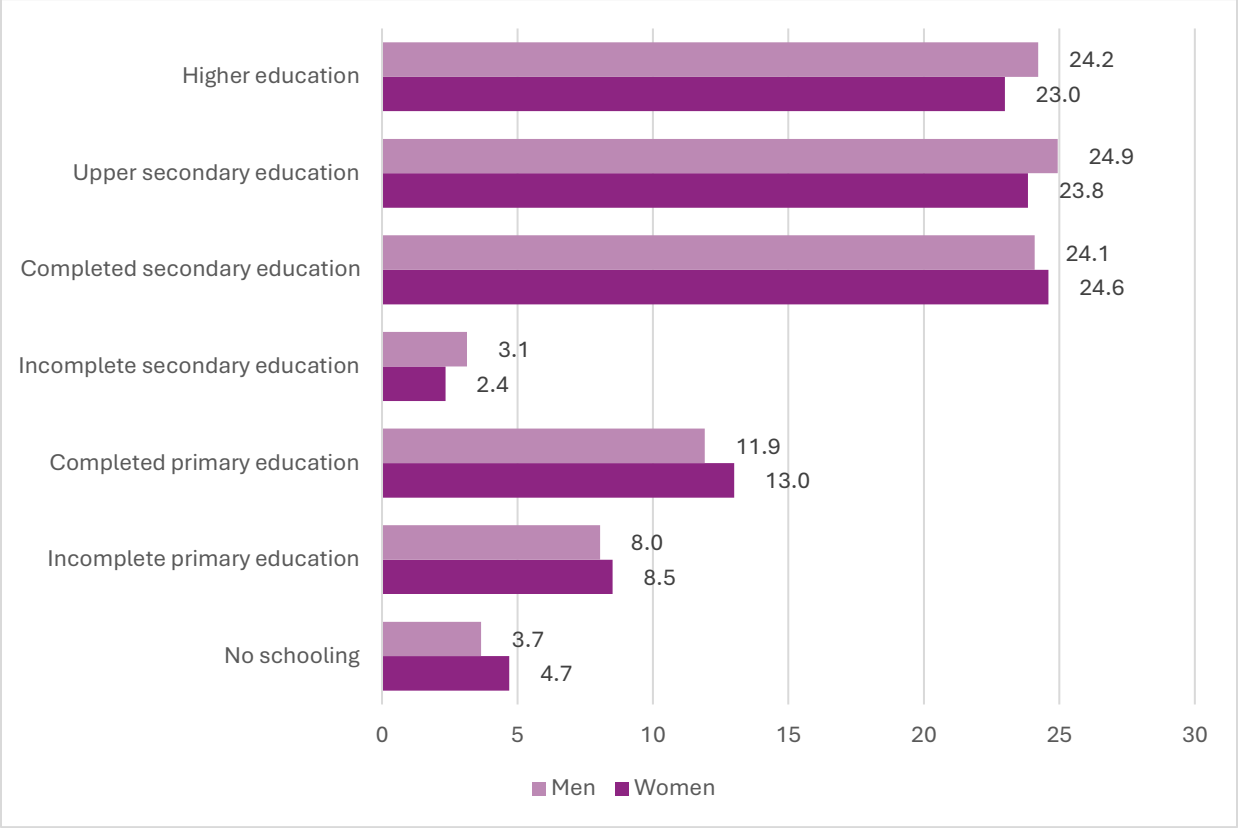
2.1.3. Education

Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, Mexico implemented a sustained strategy of educational expansion aimed at broadening access to basic education and increasing overall schooling levels among the population. As a result, the country has experienced a significant increase in average years of schooling and a sustained reduction in illiteracy rates. Over the last fifty years, Mexico has achieved notable progress in this area: while in 1970 approximately 26 out of every 100 people aged 15 years and older were unable to read or write, by 2020 this figure had declined to only 5 out of every 100 (INEGI,

2020). These changes reflect a structural transformation of the educational system and broader social conditions, although important inequalities in educational access and attainment persist.

The educational distribution of the population aged 15 years and older shows some differences between men and women, particularly at the lowest and highest levels of educational attainment. Overall, however, the educational structure presents a relatively balanced distribution across intermediate and higher educational levels.

Figure 4. Population aged 15 and over and its percentage distribution by educational attainment, by sex, 2023



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID) 2023.

At higher educational levels, differences are small but consistent. In higher education, men represent 24.2 percent compared to 23 percent for women, indicating a slightly greater male presence. Similarly, at the upper secondary level, men also show a marginally higher proportion (24.9 percent) compared to women (23.8 percent). This suggests that although both sexes are broadly represented at these educational levels, men maintain a slight advantage in the accumulation of higher educational capital.

At the completed secondary level, the difference becomes even smaller but reverses direction: women (24.6 percent) slightly surpass men (24.1 percent), indicating that women reach this intermediate educational level in greater proportion.

Gender gaps become more evident at lower educational levels. In incomplete secondary education, men present a higher proportion (3.1 percent) compared to women (2.4 percent), which may reflect higher male school dropout rates at this stage. However, at the completed primary education level, women (13.0 percent) exceed men (11.9 percent), indicating that a larger proportion of women remain concentrated at this level as their highest educational attainment.

This pattern continues in incomplete primary education, where women also present a slightly higher proportion (8.5 percent) compared to men (8.0 percent). Finally, at the most disadvantaged level—no formal schooling—the difference becomes more pronounced: women account for 4.7 percent, while men represent 3.7 percent, revealing a higher prevalence of extreme educational deprivation among the female population.

Although sex differences are not particularly wide at intermediate and higher educational levels, a structural disadvantage persists for women in terms of educational lag, as they remain disproportionately concentrated in lower educational levels and among populations with no formal schooling. At the same time, men maintain a slightly greater presence at the highest educational levels. This suggests that gender inequalities in education in Mexico are expressed less through overall access and more through unequal distribution across educational levels, reflecting cumulative inequalities throughout the life cycle.

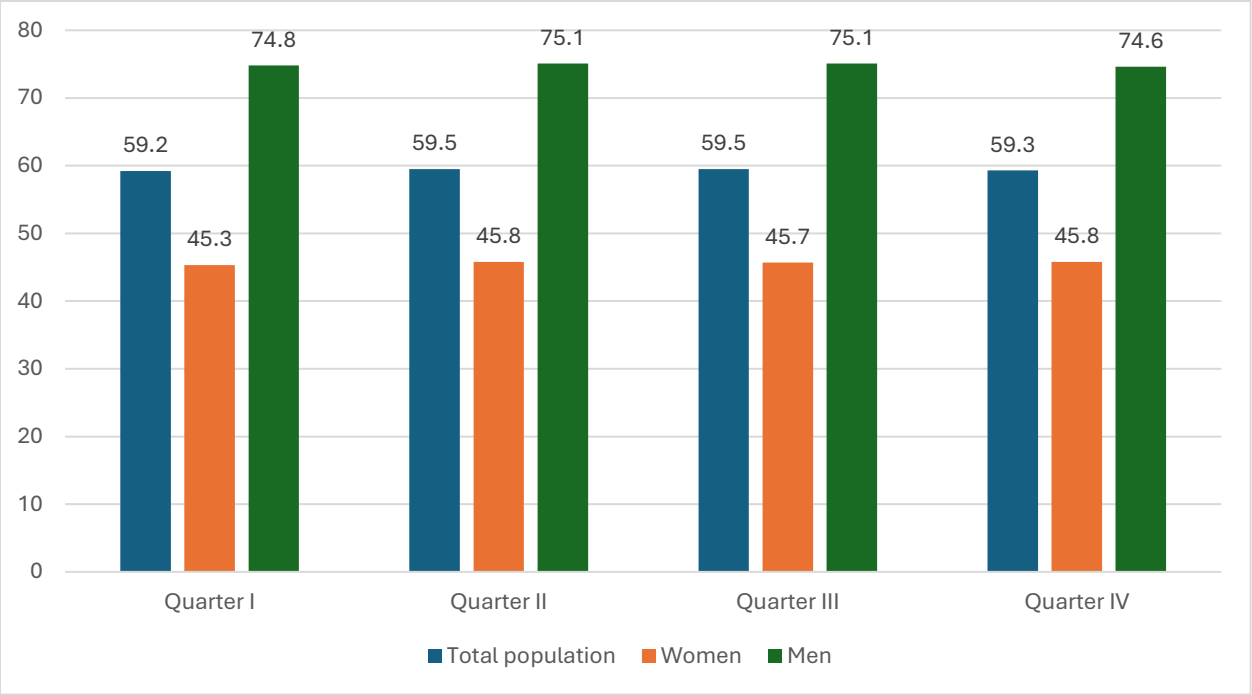
2.1.4. Labor market participation

Employment

The National Occupation and Employment Survey (ENOE) constitutes a specialized source for analyzing labor dynamics in Mexico. Although its methodological design presents greater representativeness in urban areas, it provides a relevant overview of the country's employment structure as well as the persistence of gender inequalities within the labor market.

Labor force participation in Mexico during 2025 was characterized by marked stability, but also by persistent gender inequality. Throughout the four quarters of the year, the overall economic participation rate remained close to 59 percent of the population aged 15 years and older. However, this stability conceals significant gaps between men and women. While men registered participation levels close to 75 percent, women presented rates around 45 percent. This difference of approximately 30 percentage points reflects a persistent structural gap in women's access to paid labor markets.

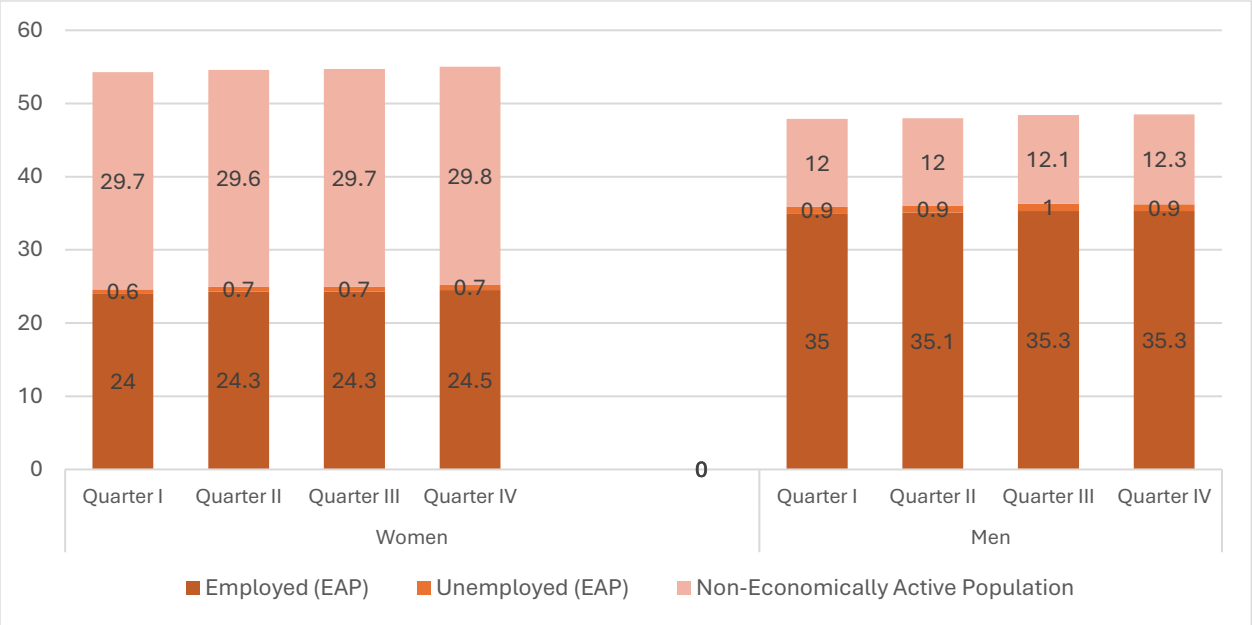
Figure 5. Labor force participation rate (percent of the population aged 15 years and over), 2025



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, National Occupation and Employment Survey (ENOE); First, Second, Third and Fourth Quarters of 2025.

The following figure provides further insight into this gap by disaggregating the population according to economic activity status. In this case, the principal difference does not lie in unemployment—which remains low and relatively similar between both groups—but rather in the size of the economically inactive population. Women present levels close to 30 percent, more than double those of men, whose levels remain around 12 percent. In contrast, the employed male population (around 35 percent) substantially exceeds the employed female population (close to 24 percent), confirming that women's lower participation is not explained by higher unemployment rates, but rather by their exclusion from the labor market.

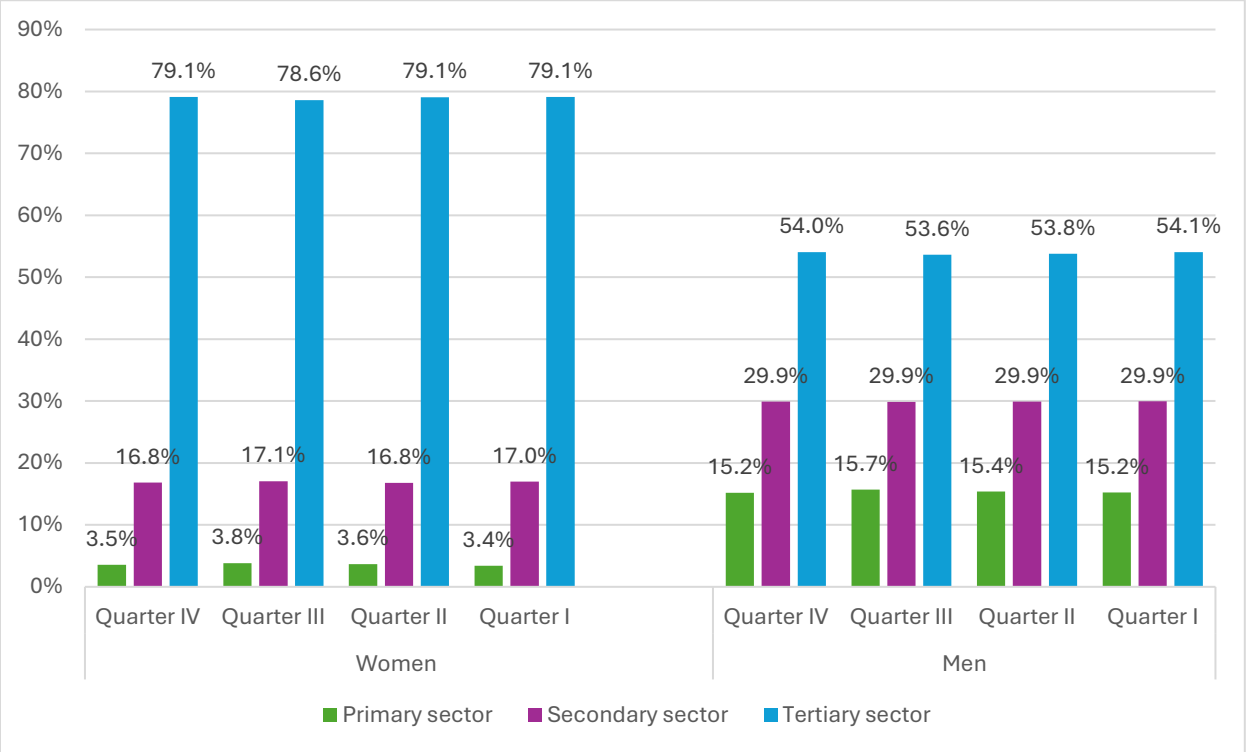
Figure 6. Population aged 15 years and over by economic activity status and employment status, 2025



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, National Occupation and Employment Survey (ENOE); First, Second, Third and Fourth Quarters of 2025.

The third analysis focuses on the employed population, which represents approximately 24 percent for women and 35 percent for men. Examining the economic sectors in which they are employed provides further insight into gender inequalities. Women face greater obstacles in accessing formal employment, stable incomes, social security, and labor protection mechanisms. In many cases, their economic participation is concentrated in informal activities, subsistence agriculture, local commerce, the use and commercialization of non-timber forest products, and community care-related activities, frequently without economic recognition or access to labor rights.

Figure 7. Percentage distribution of the employed population by sector of the economy and sex, 2025



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, National Occupation and Employment Survey (ENOE); First, Second, Third and Fourth Quarters of 2025.

Note: economic sectors: the primary sector includes agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing, and hunting; the secondary sector includes industry and manufacturing; and the tertiary sector includes services and trade.

The figure also reveals important differences in the distribution of employment by economic sector, particularly in the primary sector—which includes agriculture, livestock production, forestry, fishing, and hunting—where female participation reaches only 3.5 percent. In contrast, women are concentrated mainly in the tertiary sector, which includes services and commerce, where nearly 79 percent of female employment is located, while their participation in the secondary sector ranges between 16 percent and 17 percent. Men, by comparison, present a more diversified distribution: although they are also concentrated in the tertiary sector (approximately 53–54 percent), they maintain a considerably greater presence in the secondary sector (around 30 percent) and, particularly, in the primary sector, where they reach between 15 percent and 16 percent.

The gap in the primary sector is especially significant, as male participation is approximately four times higher than female participation, revealing strong occupational segregation in activities linked to the use and management of natural resources. This difference reflects structural barriers previously identified in rural contexts, including unequal access to land, lower agrarian ownership among women and their limited participation in productive activities associated with territory and natural resource management.

2.1.5. Political participation and decision making

Political participation

The following table presents the percentage distribution of decision-making positions within the public sector in 2024, disaggregated by men and women across different government positions. Overall, the data show that participation by sex is not homogeneous across levels of government.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of decision-making positions in the public sector by sex, 2024

	Total	Men	Women
Percentage distribution of federal ministerial positions	100	52.6	47.4
Percentage distribution of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate	100	50	50
Percentage distribution of municipal presidency positions	100	70.48	29.52
Percentage distribution of municipal syndic positions	100	30.79	69.21

Source: INMUJERES, Gender Indicators System (SIG), 2024.

In the case of federal ministries (*Secretarías de Estado*), the distribution is relatively balanced, although with a slight majority of men (52.6 percent) compared to women (47.4 percent). This indicates a near parity at the highest levels of the federal Executive Branch.

In the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, full parity is observed, with women and men each representing 50 percent of seats, reflecting significant progress toward balanced political representation within the legislative branch.

However, when analyzing the local level—particularly municipal presidencies—the inequality becomes much more pronounced. Men hold 70.48 percent of these positions, while women occupy only 29.52 percent, demonstrating that women's participation in local executive offices remains considerably lower.

In contrast, in the case of municipal syndic positions or trustees (*síndicos*), the trend is reversed: women represent 69.21 percent, compared to 30.79 percent for men. This suggests that women have greater participation in local political representation through administrative and oversight positions within municipal governments.

Political participation of rural women and governance in ejidos and communities

It is important to recall that women's political participation in rural and agrarian contexts is closely linked to the effective exercise of land rights. Historically, men have been the primary holders of agrarian rights and, consequently, have maintained greater presence within community decision-making and representation spaces. In contrast, women—particularly those without formally recognized agrarian rights—continue to face structural barriers limiting their full participation in natural resource management and in decisions concerning the future of their territories.

Land tenure constitutes a key condition for accessing community governance spaces, participating in assemblies, and holding representative positions within ejidos and communities. Persistent gender gaps in women's access to land therefore have direct implications for their levels of political representation and their capacity to influence community life.

Statistics on participation in community leadership further reinforce this disparity. In 2025, women represented only around one quarter (25.6 percent) of individuals serving in agrarian representation bodies. In the case of Ejidal Commissariat presidencies (*Comisariados Ejidales*), women accounted for only 10 percent of leadership positions, while for Communal Property Commissariat presidencies (*Comisariados de Bienes Comunales*), participation decreased further to 7.6 percent. These figures demonstrate that women continue to face important barriers in accessing leadership and decision-making spaces within agrarian nuclei.

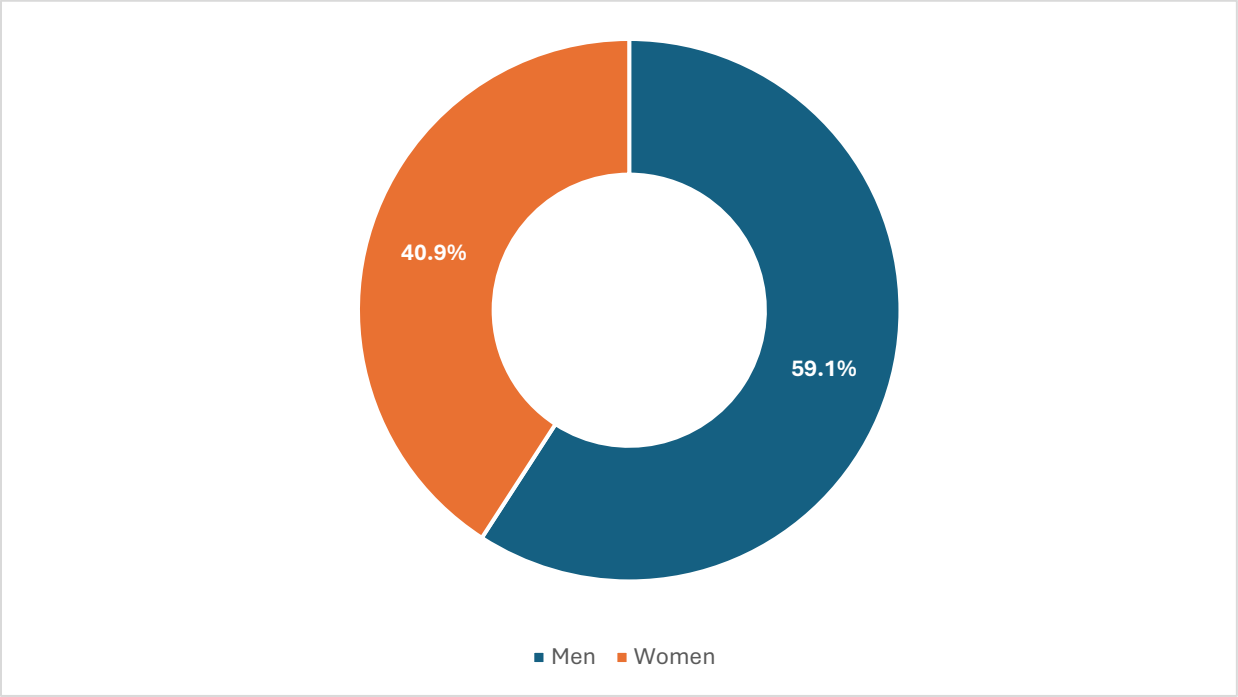
In addition to inequalities in land access, rural women face additional social and cultural barriers restricting their political and community participation. These include disproportionate unpaid domestic and care workloads, persistent gender stereotypes and community dynamics that have historically privileged male participation in representative spaces. Together, these conditions demonstrate that inequality in rural political participation is not explained solely by normative factors, but also by deeply rooted social structures that continue to limit the full exercise of rural women's rights (Prieto et al., 2021).

2.1.6. Access to land and assets

According to statistics from the National Agrarian Registry (*RAN, 2025*), fewer than 3 out of every 10 agrarian rights holders (within certified agrarian nuclei) are women, demonstrating the persistence of structural gaps in access to and recognition of agrarian rights. This situation reflects longstanding inequalities associated with social, cultural, and economic factors that have historically limited women's participation in land ownership and decision-making spaces within agrarian communities.

During 2025, women represented 40.9 percent of beneficiaries receiving agrarian titles and certificates issued by the State. Although this figure reflects progress in women's access to land tenure, important gender gaps persist in comparison to men. Access to and recognition of agrarian rights constitute fundamental elements for strengthening women's economic autonomy, participation in decision-making processes and access to rural development programs. Likewise, secure land tenure contributes to reducing historical conditions of inequality and promotes greater inclusion of women in productive, community and agrarian governance processes.

Figure 8. Percentage distribution of agrarian right holders benefiting from the issuance of certificates and land titles, by sex, 2025



Source: Own elaboration based on National Agrarian Registry (RAN), Gender Statistics, 2025.

In this context, Mexico's National Development Plan (PND) 2025–2030 recognizes the importance of advancing toward substantive equality in access to and exercise of rights, including those related to land ownership and tenure. As the guiding framework for national public policy, the Plan incorporates Strategy T1.1.3, Guaranteeing women's full and equitable rights to property, land use and access to land and assets through legal certainty, adequate documentation and equitable access to infrastructure, adequate housing, natural resources, and basic services. Through this strategy, the PND establishes actions aimed at reducing the structural inequalities that have historically limited women's access to agrarian rights and legal certainty over land.

The incorporation of this perspective into national public policy reflects the recognition that inequality in land tenure has direct implications for women's economic opportunities, community participation and full exercise of rights in rural territories. Strengthening women's access to agrarian documentation not only contributes to their empowerment and economic autonomy, but also promotes more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable territorial development processes.

2.2. Gender and forest management

Gender inequalities in the forest sector represent an important challenge for advancing toward more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable community forest management. Although women play a fundamental role in forest conservation, the use of forest resources and care-related activities linked to territory, their

participation in decision-making spaces and access to benefits derived from the forest sector remain limited.

Institutional assessments have identified significant gaps in women's access to agrarian rights, community representation and economic opportunities within the forest sector. For example, CONAFOR's National Gender and Inclusion Strategy for the Forest Sector (ENGISF) 2025–2030 indicates consistent data with the National Agrarian Registry. Among the most significant gaps identified, the strategy notes that approximately 70 percent of forest lands are owned by men and that women represent only 27 percent of rights holders within agrarian nuclei. It further highlights that women's participation in community governance remains highly limited, with women representing less than 20 percent of persons holding full rights in community assemblies, thereby restricting their effective voice and vote regarding forest resource management and territorial decision-making.

In Mexico, these inequalities are closely linked to the structure of land ownership. Although a significant proportion of the country's forests are under collective property regimes, the majority of agrarian rights holders continue to be men, which has historically constituted a structural barrier limiting women's access to forest programs and productive support mechanisms that require proof of land ownership or legal possession. In 2023 only 31 percent of direct forest subsidies were allocated to women compared to 69 percent allocated to projects led by men, revealing substantial inequalities in access to financing and productive support (CONAFOR, 2025a). These conditions limit women's opportunities for economic autonomy and restrict their full participation in forest value chains.

The use and management of forest resources also present marked gender differentiation. The strategy identifies persistent gender stereotypes associating timber and forest management activities primarily with men, while women are often confined to lower-income support or non-timber activities. It also acknowledges that women face differentiated and often greater vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation due to conditions of poverty, reduced access to productive assets, and exclusion from decision-making spaces (CONAFOR, 2025a).

Women's participation in forest technical assistance and extension services also remains limited. The low representation of women as forest promoters and technical professionals reflects structural barriers associated with access to specialized training, employment opportunities and recognition within the sector. This situation affects not only employment generation for women, but also the incorporation of gender and inclusion perspectives into community technical assistance processes.

These inequalities are compounded by the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work. The strategy recognizes that rural women dedicate, on average, 30 hours per week to care-related activities, compared to approximately 15 hours for men, significantly reducing the time available for their participation in productive activities, technical training processes and community governance spaces (CONAFOR, 2025a).

These conditions particularly affect Indigenous and rural women living in forest territories, who face multiple and intersecting forms of exclusion associated with gender, poverty, and territorial inequalities. In addition, vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation often affects them disproportionately due to limitations in access to productive resources, financing, and decision-making spaces.

In this context, integrating a gender perspective into community forest management implies not only promoting greater participation of women in decision-making spaces, but also creating more equitable conditions for access to agrarian rights, technical assistance, financing, training, and benefit-sharing mechanisms. Strengthening women's leadership and participation in forest governance constitutes a key element for advancing toward more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable territorial development models.

2.3. Gender, agriculture, and livestock

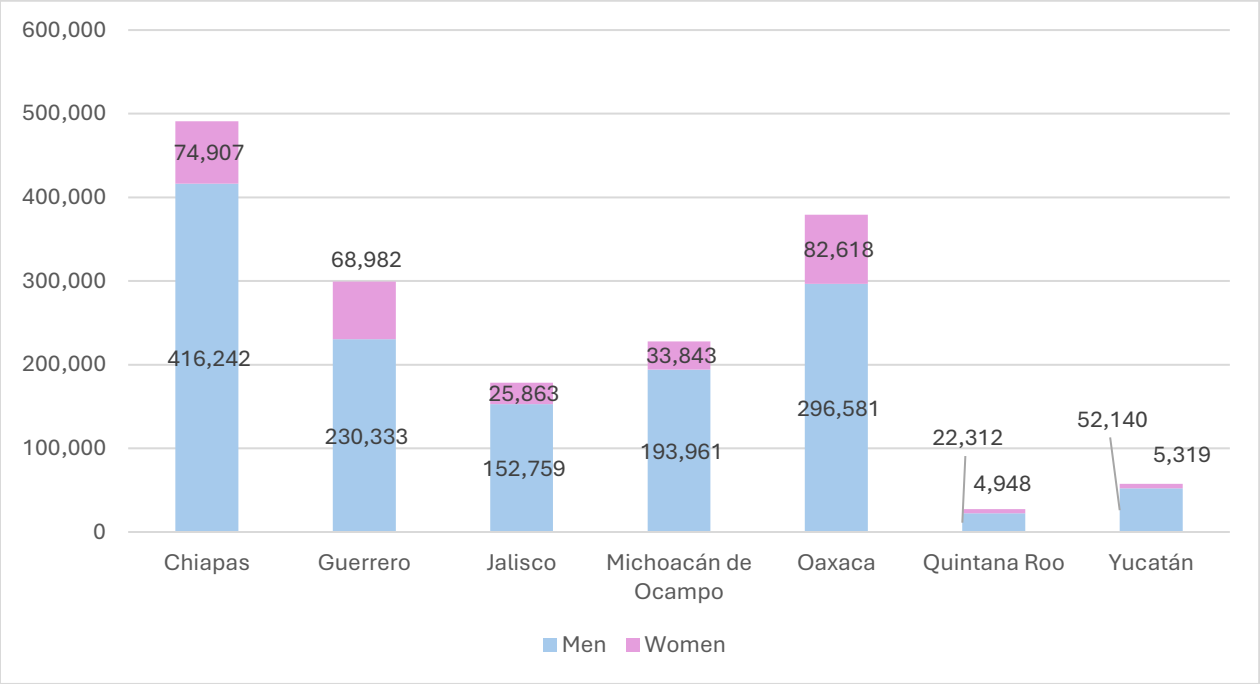
As previously noted, women's participation in activities within the primary sector of the economy—which includes agriculture, livestock production, forestry, fishing, and hunting—is substantially lower than that of men. The section on employment already analyzed differences by economic sector; it is sufficient to recall here that the participation gap between men and women exceeds 70 percentage points in this sector, revealing marked occupational segregation.

A more direct approach to understanding these disparities, particularly in livestock production and other agricultural activities, can be obtained through data from INEGI's *2022 Agricultural Census*, which allows for analysis of production units. Of the agricultural production units under the responsibility of individuals in Mexico, 81 percent were managed by men, while only 19 percent corresponded to women. These figures confirm persistent inequalities in access to and control over productive assets, particularly in rural areas.

Although important progress has been made in women's economic participation over recent decades, significant gaps persist in the ownership and control of agricultural and forest production units. As previously discussed, these inequalities have direct implications for access to productive resources, public programs, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and adaptive capacities in the face of climate change.

The following figure presents the number of production units across the states included in the study, allowing for a more detailed identification of the territorial distribution of this gender gap.

Figure 9. Number of active agricultural production units under the responsibility of an individual, by sex of the producer, by state



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, Agricultural Census 2022.

Territorial gaps also reveal significant differences across states. In all states analyzed, men concentrate the majority of agricultural production units. In Chiapas, for example, men manage approximately 416,242 production units, while women participate in around 74,907. Similarly, in Oaxaca, men control nearly 296,581 units, compared to approximately 82,618 managed by women. Guerrero also presents a substantial disparity, with 230,333 units under male control and 68,982 under women's responsibility.

These differences reflect not only inequalities in ownership of productive assets, but also persistent gaps in access to financing, technical training, productive infrastructure, and rural value chains. In many cases, women participate primarily in subsistence agriculture and livestock activities, small-scale production and complementary activities oriented toward household consumption and family subsistence, frequently with lower income levels and limited access to formal markets.

Inequalities in access to and control over production units acquire particular relevance in the context of climate change. Limited access to productive assets, land, credit, and technical assistance reduces rural women's adaptive capacities in the face of droughts, environmental degradation, agricultural productivity losses and other extreme climate events. These conditions generate differentiated vulnerability scenarios that particularly affect Indigenous women, inhabitants of forest territories and rural households living in poverty.

In addition, as previously discussed, the sexual division of labor continues to assign women a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work, restricting the time available for productive activities, technical training, and participation in organizational and community governance spaces. This

situation limits women's opportunities to strengthen processes of economic autonomy and fully access rural and forest development opportunities.

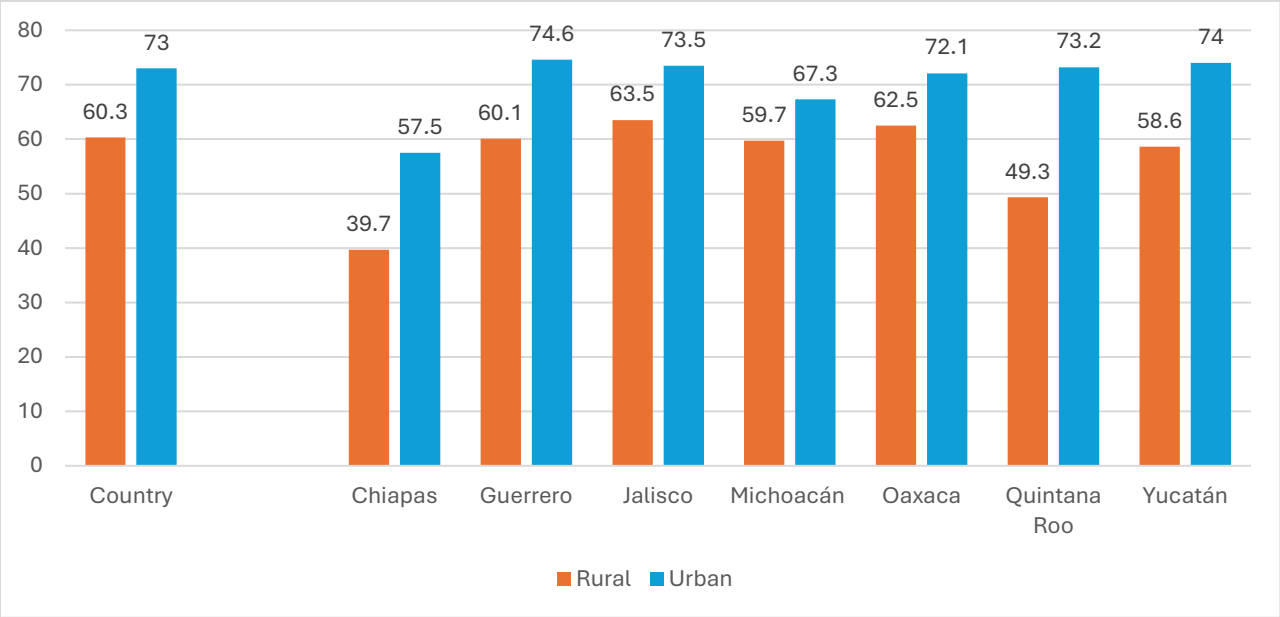
Another relevant issue is that, although women actively participate in agricultural, livestock and forest activities, their work frequently remains invisible or underreported in productive and economic statistics. This situation contributes to the persistence of inequalities in the design and implementation of public policies, financing programs and benefit-sharing mechanisms, including those associated with REDD+ initiatives and sustainable natural resource management.

In this context, strengthening rural women's access to land, productive assets, financing, training, and technical assistance, as well as improving the generation of gender-disaggregated statistical information for decision-making related to rural, agricultural and forest public policy, constitutes a strategic element for promoting more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient territorial development processes. From a gender equality and climate change perspective, advancing toward greater participation of women in productive and territorial management not only contributes to reducing structural inequalities, but also strengthens community adaptive capacities and resilience in the face of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with climate change.

2.4. Gender-based violence and prevention of sexual harassment

Within the context of the social and territorial diversity previously described—characterized by inequalities in poverty, education, and ethnic composition—violence against women also presents differentiated patterns that reflect these structural inequalities. Although aggregate national indicators make it possible to identify general trends, analysis by type of locality reveals important contrasts in the prevalence of violence. In particular, the distinction between rural and urban settings is essential for understanding how factors such as population concentration, social dynamics, and access to services shape women's experiences of violence, thereby complementing the broader analysis of social inequalities discussed in previous sections.

Figure 10. Prevalence of violence by state and locality of residence, 2021



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (ENDIREH) 2021.

Note: The prevalence of violence against women is the proportion of women aged 15 and over who have experienced one or more situations of violence at a specific point in time or over a given period.

The figure shows the prevalence of violence against women in 2021 by type of locality of residence (rural and urban) and reveals a clear and consistent pattern: violence is higher in urban areas than in rural areas in all cases, both nationally and across each of the states analyzed. This may partly reflect the fact that urban contexts tend to have greater availability of formal and informal reporting mechanisms, rather than necessarily indicating lower levels of violence in rural areas.

At the national level, prevalence in urban areas reaches 73 percent, compared to 60.3 percent in rural areas, representing a significant difference of more than 12 percentage points. This pattern is replicated across all states analyzed, suggesting that urban environments concentrate higher levels of reported violence.

At the state level, important differences are also evident. States such as Guerrero (74.6 percent urban versus 60.1 percent rural), Jalisco (73.5 percent versus 63.5 percent) and Yucatán (74 percent versus 58.6 percent) register high levels of violence in urban areas, exceeding the national average. In these cases, not only is prevalence high, but the urban-rural gap also remains considerable, indicating that violence is both more frequent and more widespread in urban contexts.

A particularly notable case is Quintana Roo, where urban prevalence reaches 73.2 percent, while rural prevalence is considerably lower (49.3 percent), representing one of the largest gaps between the two settings—nearly 24 percentage points. This suggests a strong concentration of violence in urban environments, possibly linked to specific social and territorial dynamics associated with these areas.

At the opposite end, Chiapas presents the lowest prevalence levels in both rural (39.7 percent) and urban (57.5 percent) settings, although the difference between the two remains evident. This indicates that, although prevalence is comparatively lower overall, the broader pattern of higher violence in urban areas persists.

States such as Oaxaca (72.1 percent urban versus 62.5 percent rural) and Michoacán (67.3 percent versus 59.7 percent) present intermediate levels, although violence remains consistently higher in urban areas.

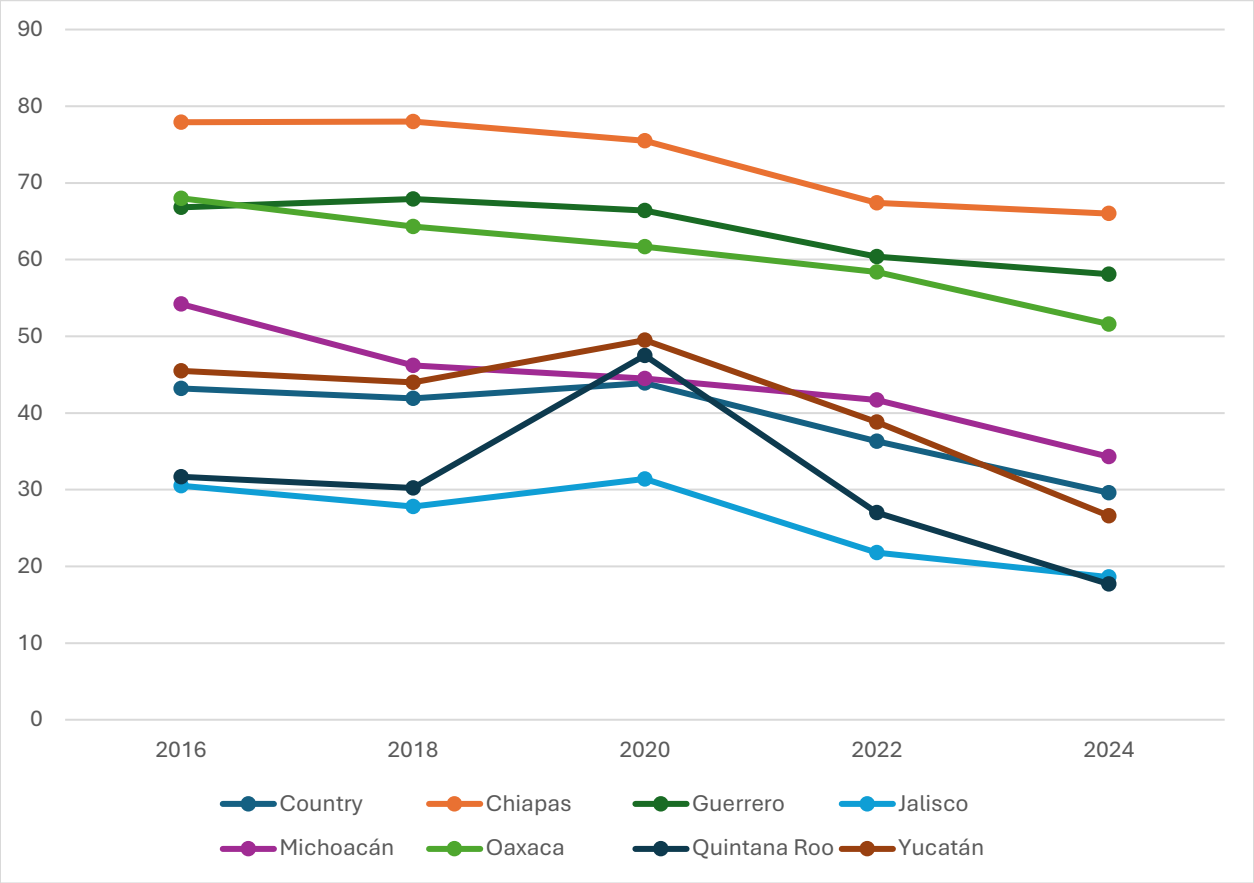
Overall, the figure demonstrates that violence against women in Mexico is systematic and has a clear territorial dimension associated with the type of locality, with higher prevalence in urban areas. This may be related to greater visibility and reporting of violence in cities, as well as structural factors such as population density, social coexistence conditions and urban social dynamics. At the same time, these territorial differences underscore the importance of designing differentiated public policies capable of addressing the specific conditions of both urban and rural contexts for GBV prevention, and formal and informal reporting and sanction mechanisms.

2.5. Other vulnerable and marginalized groups

Throughout the statistical analysis conducted for this section, strategic gender-responsive indicators have been examined in order to provide information on different situations of vulnerability and their intersections, both at the national level and across the states linked to Mexico's RBP proposal. For this reason, this subsection focuses on one variable that synthesizes many of these inequalities.

In 2024, the percentage of the population living in poverty in Mexico was 29.3 percent. By sex, there was no significant difference, with poverty levels estimated at 28.9 percent for men and 30.1 percent for women. However, when poverty is analyzed according to urban and rural localities, and trends over time are examined across the states of interest, strong territorial inequalities become evident.

Figure 11. Population in poverty by state of residence, 2016 – 2024



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, Multidimensional poverty, 2024. Calculations based on information from National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ENIGH) 2024, using CONEVAL methodology.

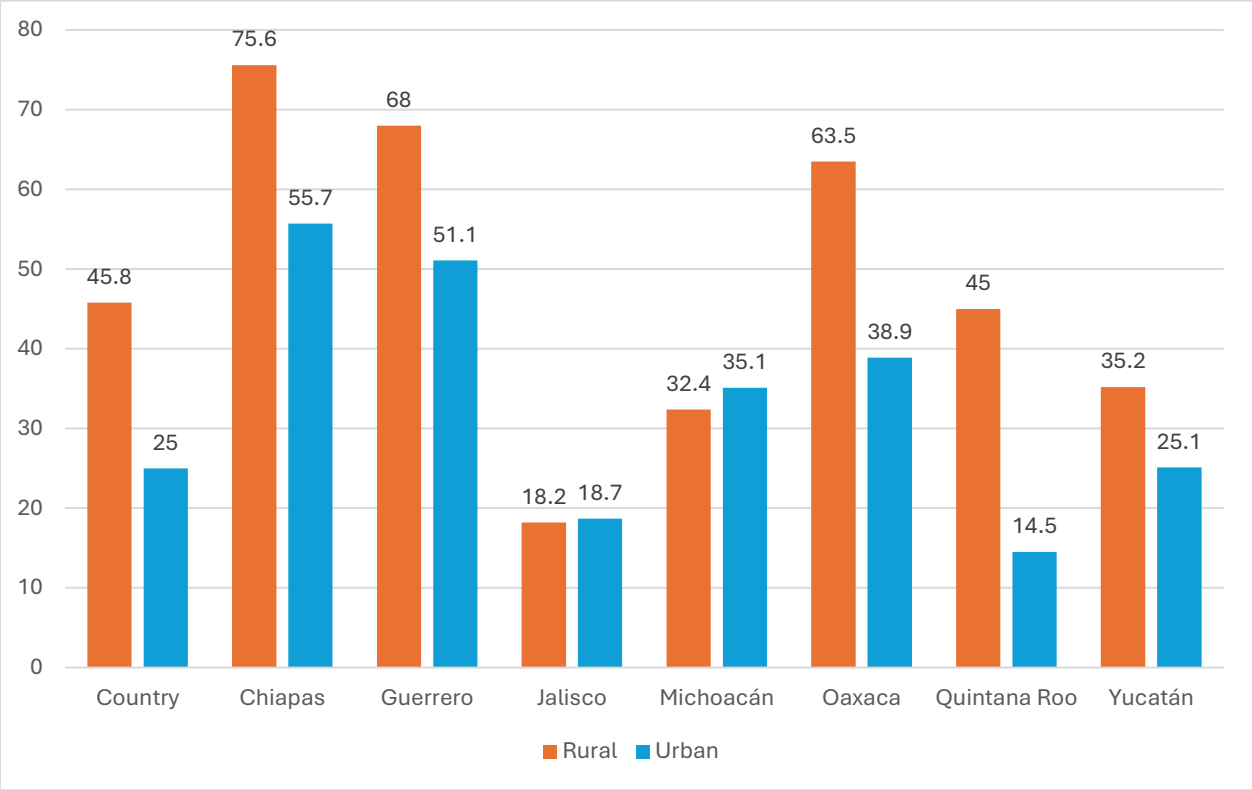
This figure illustrates the evolution of poverty levels in Mexico and across six selected states. At the national level, poverty shows a moderate decline over the period, decreasing from approximately 43 percent in 2016 to around 29 percent in 2024, indicating a general improvement in living conditions. However, this national trend conceals important differences between states.

The southern states—particularly Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca—show persistently high poverty levels throughout the entire period. Chiapas remains the state with the highest incidence, with values close to 78 percent in 2016 and still above 65 percent in 2024, reflecting some reduction but remaining at extremely high levels. Guerrero and Oaxaca follow a similar pattern, although with slightly lower levels; both show sustained reductions but continue to remain well above the national average.

In contrast, states such as Jalisco, Quintana Roo and Yucatán present lower initial poverty levels. Jalisco stands out for maintaining the lowest levels throughout the period, closing at around 18 percent in 2024. Quintana Roo displays a more volatile pattern, with a significant increase in 2020—likely associated with the economic crisis experienced that year—followed by a substantial reduction toward 2024. Yucatán also shows an increase in 2020 followed by a significant decline, reaching intermediate levels by the end of the period.

One particularly relevant finding from the figure is the impact observed in 2020, when several states registered increases in poverty, reflecting a conjunctural shock that was only partially reversed in subsequent years. Nevertheless, recovery has not been homogeneous, and important regional disparities persist.

Figure 12. Population in poverty by state and locality of residence, 2024



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, Multidimensional poverty, 2024. Calculations based on information from ENIGH 2024, using CONEVAL methodology.

Note: The rural area consists of localities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants, while the urban area consists of localities with 2,500 inhabitants or more.

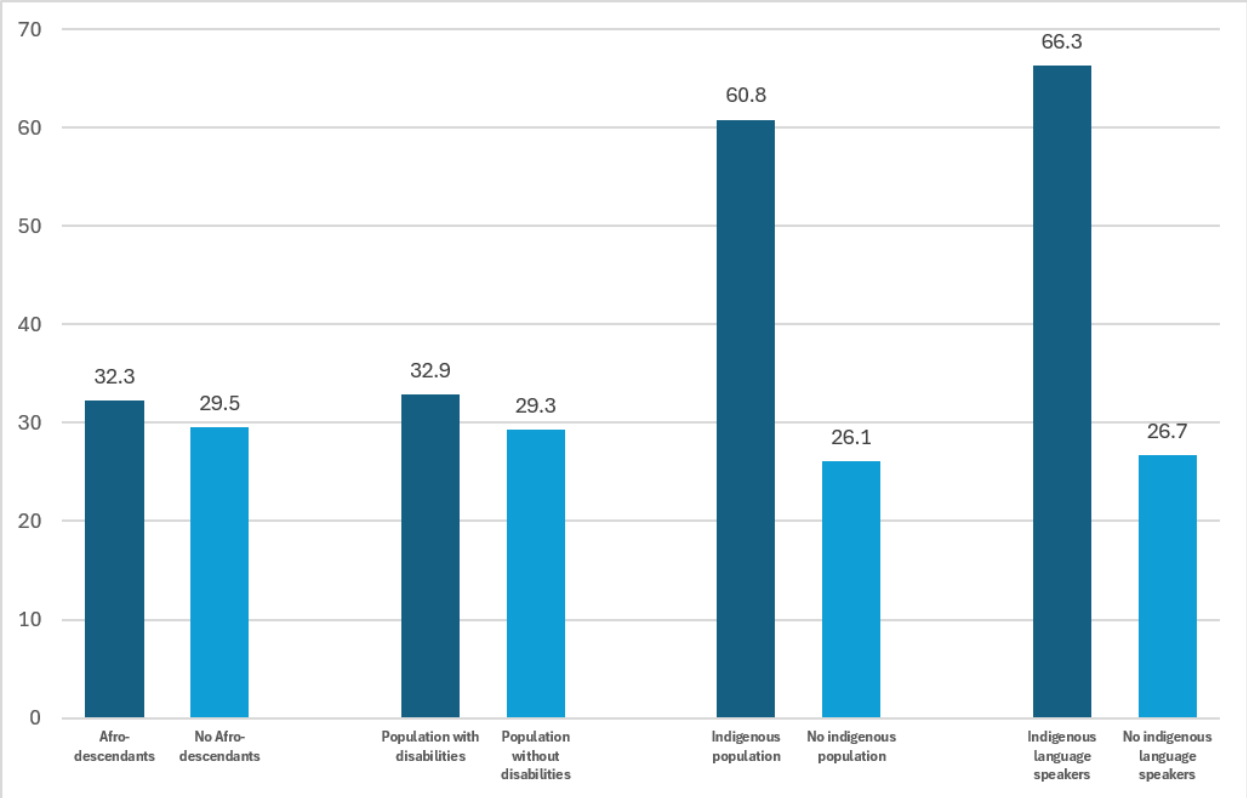
This figure disaggregates poverty levels in 2024 by rural and urban localities, allowing for a clearer understanding of these territorial differences. In all cases, poverty is significantly higher in rural areas than in urban ones, confirming the existence of a structural territorial gap. At the national level, rural poverty (45.8 percent) is almost double urban poverty (25 percent).

This difference becomes even more pronounced in the most disadvantaged states. In Chiapas, rural poverty reaches 75.6 percent, compared to 55.7 percent in urban areas; in Oaxaca, 63.5 percent in rural areas versus 38.9 percent in urban settings; and in Guerrero, 68 percent compared to 51.1 percent. These figures demonstrate that although poverty is also high in urban areas within these states, it is substantially more severe in rural contexts.

By contrast, in states with lower overall poverty levels, such as Jalisco, the difference between rural and urban poverty is much smaller (18.2 percent in rural areas versus 18.7 percent in urban areas), suggesting greater territorial homogeneity. In Quintana Roo and Yucatán, although rural poverty remains higher, the gap is more moderate than that observed in the country's southernmost states.

The final analysis in this poverty section presents a figure showing the percentage of the population living in poverty according to membership or non-membership in different population groups.

Figure 13. Percentage of the population in poverty by population group, 2024



Source: Own elaboration based on INEGI, Multidimensional poverty, 2024. Calculations based on information from ENIGH 2024, using CONEVAL methodology.

Indigenous populations and Indigenous language speakers present the highest poverty levels. The Indigenous population reaches 60.8 percent, while Indigenous language speakers reach as high as 66.3 percent, positioning them as the groups experiencing the greatest levels of vulnerability. In contrast, non-Indigenous populations and non-Indigenous language speakers register much lower poverty levels, close to 26 percent, implying gaps of more than 30 percentage points. This reveals a profound structural inequality associated with ethnic origin and the historical exclusion experienced by Indigenous Peoples and communities.

The Afro-descendant population (32.3 percent) and people with disabilities (32.9 percent) present very similar poverty levels, both slightly above 30 percent. Although poverty gaps are also observed between

those belonging to these groups and those who do not, the differences are less pronounced, remaining close to three percentage points in both cases.

Although aggregate poverty levels may appear relatively homogeneous, important differences emerge when specific population groups are analyzed. The most pronounced disparities are concentrated among Indigenous populations, particularly Indigenous language speakers, suggesting that poverty in Mexico has a strong ethnic and structural dimension. To a lesser extent, higher poverty incidence is also observed among Afro-descendant populations and persons with disabilities, confirming that social inequalities intersect with multiple forms of vulnerability.

Together, these three analyses demonstrate that although poverty in Mexico has generally declined, important structural inequalities persist. On the one hand, marked differences continue to exist between states, with a clear concentration of deprivation in the southern region of the country. On the other hand, the territorial dimension remains critical: rural poverty continues to be considerably higher than urban poverty, suggesting persistent limitations in access to services, economic opportunities, and overall well-being in smaller localities. Furthermore, analysis by population group shows that these inequalities deepen among certain social sectors—particularly Indigenous populations and Indigenous language speakers—which continue to experience significantly higher poverty levels.

3. Policy, legal and regulatory framework

3.1. Legal and policy framework

Mexico has progressively consolidated a comprehensive legal, institutional and policy framework to advance gender equality, prevent discrimination and gender-based violence, and promote the participation of women in sustainable development, climate action and natural resource governance. The framework reflects both the historical evolution of gender mainstreaming in public policy and the strengthening of substantive equality and intersectoral governance in recent years. See summary table of relevant legal and policy framework in Annex 1 to this GAAP.

3.1.1. Constitutional and Equality Reform Framework

The constitutional basis of gender equality in Mexico is grounded in Articles 1 and 4 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States. Article 1 establishes the prohibition of all forms of discrimination based on sex, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, social condition, or any other status, while also incorporating international human rights treaties into the constitutional order under the pro persona principle. Article 4 recognizes equality between women and men and establishes the obligation of the State to guarantee substantive equality. (DOF, 1917; last amendment: 2026).

Mexico's transition toward a substantive equality framework was consolidated through a set of constitutional and legislative reforms adopted between 2024 and 2026, commonly referred to as the "substantive equality reform package." The first milestone occurred with the constitutional reform published on November 15, 2024, which amended Articles 4, 21, 41, 73, 116, 122 and 123 of the Constitution in order to strengthen the protection of women's rights, institutionalize substantive equality and reinforce the State's obligations regarding gender-based violence prevention and non-discrimination. (DOF, 1917; last amendment: 2026).

The reform represented a significant shift in Mexico's constitutional approach to equality by moving beyond formal equality principles and explicitly recognizing substantive equality as a guiding obligation for public institutions. Among its most important innovations, the reform established reinforced protection duties for women, adolescents, girls, and boys; required public security institutions to incorporate a gender perspective into their operations; and strengthened gender parity obligations in appointments across federal, state, and municipal executive branches. In addition, the reform mandated the establishment of specialized prosecutorial bodies to investigate crimes related to gender-based violence against women at state and local levels.

Another central aspect of the reform concerned labor equality and economic rights. Constitutional amendments reinforced the principle that equal work must receive equal pay regardless of sex, gender or nationality and instructed the State to develop specific legal and institutional mechanisms to eliminate gender wage gaps. This represented a substantial strengthening of the constitutional basis for addressing structural discrimination within labor markets and public administration.

The constitutional reform was followed by a second legislative harmonization process enacted on January 15, 2026, through which provisions across 18 federal laws were amended[2], added, or repealed to align secondary legislation with the new constitutional mandate on substantive equality and non-discrimination. The reform also strengthened institutional coordination mechanisms by restructuring the National System for Equality and incorporating INEGI as a permanent participant with voice rights in order to reinforce the use of statistical evidence in equality policymaking.

The harmonization reforms additionally introduced obligations for public institutions—particularly in the health and social security sectors—to generate and collect information using intersectional disaggregation criteria. These measures seek to improve the visibility of structural inequalities affecting women and historically marginalized groups whose conditions had traditionally remained statistically invisible. Likewise, the reforms established stronger obligations related to equal pay within public administration and incorporated preferential measures in housing programs benefiting women heads of household and women affected by violence.

3.1.2. National Development and Gender Equality Policy Framework

In parallel, the National Development Plan 2025–2030 consolidates substantive equality and women's rights as one of the central cross-cutting priorities of the Federal Government through Transversal Axis 1: Substantive Equality and Women's Rights. The Plan recognizes that structural inequalities affecting women are intensified by intersecting factors such as poverty, ethnicity, territorial exclusion, and unequal access to productive assets, particularly in rural and Indigenous regions. Within its strategic objectives, the PND explicitly identifies the need to guarantee women's access to land tenure, agrarian rights, and productive resources as a central condition for achieving substantive equality and strengthening women's economic autonomy. This objective is especially relevant for Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, and rural women linked to the forest and livestock sectors, where unequal access to land ownership and agrarian rights continues to limit women's participation in decision-making processes, access to public programs, forest incentives, financing mechanisms and benefit-sharing arrangements. The Plan therefore calls for the incorporation of substantive equality criteria across agrarian, rural, and environmental policies, including actions aimed at reducing structural barriers affecting women's participation in territorial governance and sustainable rural development processes (Gobierno de México, 2025).

The PND 2025–2030 additionally emphasizes the strategic role of women in food systems, biodiversity conservation, sustainable natural resource management and climate resilience. The document recognizes Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, and rural women as key actors in forest conservation, water management, agroecological production and community sustainability, while also acknowledging that women frequently face differentiated impacts from environmental degradation, climate change and territorial inequalities. In this context, the Plan establishes objectives aimed at strengthening women's access to technical assistance, productive projects, education, financing, innovation, and social protection, particularly in historically marginalized territories. It also highlights the importance of strengthening women's participation and

2 General Law for Equality between Women and Men; General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violences; National Code of Civil and Family Procedures; Federal Law on State Workers; Regulatory Law of Section B of Article 123 of the Constitution; General Law on Social Development; General Health Law; General Education Law; Social Security Law; Migration Law; General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents; Law of the Institute of Social Security and Services for State Workers; Planning Law; Housing Law; Federal Labor Law; Federal Copyright Law; Federal Law for the Protection of Industrial Property; and General Law on Culture and Cultural Rights.

leadership within community, agrarian and territorial governance structures related to environmental management, forest conservation, and sustainable livestock production.

At the same time, the Plan identifies unpaid care work and the unequal sexual division of labor as structural barriers limiting women's economic autonomy and participation in productive and community activities. In response, the PND links substantive equality with the consolidation of the National Care System and the development of care-responsive public policies intended to reduce women's disproportionate care burdens and create enabling conditions for their participation in education, governance, productive activities, and public life. This perspective is especially relevant for rural and forest territories, where women commonly combine agricultural, livestock, forest and household responsibilities with unpaid community and caregiving work. Consequently, the Plan promotes a development vision grounded in territorial justice, interculturality, social inclusion and women's autonomy, while recognizing that substantive equality must be integrated transversally into climate action, sustainable rural development, and environmental governance policies.

3.1.3. Legal Framework for Women's Rights, Equality, Non-Discrimination, and a Life Free from Violence

In line with the constitutional reform on substantive equality and the priorities established under the National Development Plan 2025–2030, one of the most relevant outcomes of this process was the transformation of the former General Law for Equality between Women and Men into the General Law for Substantive Equality between Women and Men (LGISMH), reflecting a transition from a formal equality approach toward a more comprehensive framework centered on substantive equality, intersectionality, and structural transformation. The updated law strengthens institutional obligations for integrating gender perspectives across all branches and levels of government, reinforces parity and equal participation in decision-making spaces, and promotes measures aimed at reducing structural inequalities affecting women, particularly Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, rural, and marginalized women. The reform also strengthens provisions related to gender mainstreaming in planning, budgeting, public policy, and institutional accountability mechanisms, thereby reinforcing the legal basis for gender-responsive climate and forest governance. Articles 3 and 5 recognize ethnicity, language, culture, and origin as protected categories and prohibit discriminatory conditions that limit equal access to opportunities and rights. Article 16 establishes that municipalities must promote women's social and political participation in both rural and urban areas, while Article 17 recognizes women as strategic actors in sustainable rural development and community decision-making processes. Specifically, Article 17 mandates policies to strengthen women's participation in the sustainable development of rural communities and additionally recognizes the right to a healthy environment and access to water and sanitation as substantive equality issues. The law further incorporates land and territorial rights within the equality agenda. Article 33 establishes the objective of promoting equal opportunities in the use, enjoyment and ownership of land and rural development benefits, while Article 34 promotes the participation of rural women in agrarian and sectoral development programs (DOF, 2006; last amendment: 2026).

In parallel, reforms to the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violences expanded and strengthened the State's obligations regarding prevention, attention, protection, and reparation in cases of gender-based violence. The updated framework incorporates broader recognition of structural, institutional, digital, and community-based forms of violence and reinforces the obligation of public institutions to adopt preventive and differentiated measures, particularly for women facing intersecting conditions of vulnerability. The law constitutes one of the principal legal instruments for protecting the

rights, safety, and access to justice of women in Mexico, including Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, and rural women. The law incorporates interculturality as a guiding principle through Articles 4 and 5, recognizing that public policies must address the specific realities and cultural contexts of Indigenous and Afro-descendant women. Article 5 additionally establishes the principle of differential approach, requiring authorities to identify and address the differentiated vulnerabilities affecting women based on ethnicity and other intersecting conditions in order to implement affirmative measures that guarantee substantive equality and protection of rights. The law also establishes safeguards against discriminatory uses of customary norms and practices. Article 20 prohibits restrictions on women's political rights based on traditions or internal normative systems that violate human rights, while Article 33 establishes that systems based on customary law and traditional practices cannot impede the protection of women's constitutional and internationally recognized rights in the implementation of protection measures. These provisions are particularly relevant in Indigenous and rural territories where community normative systems coexist with national legal frameworks. (DOF, 2007; last amendment: 2026). Likewise, the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination establishes obligations for public institutions to prevent discriminatory practices and guarantee equal access to public programs and services, including for Indigenous women, rural women, and historically marginalized populations.

Mexico has also progressively integrated gender equality into its planning and budgeting systems. The Planning Law requires national planning instruments to incorporate gender perspectives, while the Federal Budget and Fiscal Responsibility Law establish the obligation to mainstream gender equality into public expenditure. This has been operationalized through Annex 13 of the Federal Expenditure Budget, which earmarks federal resources for actions related to equality between women and men and has become one of the most important public financing mechanisms for gender-responsive policy implementation in Mexico.

At the policy level, gender equality is currently guided by the Women's Sectoral Program 2025–2030, coordinated by the Ministry of Women (Secretaría de las Mujeres) as part of the federal government's broader substantive equality agenda and in articulation with the objectives of the National Program for Equality between Women and Men (PROIGUALDAD). The sectoral program adopts a human rights, intersectional and territorial approach and identifies rural women, Indigenous women, Afro-Mexican women and women living in conditions of poverty as priority populations. It establishes strategic objectives related to women's economic autonomy, participation in decision-making, prevention of violence, access to land and productive resources, redistribution of care work and the strengthening of gender-responsive public institutions. The program also explicitly promotes the incorporation of gender perspectives into environmental, climate and territorial governance processes, recognizing that climate change, environmental degradation and unequal access to natural resources disproportionately affect women in rural and Indigenous territories. In this regard, the program calls for strengthening women's participation in sustainable rural development, climate adaptation, food security, biodiversity conservation, and community-based natural resource management initiatives. It further emphasizes the importance of supporting Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women's participation in territorial governance, traditional knowledge systems and sustainable production processes, while promoting interinstitutional coordination between gender, environmental, agricultural, and rural development authorities. The program additionally recognizes the structural barriers faced by women in the forest and rural sectors—including unequal access to land tenure, financing, technical assistance, and decision-making spaces—and promotes actions aimed at strengthening women's leadership, productive capacities and participation in community and environmental governance structures (DOF, 2025).

3.1.4. Environmental, Climate and Forest Governance Framework

The environmental and climate sectors have progressively incorporated gender equality into their legal and policy frameworks. The General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection (LGEEPA) incorporate principles related to gender equality, social participation, and equitable environmental governance within Mexico's environmental policy framework. Article 15 establishes the guiding principles for the formulation and implementation of environmental policy and explicitly recognizes that women play an important role in the protection, preservation, and sustainable use of natural resources and in development processes, further stating that their full participation is essential for achieving sustainable development. This provision constitutes one of the earliest explicit recognitions within Mexican environmental legislation of the strategic role of women in environmental governance and sustainable resource management. In addition, Article 21 establishes that the Federation and the federal entities shall design and implement economic instruments to incentivize compliance with environmental policy objectives and, specifically, mandates the promotion of greater social equity, with an intercultural and gender perspective, in the distribution of costs and benefits associated with environmental policy objectives. The article further promotes incentives for environmental protection, restoration and sustainable resource use while reinforcing the integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations into public policy (DOF, 1988; last amendment: 2026).

The General Law on Climate Change (LGCC) incorporates gender equality, participation, and social inclusion within Mexico's climate governance framework. Article 26 establishes that national climate policy must be guided by principles including sustainability, co-responsibility, public participation, social equity, and gender equality, thereby providing a legal basis for integrating gender-responsive approaches into climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Article 51 further strengthens inclusive climate governance by establishing that the Climate Change Council—the permanent advisory body of the Interministerial Commission on Climate Change—must be composed of representatives from the social, private, and academic sectors while guaranteeing both balanced sectoral representation and the principle of gender parity in its integration. Additionally, Article 71 establishes that state-level climate change programs must incorporate gender equity criteria and promote the representation of the most vulnerable populations in climate-related planning and implementation processes. Together, these provisions reinforce the integration of gender equality, inclusive participation and differentiated vulnerability considerations within Mexico's climate policy and REDD+ governance framework. (DOF, 2012; last amendment: 2024). These provisions are operationalized through climate planning instruments, including the updated Special Climate Change Program (SEMARNAT, 2023) and Mexico's Nationally Determined Contributions, which recognize the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and Indigenous Peoples and promote inclusive adaptation and mitigation measures (SEMARNAT, 2025).

The General Law on Sustainable Forest Development (LGDFS) incorporates explicit provisions on gender equality, affirmative actions, and inclusive participation within Mexico's forest governance framework. Article 2 establishes among the general objectives of the law the promotion of affirmative actions within forest policy aimed at guaranteeing substantive equality of opportunities for women, Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Peoples and communities, youth, and persons with disabilities. Complementarily, Article 3 establishes as a specific objective the promotion of opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities within sustainable forest development processes. The law further defines "affirmative actions" in Article 7 as temporary, compensatory, or promotional measures directed toward specific persons or groups in order to correct structural inequalities and guarantee substantive equality of opportunities while such inequalities persist. In addition, Article 8 establishes that forest policy must be implemented under principles including gender equality, inclusion, participation, and safeguards, thereby providing an explicit

legal basis for integrating gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches into forest governance and REDD+ implementation. Article 24 further establishes that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Forestry Commission, shall promote the participation of women in projects related to sustainable forest management, including in relation to benefits derived from forest incentives and support programs. Finally, Article 153 establishes that State Forestry Councils must guarantee the participation of representatives from forest communities, Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Peoples and communities, civil society, youth, and women, thereby strengthening inclusive and participatory governance within the forest sector. (DOF, 2018; last amendment: 2024).

The forest policy framework has evolved substantially in recent years. The National Forestry Program 2026–2030 (PNF 2026–2030) positions substantive equality, inclusion and social justice as cross-cutting principles of Mexico's forest policy and recognizes women, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Mexican communities as strategic actors in sustainable forest governance and climate action. Consistent with the National Development Plan 2025–2030, the PNF 2026–2030 incorporates specific actions aimed at strengthening the participation of women, youth and Indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities in conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest management processes. Objective 5 of the Program specifically establishes actions to mainstream gender equality and inclusion across institutional and operational processes, strengthen women's capacities and leadership, promote equitable participation in community governance structures and eliminate cultural and gender-based violence within forest territories. The Program also recognizes that community forest management and inclusive governance models have the potential to contribute to greater substantive equality between women and men by strengthening local capacities, improving livelihoods, and promoting equitable access to forest-related economic opportunities and benefits (DOF, 2026).

A particularly important milestone is the adoption of the National Gender and Inclusion Strategy for the Forest Sector 2025–2030 by CONAFOR. This strategy represents the first comprehensive sectoral instrument dedicated specifically to gender equality and social inclusion in the forest sector. The strategy adopts an intersectional and rights-based approach and establishes objectives related to women's participation in forest governance, access to technical assistance and financing, prevention of discrimination and violence, generation of sex-disaggregated data, strengthening of women-led forest enterprises and inclusion of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women. It also recognizes structural barriers affecting women in the sector, including unequal land tenure, limited participation in ejido assemblies, unpaid care work and restricted access to technical and financial resources (CONAFOR, 2025a).

To address these structural gaps, the ENGISF is organized around five strategic axes and forty-four operational actions aimed at mainstreaming substantive equality and inclusion across forest policy and institutional practice. These axes include capacity development for inclusion and well-being; substantive equality for sustainable forest development; inclusive governance; culture of peace and violence-free environments; and institutional strengthening within CONAFOR. Through these components, the strategy promotes affirmative actions to improve women's access to forest incentives, technology, technical assistance, and markets; strengthen women's leadership and participation in community and sectoral governance bodies; and incorporate measures to prevent gender-based violence and discrimination within forest territories and institutional environments.

The current CONAFOR Operating Rules operationalizes many of these principles. The Operating Rules establish inclusion criteria and prioritization mechanisms for women, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Mexican populations, and other vulnerable groups within forest support schemes. They also promote women's

participation in technical training, community forestry, restoration activities, and sustainable production projects. Several support categories include explicit scoring criteria or prioritization mechanisms favoring projects led by women or projects demonstrating inclusive governance structures. In addition, the Rules incorporate safeguards provisions requiring compliance with social and environmental standards and alignment with CONAFOR's safeguards framework (CONAFOR, 2026).

3.1.5. Rural Development and Agrarian Governance Framework

The agricultural and rural development sectors have also strengthened gender mainstreaming in recent years. SADER currently implements the Farmer Field Schools model as part of its rural extension and agroecological transition strategy. These schools promote participatory learning, community-based innovation and sustainable production practices while incorporating gender perspectives through targeted participation of women producers, leadership strengthening and inclusion of women in technical and organizational processes (SADER, 2025a; 2025b). The model recognizes that women often face differentiated barriers in access to technical assistance, productive inputs and decision-making spaces and therefore seeks to strengthen their agency and participation in local food systems and climate resilience processes.

Likewise, the Sustainable Rural Development Law (LDRS) incorporates gender equality and women's inclusion as part of Mexico's rural development policy framework. Article 15 establishes equity and social inclusion as guiding principles of sustainable rural development, while Article 118 promotes the participation of women and vulnerable groups in economic and productive development processes within rural territories. Article 144 further establishes that training, technical assistance, and technology transfer programs must contribute to improving the capacities and productive participation of rural women. In addition, Article 154 mandates public authorities to promote the incorporation of women into productive activities, training processes, rural organizations and decision-making spaces, and Article 162 recognizes rural women as priority subjects of public policy, requiring the implementation of programs aimed at improving their access to productive resources, financing, technical assistance, and organizational participation.

Also, the Agrarian Law incorporates multiple provisions aimed at strengthening gender equality, women's participation and substantive equality within agrarian governance and rural development processes. Article 4 establishes that the Federal Executive shall promote the integral and equitable development of the rural sector through productive and social actions implemented with a gender perspective and aimed at improving the well-being and participation of the population under conditions of equality and parity. Article 12 further recognizes both women and men as holders of ejido rights, thereby affirming women's legal status as *ejidatarias*. In matters of governance, Article 37 establishes that the candidacies for positions within ejido commissariats and supervisory councils must be integrated under the principle of gender parity and that auxiliary commissions and secretariats must also comply with parity criteria, strengthening women's participation in agrarian decision-making structures. Additionally, Article 63 grants protection to the Women's Agricultural and Industrial Unit (UAIM) as part of the lands reserved for community development within ejidos, while Article 71 establishes that ejidos may reserve land specifically for UAIMs to support productive, mutual assistance and economic development activities carried out by women within agrarian communities. Finally, Article 108 authorizes ejidos and communities to establish enterprises for the sustainable use of natural resources and explicitly recognizes the participation of organized groups of rural women, while also allowing women from agrarian nuclei to organize themselves into UAIMs and federations thereof.

The current policy framework also reflects increasing attention to intersectionality and differentiated vulnerabilities. The 2024 constitutional reform on Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Peoples strengthened recognition of collective rights and participation, while public policy instruments increasingly incorporate intersectional approaches recognizing the differentiated conditions affecting Indigenous women, Afro-Mexican women, young women, and women living in conditions of poverty. This aligns with the broader shift in Mexico toward a human rights-based approach to public policy and data generation, including the production of disaggregated information for monitoring inequality and discrimination.

3.2. International commitments

Mexico is party to a broad range of international and regional instruments related to gender equality, women's rights, non-discrimination, climate change, Indigenous Peoples' rights, environmental governance, and participation. Annex 2 to this GAAP provides an overview of these instruments. These commitments constitute an essential normative basis as they establish obligations related to substantive equality, participation, safeguards, prevention of GBV, access to natural resources, and inclusive climate action. The current Mexican legal and institutional framework reflects a progressive harmonization between these international commitments and national legislation, public policy, and sectoral governance.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

At the international level, one of the principal instruments guiding gender equality policy in Mexico is the CEDAW, ratified by Mexico in 1981. Through the constitutional reform of 2011, CEDAW acquired constitutional hierarchy under Article 1 of the Constitution, requiring all public authorities to align legislation, policies, and programs with its provisions. CEDAW establishes obligations to eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic, social, cultural, and rural contexts, including equal access to land, participation in development planning and access to public services. Particularly relevant is Article 14, which recognizes the specific rights of rural women and calls on States to ensure their participation in rural development processes and equal access to productive resources, credit, training, and community activities (United Nations, 1979).

Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention)

Mexico is also party to the Belém do Pará Convention, ratified in 1998. This convention constitutes the principal regional instrument on violence against women and establishes the obligation of States to prevent, investigate and sanction gender-based violence in both public and private spheres. The convention has strongly influenced the development of Mexico's legal framework on violence against women, particularly the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence. Belém do Pará supports the integration of prevention and response measures for GBV and SEAH within grievance redress mechanisms and participation processes (Organization of American States, 1994).

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Mexico has additionally committed to the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The Beijing Platform for Action established strategic objectives related to women and the environment, women and poverty, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, and women in decision-making. Mexico continues to report periodically on implementation progress through national review processes coordinated by federal gender institutions (United Nations, 1995). The principles of gender mainstreaming and intersectionality promoted

through the Beijing Platform have influenced the development of PROIGUALDAD, climate policy, and forest sector inclusion strategies.

2030 Agenda

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is another central pillar of Mexico's international commitments. Mexico adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 and has incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national planning and policy frameworks. SDG 5 promotes women's full participation, equal access to economic resources, recognition of unpaid care work, and the elimination of violence and discrimination. Mexico has institutionalized monitoring mechanisms for SDG implementation through interinstitutional coordination platforms and national indicator systems (United Nations, 2015).

Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (ILO Convention 169)

Mexico has also strengthened its commitments regarding Indigenous Peoples and participation rights. The country ratified the ILO Convention 169 in 1990, thereby recognizing obligations related to consultation, participation, cultural identity, and collective rights. Convention 169 establishes that Indigenous Peoples must participate in decisions affecting their territories and natural resources and requires culturally appropriate consultation procedures. (International Labour Organization, 1989).

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Mexico additionally endorsed the UNDRIP, which reinforces rights related to self-determination, participation, traditional knowledge and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). These principles are reflected in Mexico's recent constitutional reforms strengthening the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Peoples.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

In environmental governance, Mexico is party to the UNFCCC, ratified in 1993, and the Paris Agreement, ratified in 2016. These instruments provide an overarching framework for REDD+ implementation and climate finance. Mexico has incorporated gender considerations progressively within its climate commitments, including through its NDCs, which recognize differentiated vulnerabilities and the need for inclusive adaptation and mitigation approaches (SEMARNAT, 2025). Mexico also participated actively in the development of the Cancun Safeguards adopted at COP16 in Cancun in 2010. These safeguards explicitly call for respect for the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, full and effective participation, transparent governance and consistency with biodiversity conservation and social inclusion objectives (UNFCCC, 2011).

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

The CBD, ratified by Mexico in 1993, promotes biodiversity conservation while recognizing the role of traditional knowledge and participation of Indigenous and local communities. The CBD Gender Plan of Action and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework further reinforce the integration of gender equality into biodiversity governance and ecosystem management processes (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022).

Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement)

Mexico is additionally party to the Escazú Agreement, which entered into force for Mexico in 2021. The Escazú Agreement establishes obligations regarding access to environmental information, participation in

environmental decision-making and access to justice, while also recognizing the need to protect environmental human rights defenders (ECLAC, 2018).

Inter-American Level Conventions

At the inter-American level, Mexico has also ratified the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, both of which reinforce obligations related to equality, non-discrimination, and intersectionality. These instruments are relevant for addressing the differentiated conditions affecting Indigenous women, Afro-Mexican women and women living in rural and forest-dependent territories (Organization of American States, 2013a; 2013b).

3.3. Institutional framework

Mexico's institutional framework for gender equality and social inclusion has evolved significantly over the last decade and, as of 2026, reflects an increasingly integrated approach linking human rights, climate action, rural development, environmental governance, and social inclusion.

Gender Equality

At the federal level, the principal institution responsible for coordinating national gender equality policy is the Ministry of Women, which represents the most recent institutional evolution of Mexico's national gender machinery. Building upon the previous work of the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), the Ministry coordinates the implementation of PROIGUALDAD and the Women's Sectoral Program 2025–2030, promotes gender mainstreaming across public administration and provides technical guidance for integrating substantive equality and intersectionality into sectoral policies; also plays an important role in monitoring compliance with national and international gender commitments and coordinating interinstitutional actions related to violence prevention, economic empowerment, and women's participation in decision-making. Complementarily, the Ministry of Women also plays a central role in coordinating Mexico's emerging National Care System, which has become an increasingly important component of the country's substantive equality agenda. The strengthening of the care policy framework reflects growing recognition that unpaid care and domestic work constitute structural barriers limiting women's participation in economic activities, community governance, climate initiatives and decision-making spaces, particularly in rural and forest-dependent territories (ECLAC, 2022). Operational coordination of gender mainstreaming is further articulated through the National System for Equality between Women and Men, which coordinates 51 federal public administration institutions to ensure the transversal integration of gender perspectives across public policy. As of 2026, the Gender Equality Units (UIGs) established within federal institutions function as strategic operational mechanisms for implementing the sectoral program, strengthening institutional coordination, gender-responsive planning and accountability across sectors.

Environmental and Climate Governance

Within the environmental sector, SEMARNAT serves as the lead institution responsible for environmental and climate policy and oversees the implementation of Mexico's climate commitments, including REDD+ in coordination with CONAFOR. SEMARNAT has progressively incorporated gender equality into climate and environmental governance through policy instruments such as the National Climate Change Strategy and the Special Climate Change Program (PECC). Gender mainstreaming within SEMARNAT has also been strengthened through institutional coordination with the Ministry of Women and through the

incorporation of gender-responsive approaches into climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation and territorial planning initiatives (SEMARNAT, 2025).

Other environmental institutions also contribute to the gender and safeguards framework. The National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) integrates gender considerations into biodiversity conservation and community participation processes in protected areas, while the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC) contributes to climate policy research, data generation and policy evaluation.

Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Participation

Another institution of major relevance is the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), which plays a key role in promoting the rights, participation, and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples within development and environmental governance processes. INPI leads and participates in consultation processes, territorial governance initiatives, and interinstitutional coordination related to Indigenous rights, traditional knowledge and participation in climate and environmental policies.

Rural Development

The agricultural and rural development sector also plays a strategic role in gender-responsive climate and territorial governance. SADER has progressively integrated gender perspectives into rural extension and agroecological transition processes. One of the most relevant current models is the implementation of Farmer Field Schools, which constitute a participatory rural extension model that strengthens sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty, and climate resilience through community-based, hands-on learning. They build farmers' capacities through experimentation, peer learning, and technical support adapted to local conditions, while promoting agroecological practices, improved resource management, and sustainable rural livelihoods. Gender equality and women's participation constitute increasingly important components within the implementation of Farmer Field Schools. SADER has promoted the active participation of women both as technical facilitators and as beneficiaries of community learning processes, recognizing their central role in food production, agroecological transition and rural development. The strategy also seeks to reduce structural barriers affecting rural women's access to technical assistance, productive knowledge, and participation spaces, while strengthening women's leadership, economic autonomy, and organizational capacities in rural territories (SADER, 2025a; 2025b).

Other Supporting Institutions

At the social policy and anti-discrimination level, the National Council to Prevent Discrimination (CONAPRED) contributes to the promotion of equality and non-discrimination through policy recommendations, monitoring, and awareness actions, while the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) generates poverty and social inequality indicators that are critical for identifying gender and territorial disparities. Similarly, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) plays a central role in generating sex-disaggregated and intersectional data needed for monitoring safeguards, participation, and benefit-sharing outcomes.

At the territorial level, ejidos, agrarian communities and community assemblies remain fundamental governance institutions because they constitute the primary decision-making spaces for forest management and participation in forest and climate programs. However, the institutional framework also recognizes persistent barriers to women's participation within these structures, including unequal land tenure, cultural norms, and unpaid care burdens. Consequently, current gender strategies increasingly emphasize strengthening women's participation and leadership in community governance and territorial decision-making.

Gender Mainstreaming and Institutional Strengthening within CONAFOR

The National Forestry Commission is responsible for forest policy implementation, REDD+ coordination, and forest-related incentive programs. As mentioned above, current institutional framework is significantly reinforced by the adoption of the National Gender and Inclusion Strategy for the Forest Sector 2025–2030, which provides a dedicated operational roadmap for integrating gender equality into community forestry, restoration, forest governance, and technical assistance (CONAFOR, 2025a).

The ENGISF is based on a diagnostic assessment identifying persistent structural, cultural, and institutional barriers affecting women in forest territories. The strategy highlights unequal access to land tenure and agrarian rights, limited participation in community governance and decision-making spaces, unequal access to forest incentives and productive resources, disproportionate unpaid care burdens, persistent gender stereotypes within forest activities and differentiated vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation. It also recognizes that Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, and rural women continue to face intersecting forms of exclusion that limit their participation in sustainable forest management, climate action and access to economic opportunities within the forest sector (CONAFOR, 2025a).

In response to these challenges, the ENGISF strengthens internal institutional mechanisms through the Gender and Inclusion Unit (UGI), which is responsible for coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts, supervising the incorporation of gender perspectives into institutional instruments, and promoting organizational and operational changes both within CONAFOR offices and field operations. Operationally, the ENGISF is linked to CONAFOR's Operating Rules. The strategy also promotes institutional cultural transformation through mandatory gender training for technical and operational staff, the use of inclusive language, implementation of labor equality and non-discrimination standards and actions aimed at strengthening parity and work-life balance within CONAFOR itself. In addition, implementation is supported through gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms associated with Annex 13 of the Federal Expenditure Budget, which earmarks federal resources for substantive equality actions.

The operationalization of these commitments is reflected in the current CONAFOR's Operating Rules 2026 within the Sustainable Forest Development for Wellbeing Program (*Programa de Desarrollo Forestal Sustentable para el Bienestar*), which constitutes one of the most advanced institutional frameworks developed by CONAFOR to mainstream gender equality, social inclusion, and differentiated participation in the implementation of forest policy. Rather than treating gender and inclusion as isolated social criteria, the Operating Rules integrate these approaches across the programmatic structure, operational procedures, eligibility criteria, technical assistance mechanisms, territorial governance arrangements and support concepts of the program. This institutional approach reflects the progressive evolution of CONAFOR's operational framework over the last decade, moving from isolated social targeting mechanisms toward a broader model based on substantive equality, interculturality, differentiated participation and inclusive forest governance (CONAFOR, 2026). Section 4 below includes an analysis on the progressive inclusion of gender-related aspects into the Operating Rules.

The Operating Rules define gender perspective as a methodology aimed at identifying, questioning, and transforming discrimination, inequality and exclusion affecting women, while affirmative actions are defined as temporary corrective, compensatory or promotional measures intended to accelerate substantive equality between women and men. In parallel, the rules define gender equality as a condition in which women and men access resources, participation spaces, decision-making processes, and benefits under equal conditions. This conceptual framework is operationalized throughout the program through differentiated incentives, eligibility conditions, affirmative actions, participation requirements and governance mechanisms that seek to reduce structural barriers affecting women, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-

Mexican peoples, youth, and other groups historically excluded from forest-sector decision-making and productive opportunities (CONAFOR, 2026).

The institutional framework of the Operating Rules explicitly links forest policy implementation with national and international commitments related to human rights, gender equality, and inclusion. The program incorporates principles derived from the Political Constitution, the LGDFS, LGCC, LGIHM, the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence and international instruments such as CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment. The rules also incorporate references to Indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples as collective rights holders and recognize the importance of culturally appropriate participation, territorial governance, and community decision-making systems within forest management processes (CONAFOR, 2026).

One of the most significant advances of the 2026 Operating Rules is that gender and inclusion are not limited to isolated support concepts but are mainstreamed throughout the operational architecture of the program. The rules establish that information, technical assistance, outreach activities, training and communication with beneficiaries must be conducted using inclusive and non-sexist language. Similarly, they institutionalize social equity and inclusion criteria within technical evaluations and prioritization mechanisms in order to facilitate access to support for women, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Mexican peoples, youth, community organizations and vulnerable groups.

The Operating Rules also incorporate differentiated operational mechanisms intended to reduce participation barriers faced by women in forest activities and territorial governance. Among the most innovative affirmative actions is the "Care for Equality" mechanism (*Cuidados para la Igualdad*), which allows part of the financial support to be used to cover childcare, care for older persons, sick family members or dependent persons while women participate in forest-sector activities, training, governance spaces or productive projects. This measure recognizes unpaid care work as a structural barrier limiting women's participation in the forest sector and introduces operational tools to facilitate their participation in community governance, productive activities, and territorial decision-making.

Additional affirmative measures incorporated into the Operating Rules include the recognition of Agrarian Industrial Units for Women certificates issued by the National Agrarian Registry as valid proof of land possession or agrarian rights, as well as flexible payment mechanisms allowing groups of women without bank accounts to designate representatives from their assemblies to receive support on their behalf. These provisions are particularly relevant in rural and Indigenous territories where women frequently face barriers related to land tenure formalization, financial inclusion, and access to banking services.

The mainstreaming of gender and inclusion is especially visible in Component I: Community Forest Management and Value Chains. Within this component, governance, productive organization, community forestry enterprises and women-led productive initiatives receive differentiated incentives and prioritization criteria. Under support concept MFC.3 related to governance and community development, seminars, exchanges, and capacity-building activities explicitly recognize Women Forest Enterprises (EFM) and women's groups as eligible beneficiaries. In addition, prioritization criteria assign the highest scores when Community Forest Brigades are composed exclusively of women or when women act as extensionists or technical advisors.

The value-chain and forest industry support concepts also incorporate strong affirmative actions for women's participation. Under ATM.4, support is provided for the legal establishment and formalization of EFM composed of at least five women members. Additional prioritization points are granted when

proposals are submitted by women-led enterprises or women producers. Similarly, ATM.5 related to forest industry investments establishes differentiated financing ceilings for EFM and prioritizes women-led projects within timber and non-timber value chains. These measures seek not only to facilitate women's participation as beneficiaries, but also to strengthen their role in community enterprises, productive transformation, market access, and forest-based economic activities.

One of the clearest examples of affirmative action within the Operating Rules is ATM.6, which establishes a support concept specifically directed at productive forest projects for women. This support includes differentiated financing schemes for EFM and women's participatory groups, as well as dedicated resources for care-related expenses under the "Care for Equality" mechanism. Under ATM.6.3 Forest Project Incubator for Women, the component also includes, for the first time in the history of CONAFOR's Rules of Operation and as an innovative mechanism to promote and strengthen women's participation in the forest sector, business incubation support for women-led productive initiatives and incorporates operational flexibility by exempting some initial technical requirements, such as shapefiles or documentation related to raw material sourcing, during early application stages. These measures reduce technical and administrative barriers that frequently limit women's access to productive support programs. It also includes a support model through technical advisors for women's groups, with the aim of strengthening their project ideas and advancing the incubation process toward consolidation and scaling.

The Restoration Component also integrates affirmative actions and differentiated participation mechanisms. Under RF.1, the production of forest plants by women's groups is recognized as an eligible activity linked to restoration projects. Restoration projects incorporating women's groups receive additional prioritization points, while up to 20% of total project costs or annual ceilings may be allocated to care-related support activities. This integration is significant because it connects women's participation not only with productive activities, but also with ecological restoration, biodiversity conservation, and climate adaptation actions.

The Environmental Services Component similarly incorporates differentiated participation incentives. Within Payment for Environmental Services, ejidos and communities receive additional prioritization points if they commit to implementing productive projects in which at least 80% of participants are women. Women-led projects may also receive additional financial support for care-related activities. Under local financing mechanisms for environmental services, prioritization criteria recognize projects led by women, projects involving women in governance structures and projects explicitly designed to strengthen women's productive participation and territorial involvement.

The Protection Forest Component incorporates some of the strongest operational incentives for women's participation in technical and field activities traditionally dominated by men. Under phytosanitary treatment activities, additional prioritization points are assigned when women act as technical advisors, when at least 30% of contracted personnel are women or when applicants are women or youth. Similar incentives are incorporated into sanitation brigades and fire-management brigades, including additional economic incentives for women brigade members and prioritization points for projects integrating women into operational teams and governance structures.

The fire-management brigade component is particularly important because it explicitly seeks to increase women's participation in forest-fire prevention and management activities. The Operating Rules establish fixed financial support for "Care for Equality" activities and assign the highest prioritization scores to brigades including at least three women members. These provisions contribute to challenging traditional

gender roles in forest protection activities and promote women's participation in technical, operational, and territorial-risk management functions.

The Capacity Building Component further strengthens the gender-responsive and inclusive orientation of the program. Courses, workshops, and forums must ensure that at least 30% of participants are women, while support concepts related to ecotechnologies, technological innovation and productive training incorporate additional prioritization criteria for women's groups and youth organizations. Some modalities specifically target groups or enterprises composed of women or young people, reinforcing intergenerational participation and inclusion in innovation and forest entrepreneurship processes.

Beyond gender equality, the Operating Rules also incorporate differentiated participation mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Mexican peoples. The rules recognize the need to respect collective rights, community governance systems, cultural diversity, and territorial representation structures. Indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities may accredit legal representation through community authorities or traditional governance systems recognized by applicable legislation. The rules also incorporate culturally appropriate participation principles and acknowledge that forest governance and productive activities occur within territories characterized by cultural diversity, collective land tenure and community-based natural resource management systems.

The Operating Rules further strengthens the participation of youth through differentiated support concepts, innovation mechanisms, and productive incubation schemes. Several support concepts recognize youth participation as a prioritization criterion, particularly in productive projects, extension activities, technological innovation, and territorial entrepreneurship. This approach reflects increasing institutional recognition of intergenerational continuity as a key condition for sustainable forest management, community governance, and long-term territorial resilience.

An additional strength of the 2026 Operating Rules is the integration of safeguards, human rights, and inclusive governance principles into operational implementation. The rules incorporate provisions related to transparency, participation, non-discrimination, environmental and social safeguards, grievance mechanisms, and prevention of involuntary restrictions affecting local populations. These elements align the program with broader safeguards frameworks associated with REDD+, climate finance, and international environmental and social standards.

The 2026 Operating Rules also contributes to strengthening women's participation in territorial decision-making and forest governance structures. By incentivizing women's participation in brigades, technical advisory roles, productive enterprises, environmental services projects and community governance activities, the rules progressively expand women's visibility and leadership within forest territories. This is especially relevant in ejidos and Indigenous communities where participation in forest governance has historically been dominated by men due to unequal access to land rights, representation structures and productive resources.

Institutional coordination is reinforced through intersectoral and participatory governance platforms. The National Forestry Council (CONAF) and state-level forestry councils provide spaces for stakeholder participation, consultation, and policy dialogue within the forest sector. In 2026, the institutional governance framework of CONAF also incorporated measures to strengthen women's representation and substantive equality in decision-making spaces through the adoption of parity criteria in its integration mechanisms. These measures align the forest sector governance framework with Mexico's broader constitutional principle of "parity in all" and seek to address the historical underrepresentation of women

in forest governance and policy dialogue spaces. Strengthening women's representation within CONAF contributes to more inclusive and gender-responsive decision-making processes and supports the incorporation of women's perspectives into forest policy, safeguards implementation and climate governance processes (CONAFOR, 2025a).

3.4. Gender equality in grievance redress mechanisms

Mexico has established a broad legal, institutional and safeguards framework to promote accountability, non-discrimination, inclusive participation, and access to grievance redress mechanisms in environmental, climate and forest governance processes. This framework is relevant to REDD+ implementation because it provides mechanisms for addressing complaints, disputes, exclusion, discrimination, and other social risks that may arise during project implementation, including risks related to gender inequality, GBV and SEAH.

The prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Mexico is grounded in a robust national legal and institutional framework and is progressively incorporated into environmental safeguards and social inclusion mechanisms associated with REDD+ implementation. Although REDD+ activities are not considered intrinsically linked to GBV risks, Mexico's safeguards instruments recognize that climate and forest interventions may unintentionally reinforce pre-existing inequalities or vulnerabilities if differentiated social conditions are not adequately addressed. Also, international safeguards standards, including those of FAO and GCF, require that grievance and accountability mechanisms be capable of preventing, identifying, and responding to potential cases of GBV and SEAH. Consequently, national safeguards frameworks emphasize the importance of preventing discrimination, exclusion, harassment, and other forms of violence that could affect women and vulnerable groups participating in territorial governance and forest-related activities.

Within the forest sector, potential GBV related risks are addressed through broader accountability, ethics, and safeguards systems implemented by institutions such as CONAFOR. These mechanisms include codes of conduct, citizen attention and grievance redress mechanisms, social oversight processes and institutional protocols aimed at promoting respectful, safe, and inclusive participation environments for beneficiaries, technical personnel, and community members. Such instruments also provide channels through which misconduct, discrimination, or violence-related concerns may be reported and addressed. In parallel, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities targeting operational staff, technical personnel and beneficiaries contribute to strengthening institutional capacities on gender equality, prevention of violence and culturally appropriate engagement practices within rural and forest territories.

In this context, Mexico's current grievance redress and accountability framework related to gender equality, safeguards and environmental governance combines constitutional protections, human rights institutions, administrative complaint mechanisms and sector-specific safeguards procedures. These mechanisms are particularly relevant because they constitute the institutional basis for addressing complaints, disputes, exclusion, discrimination, and potential risks related to gender inequality, GBV, participation and access to benefits.

At the constitutional level, Article 1 guarantees access to justice and protection against discrimination. Also, the constitutional legal framework recognizes the right of individuals to submit petitions before public authorities (Article 8), provided these are presented in writing and in a peaceful and respectful manner, while simultaneously obligating authorities to issue a response within a reasonable period of time. The Constitution also establishes that individuals may not seek justice through self-help measures and

guarantees access to prompt, complete, impartial, and free justice administered by competent judicial authorities.

At the national level, these guarantees are complemented by the General Law of Administrative Responsibilities, which establishes the legal framework governing misconduct and administrative offenses committed by public officials and, where applicable, private actors linked to serious administrative violations. The law defines principles that must guide public service conduct—including legality, integrity, impartiality, transparency, and efficiency—and establish procedures, sanctions, and typologies of administrative misconduct. It additionally requires public officials to submit asset and conflict-of-interest declarations as preventive measures against corruption and abuse of authority. The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence establishes institutional responsibilities for prevention, attention, and sanction of violence against women. Complementarily, institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), CONAPRED, and specialized prosecutors' offices provide mechanisms for reporting discrimination, institutional violence, human rights violations, and gender-based violence. These mechanisms are particularly important for women living in rural, Indigenous, and forest-dependent territories, where structural barriers frequently limit access to justice and institutional response mechanisms.

In parallel, Mexico has strengthened institutional obligations related to transparency, participation, and environmental justice through the implementation of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Escazú Agreement stablish the basis and reinforces the obligation to guarantee accessible, inclusive, and culturally appropriate grievance and participation mechanisms, including for women environmental defenders and Indigenous women participating in environmental governance processes (Article 5, 7, 8 and 9) (ECLAC, 2018).

Within the forest sector, CONAFOR has been operating the Citizen Attention Mechanism (MAC) since 2017 (CONAFOR, 2025b; n.d.). MAC functions as the principal institutional channel for receiving, processing, and responding to complaints, requests, suggestions, and grievances related to forest programs and services. The MAC can receive complaints related to exclusion from benefits, irregularities in program implementation, discrimination, safeguards concerns, and operational grievances associated with forest projects and public programs.

The MAC aimed to: (i) facilitate access to procedures for submitting information requests, complaints, and grievances; (ii) improve the responsiveness of the institution; (iii) identify potential negative impacts; and (iv) prevent conflicts associated with the implementation of forestry and climate-related activities.

The mechanism integrated existing institutional procedures into a structured system and operated through three main institutional channels, depending on the nature of the grievance:

- The Citizen Information and Attention Service (SIAC), provided attention and responses to the public by addressing inquiries and offering general information on CONAFOR's programs and activities (e.g. calls for proposals, competitions, conferences, exhibitions, among others). It receives petitions, requests, complaints, and suggestions related to the institution's activities and, when necessary, refers them to the relevant competent units for appropriate follow-up.
- The Transparency Unit (UT), which served as the liaison with the National Institute for Access to Information (INAI, now "Transparencia para el Pueblo") and facilitated access to public government information, as well as protected personal data held by entities of the Federal Public Administration. The UT acted as the interface between the institution and the requesting party, carrying out the necessary internal procedures to facilitate access to information.

- The Internal Control Body (OIC), under the Secretariat of Public Administration (now Secretariat of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance), which received complaints and reports regarding potential non-compliance with the obligations of public servants, including complaints related to misconduct, and is responsible for their follow-up.

The MAC is guided by six operational principles: accessibility, cultural appropriateness, timeliness and effectiveness, equity, transparency, and feedback. These principles are aligned with international standards on grievance redress mechanisms and are consistent with the grievance redress principles and requirements promoted by FAO and GCF.

The CONAFOR institutional portal also included access to the Comprehensive Citizen Complaint System (SIDEC), a platform managed by the Secretariat of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance to register, manage, investigate, and follow up on complaints submitted under the General Law of Administrative Responsibilities. The SIDEC system provided guidance on complaint procedures, including stages, types of complaints, and mechanisms for tracking submissions, thereby enhancing transparency and accessibility.

Table 3. Citizen Attention Mechanism Channels

Definition	Responsible area	Access Channels	Procedure
Complaints: Submission regarding acts or omissions that may constitute administrative offenses by public servants or related private actors.	Internal Control Body (OIC)	CONAFOR: Tel: +52 (33) 3777 7021 Email: quejas@conafor.gob.mx In person: Zapopan, Jalisco Secretariat of Anti-Corruption: SIDEC: https://sidec.buengobierno.gob.mx Tel: 01 800 1128 700 / +52 (55) 2000 2000	To submit a complaint or report, the complainant should provide contact information (although submissions may be anonymous), any available identification details of the public official involved, a description of the facts, and, where possible, supporting evidence and indications of the alleged administrative misconduct. Complaints are processed through the Integrated Citizen Complaints System (SIDEC). The process begins with a jurisdiction assessment to determine whether to initiate an investigation or reject the complaint due to insufficient information. If initiated, the investigation may involve gathering evidence, consulting relevant parties, and conducting necessary inquiries. Cases may be classified as serious or non-serious for further administrative action, with

			any potential criminal cases referred to the competent authorities. Complaints received must be classified no later than the next working day following their receipt, the person is notified 10 days after submission.
Access to information: Right to request, receive and disseminate public information.	Transparency Unit	CONAFOR: Email: unidadtransparencia@conafor.gob.mx Tel: +52 (33) 3777 7000 Ext. 1246-1247 In person: Zapopan, Jalisco, and through CONAFOR's 32 State Offices nationwide. Platform: https://www.plataformadetransparencia.org.mx	To submit a request for access to information, the applicant must provide a means to receive notifications (such as an address, contact number, or other communication channel), a description of the information requested, and the preferred modality for accessing the information. The applicant may also indicate the need for accessible formats. Such information is optional and not a requirement for submitting a request; requests may also be made anonymously. When information is non-existent, classified as reserved or confidential, the Transparency Committee decides whether to provide a public version or not. If the response is insufficient, the applicant may file an appeal. The standard timeframe for responding is 20 days, which may be extended if the initial response does not satisfy the applicant.
Citizen requests: Submissions related to services provided by public institutions.	SIAC	CONAFOR: Tel: +52 (33) 3777 7000 Ext. 1157 / 01 800 649 0127 Email: atencionciudadana@conafor.gob.mx In person: Zapopan, Jalisco, and through CONAFOR's 32 State Offices nationwide. Social media: X and Facebook	CONAFOR receives inquiries through telephone calls, emails, and social media, registers each request, and acknowledges receipt to the citizen. It then determines whether the matter falls within CONAFOR's mandate; if not, the citizen is informed and guided to the appropriate institution. If the

			matter is within CONAFOR's competence, it is assessed to determine whether it constitutes a complaint or formal report, in which case it is referred to the OIC. For other types of requests, the unit identifies the relevant internal area and forwards the request to the designated citizen attention focal point, who is responsible for addressing it and closing the process. Each CONAFOR department has assigned focal points who receive and follow up on requests via email. The response times established are: immediate for telephone inquiries, 0–10 working days for email, and up to 10 working days for postal submissions.

Source: Own elaboration based on publicly available information from CONAFOR's MAC.

The MAC provides an established institutional platform that serves as the main entry point for RBP project-related requests, feedback, complaints, and information inquiries. It includes multiple access channels, as well as procedures for registering, referring, and responding to submissions, with defined timelines for certain processes. (CONAFOR, n.d.).

During the inception phase, specific grievance arrangements for the project will be further refined including the development of a project-specific Conflicts, Feedback and Grievance Management Plan that builds on the MAC. Rather than creating a new mechanism, this plan will establish procedures to effectively manage, and track grievances, feedback, and concerns related to the project. The approach leverages existing institutional systems while aligning with FAO requirements and ESMF procedures, and will define improvements to ensure that the MAC is accessible, inclusive, culturally appropriate, gender-responsive, and capable of addressing project-related issues.

For activities supported under the RBP Proposal, CONAFOR will provide FAO with periodic reports on requests for information, complaints, grievances, and other submissions received through the MAC that are related to the implementation of the RBP. These reports will include information on the nature and status of cases, and response timelines. This reporting arrangement will enable FAO to monitor the handling of grievances, follow up on pending cases, support timely responses where necessary, and ensure that grievance resolution processes are implemented in a transparent, effective and gender-responsive manner.

In recent years, CONAFOR has strengthened institutional measures aimed at preventing sexual harassment, workplace harassment and gender-based violence, both within its internal labor environment and in its interactions with beneficiaries and forest communities participating in public programs. As part of its

institutional integrity and gender equality framework, CONAFOR has adopted and publicly disseminated a Pronouncement of Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Harassment Conducts, aligned with federal public administration standards and national integrity policies. This pronouncement establishes that acts of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and gender-based violence are incompatible with public service ethics and institutional conduct standards and reaffirms the obligation of all personnel to promote respectful, inclusive, and violence-free environments (CONAFOR, 2025c).

These actions are complemented by the work of CONAFOR's Ethics Committee, a democratically constituted collegiate body within CONAFOR responsible for addressing complaints related to breaches of the Institution's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. It also issues recommendations to improve the organizational climate and the quality of public service, and identifies ethical risks to help prevent potential acts of corruption. Any person may submit a complaint to the Committee. Additionally there are certified councellors ("*Personas Consejeras*") designated and trained to provide guidance, accompaniment and referral in cases related to workplace violence, harassment, and discrimination. Victims may submit a complaint through any of the following channels:

1. Counsellor: provides support and accompaniment to individuals who may have experienced sexual harassment or sexual abuse. Complaints are submitted by email.

Procedure:

- Serves as the first point of contact for the complainant.
- Refers the complainant to medical, psychological, or other support services, as needed.
- Provides guidance, advice, and support in documenting and describing the facts of the case.
- Refers complaints to the Ethics Committee and/or the Internal Control Body (OIC) within a maximum of three days.

2. Ethics Committee receives complaints either in person or by email.

Procedure:

- Receives both direct and anonymous complaints.
- Provides information and guidance on available response and resolution options.
- Issues recommendations and protective measures, as appropriate.
- May refer the complaint to the Internal Control Body (OIC) for investigation when warranted.

3. Internal Control Body: is the authority responsible for addressing complaints related to potential administrative misconduct by public servants. Channels to receive complaints include in person, email, and phone.

Procedure:

- Investigates and analyzes cases using a human rights and gender-responsive approach.
- In consultation with the complainant, adopts protective measures when appropriate.
- Determines administrative responsibility and, where applicable, imposes corresponding sanctions, including warnings, suspension, temporary disqualification, or dismissal from public service.

Regarding personal data protection, personal data provided by beneficiaries and other stakeholders will be protected and handled confidentially by CONAFOR in accordance with applicable data protection requirements and legal framework. Personal information collected through project implementation, subsidy programmes, grievance mechanisms, and other institutional processes will be used only for legitimate administrative, operational, reporting, and accountability purposes. Individuals have the right to access, review, correct, update, object to, or request the deletion of their personal data, as well as to restrict or withdraw consent for certain uses where applicable. Personal data will not be shared with third parties without consent except in cases authorized by law or required for the performance of official functions. Stakeholders who believe their data protection rights have been violated may submit a complaint through the appropriate transparency and data protection channels established by CONAFOR.

In parallel, during 2025 and 2026, CONAFOR continued implementing awareness-raising and capacity-building activities for operational and managerial personnel related to gender equality, prevention of harassment and sexual harassment, institutional ethics and inclusive workplace practices, in alignment with broader federal strategies promoting zero tolerance policies within public institutions. These processes contribute to strengthening institutional capacities for identifying, preventing and addressing risks associated with gender-based violence and unequal power relations within organizational and field-level operations, and serves as a vital complement to an active, accessible, and timely grievance redress mechanism.

At the operational level, important challenges remain for ensuring effective access to grievance mechanisms in forest-dependent territories. Rural and Indigenous women frequently face structural barriers associated with unequal land tenure, limited participation in community assemblies, lower access to information technologies, mobility restrictions, language barriers and fear of social stigmatization or retaliation. In many cases, grievance mechanisms are formally available but not fully accessible in practice for women and marginalized populations. These barriers are particularly relevant in community-based forest governance contexts where local power structures may influence access to participation and complaint processes.

In this context, the RBP proposal provides an important opportunity to strengthen gender-responsive safeguards and grievance management systems within REDD+ activities implementation. Through the Conflicts, Feedback and Grievance Management Plan to be developed for the MAC during the inception phase, the RBP should reinforce gender-sensitive grievance procedures that incorporate confidentiality, culturally appropriate communication, differentiated attention protocols and safe referral pathways for GBV and SEAH related cases. This includes ensuring that women—including Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women—can access grievance channels safely and without fear of retaliation, discrimination or revictimization.

The RBP should also strengthen outreach and communication strategies to ensure that women and marginalized groups are aware of available grievance mechanisms and understand how to access them. This may include multilingual communication materials, community-based outreach, collaboration with

women's organizations and strengthened territorial presence of operational personnel with knowledge of safeguards, a gender perspective, and the functioning of the grievance redress mechanism.

Finally, the integration of gender equality into grievance redress mechanisms should not be understood solely as a compliance requirement, but rather as a core element of inclusive climate governance and safeguards implementation. Strengthening gender-responsive accountability systems contribute to transparency, participation, institutional trust, and the effective protection of rights within REDD+ implementation processes. In this sense, Mexico's existing institutional and safeguards framework provides an important foundation for the implementation of the RBP Gender Action Plan, although continued strengthening of institutional capacities, territorial accessibility, and gender-sensitive operational procedures will remain necessary for ensuring effective implementation.

4. Strategic integration of gender equality and prevention of GBV in Mexico's REDD+ strategy

4.1. Efforts undertaken to mainstream gender equality in REDD+

Mexico's REDD+ process has progressively incorporated gender equality and social inclusion as cross-cutting dimensions of forest governance, safeguards implementation, stakeholder engagement, benefit-sharing, and climate action. Although gender mainstreaming in REDD+ did not emerge as a stand-alone process, it has evolved through the cumulative interaction of Mexico's REDD+ readiness phase, its national safeguards architecture, forest-sector policy reforms, participatory governance mechanisms and broader institutional commitments to substantive equality. As a result, women's participation, differentiated vulnerability, access to benefits, land tenure barriers, unpaid care work, and prevention of exclusion have become increasingly visible within the national REDD+ framework and within the operational instruments that support forest and climate policy implementation (CONAFOR, 2017a).

During the REDD+ readiness phase, gender equality was progressively integrated into the design of the ENAREDD+ and its associated safeguards instruments. ENAREDD+ recognizes that forest territories are not socially neutral spaces, and that women, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Mexican communities, youth, and other groups may experience differentiated conditions in relation to land tenure, access to forest resources, participation in community governance and benefit distribution. In this context, women are recognized not only as potentially vulnerable stakeholders, but also as strategic actors in sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, restoration, climate resilience, transmission of traditional knowledge, non-timber forest value chains and territorial governance.

During the REDD+ preparation process, CONAFOR, with the support of the MREDD+ project, developed the Gender Action Plan for REDD+ Mexico, known as PAGeREDD+ (Aguilar & Castañeda, 2014). This plan was conceived as a dynamic guiding instrument to define the steps required to incorporate a gender perspective into the REDD+ mechanism in Mexico. It was prepared with the inputs, participation and consensus of diverse stakeholders linked to forest and gender issues, and its implementation was understood as the shared responsibility of a broad collective of actors, including government institutions, international organizations, academia, and civil society.

The objective of PAGeREDD+ was to ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the policies, programmes, institutional arrangements, and budgets linked to REDD+ in Mexico. Its structure followed the three phases established for REDD+: Phase I, capacity-building and preparation of ENAREDD+; Phase II, implementation of policies and measures; and Phase III, results-based payments. For each phase, the plan included strategies, lines of action, specific actions, and indicators. The objectives defined for each phase responded, to a large extent, to an analysis of the threats and weaknesses identified during consultation processes and workshops undertaken as part of REDD+ preparation. A synthesis of this analysis was included in the plan as a reference point before the description of its objectives and activities.

The PAGeREDD+ results matrix also included footnotes with suggestions and recommendations to guide implementation. In this sense, the plan provided an early framework for mainstreaming gender in REDD+ and anticipated several areas that Mexico would continue to strengthen in subsequent years, including women's participation in decision-making spaces, gender-responsive institutional capacities, differentiated access to forest programs, affirmative actions, capacity-building, gender-sensitive budgeting and the recognition of women's roles in forest governance, restoration, conservation and productive activities.

Table 4. Gender-related lines of action established in the National REDD+ Strategy

Component	Line of action	Specific gender-related line of action
Public policies and legal framework	1. Articulate and improve policies, instruments and regulations linked to REDD+ implementation.	1.2. Adjust the budget of programmes in sectors linked to REDD+ implementation to improve investment in forest activities in rural landscapes, in accordance with the objectives of forest legislation and promoting the well-being of forest owners, possessors and inhabitants, especially women and youth.
	2. Adapt sectoral policies to make use of and consolidate coordination spaces with a territorial approach.	2.4. Strengthen components related to the participation of rural women, youth, older persons, and specific groups in activities related to Sustainable Forest Management and value chains or networks in Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and communities, and local communities.
	3. Design and operate plans, programmes and public policies with a territorial and long-term approach that enables sustainable territorial management.	3.2. Develop long-term public policies for integrated territorial management that promote productive activities and limit activities that lead to land-use change, ensuring that they incorporate a gender perspective.
		3.4. Generate work programmes for priority regions that integrate a gender perspective and are implemented with the participation of federal, state, and municipal institutions, as well as civil society.
Financing schemes	1. Identify and manage financial alternatives that incentivize greater investment in REDD+-related activities within the framework of sustainable rural development.	1.2. Promote public, private, and social investment in activities that reduce pressure on forest ecosystems through fiscal and economic instruments and incentives, and new financing mechanisms that strengthen sustainable forest management, community value-added chains and networks, sustainable productive diversification, and risk management and mitigation, with emphasis on women, Indigenous population, youth, and older persons.
	3. Design and/or adapt economic and financial instruments and incentives to manage REDD+ financing resources, including benefit-sharing schemes.	3.4. Design and apply incentives in rural landscapes with forest activities to support productive and conservation activities that generate greater social benefits, ensure gender equality, and promote sustainable rural development, ensuring their accessibility and competitiveness.
Institutional arrangements	1. Strengthen, promote, and create local governance conditions as the basis for planning and operating REDD+ actions.	1.3. Strengthen planning, community participation and territorial coordination structures, as well as promote other local governance schemes defined by entities and regions according to their needs, culture, and levels of organization, guaranteeing the participation of women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in the cross-cutting planning and management of resources, with financial

		instruments that allow broad access to financing to achieve REDD+ objectives.
		1.7. Promote governance mechanisms with a gender perspective and full respect for customs and traditions for participatory territorial planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities at the local level, taking into account the actors involved.
Social participation and transparency	3. Promote and guarantee the participation of women, youth, older persons, and other specific groups in integrated territorial management processes.	3.1. Strengthen the inclusion and participation of women and specific attention groups in productive, conservation and restoration projects that are favorable to REDD+.
		3.2. Ensure compliance with legislation that already provides for the implementation of positive and compensatory measures to promote equal opportunities for women and specific attention groups in REDD+ implementation.
		3.3. Develop specific mechanisms to ensure the participation of women and specific attention groups in participation and decision-making platforms.
	4. Establish feedback, grievance redress, accountability and access-to-information mechanisms based on the principles of accessibility, efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency for actions carried out under ENAREDD+.	4.1. Analyze and assess the needs of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and communities, women and other specific attention groups, and their ways of accessing information, as well as expressing and resolving conflicts related to REDD+, with the participation of relevant institutions.
Communication and capacity development	1. Design and implement a communication strategy that contributes to achieving REDD+ objectives, fostering social participation through a broad process of effective and multidirectional communication.	1.3. Design and implement communication strategies with ejidos and communities, taking into account cultural, ethnic, age and gender diversity.

Source: Own elaboration based on ENAREDD+.

This approach is consistent with the Cancun Safeguards, particularly those related to transparent and effective forest governance, respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders. While the Cancun Safeguards do not establish a separate gender safeguard, Mexico's interpretation and operationalization of these safeguards has progressively incorporated gender equality through the recognition that "full and effective participation" requires attention to the specific barriers faced by women in rural, Indigenous, and forest-dependent territories. This includes barriers associated with unequal agrarian rights, limited voice and vote in community assemblies, lower access to technical assistance and financing, unequal distribution of care

responsibilities, language barriers, mobility constraints and social norms that restrict women's participation in forest-sector decision-making (CONAFOR, 2017c).

The Second Summary of Information on the Addressing and Respect of REDD+ Safeguards in Mexico for the 2017–2022 period reports that gender equality was expressly addressed within Mexico's national interpretation and reporting on the Cancun Safeguards. Under constitutive element D3, the document states that gender equality is recognized and promoted in decision-making and must be guaranteed in the context of the design and implementation of ENAREDD+ (CONAFOR, 2024b).

A central achievement of Mexico's REDD+ readiness process was the development of a national safeguards architecture composed of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment, the Environmental and Social Management Framework and the Safeguards Information System. These instruments provided an institutional basis for identifying and managing social and environmental risks associated with REDD+ implementation, including risks related to gender inequality, exclusion from decision-making spaces, unequal access to benefits and the potential capture of REDD+ incentives by actors with stronger land tenure or institutional representation (CONAFOR, 2015; CONAFOR, 2019). The prior section already notes that these instruments identified gender inequality as a structural risk for REDD+ implementation, particularly in relation to unequal access to benefits, limited participation of women in decision-making spaces and gender gaps in land tenure.

The Second Summary of Information on how REDD+ Safeguards were Addressed and Respected in Mexico for the 2017–2022 period also documents concrete operational measures adopted during the reporting period. In 2017, within the Forests and Climate Change Project, CONAFOR carried out a diagnostic assessment of women's participation in the National Forest Fire Prevention Program to understand the conditions under which women participate directly and indirectly in fire-fighting activities. This is significant because forest fire prevention and combat have traditionally been male-dominated operational fields, and the diagnostic helped make visible women's roles and barriers in forest protection.

The same reporting period also shows an evolution from diagnosis to affirmative action. In 2022, CONAFOR established support concept MFCCC.4 for comprehensive productive projects for women and strengthened women's productive forest projects through the affirmative action "Care for Equality." This measure recognized and made visible unpaid care work as a barrier to women's participation and allowed resources to support care-related tasks. This arrangement is one of the most relevant institutional advances of the reporting period under constitutive element D3.

Gender mainstreaming in REDD+ was therefore linked to a broader safeguards logic: REDD+ actions must not reproduce or deepen existing inequalities in forest territories, and should contribute, where possible, to strengthening inclusive governance and equitable access to benefits. This is particularly relevant in Mexico, where a large proportion of forests are located in ejidos and agrarian communities, and where formal decision-making over land and forest resources is frequently tied to agrarian rights. Since women often have lower levels of formal land ownership or recognized agrarian rights, REDD+ implementation requires specific measures to ensure that participation and benefit-sharing are not limited only to formal landholders or male-dominated community structures.

Mexico's approach to gender mainstreaming in REDD+ has also been reinforced through the gradual transformation of CONAFOR's operational framework. Over time, CONAFOR's Operating Rules incorporated gender-related eligibility, prioritization, and affirmative action criteria, moving from isolated measures toward a more systematic integration of gender equality across forest support programs

(CONAFOR, 2026). This operational evolution is especially important because REDD+ implementation in Mexico relies heavily on existing national forest policy instruments, including incentives for sustainable forest management, restoration, payment for environmental services, community forestry, forest protection, productive projects, and capacity-building. The integration of gender criteria into these instruments therefore represents a concrete mechanism through which REDD+ objectives can be implemented in a gender-responsive manner.

Table 5. Progressive incorporation of affirmative actions for women in CONAFOR's Operating Rules

Year	Affirmative action or gender-related measure	Relevance for women's participation in forest activities
2010	Additional points for women were incorporated into CONAFOR's Operating Rules.	Established an early affirmative action mechanism to improve women's access to forest support programmes by increasing the competitiveness of applications submitted by or involving women.
2011	The guidelines for ML-PES granted additional points to applications submitted by women.	Strengthened women's access to Payment for Environmental Services schemes, supporting their participation in conservation incentives and forest ecosystem management.
2011	Start of Annex 13, "Expenditures for Equality between Women and Men".	Created a federal budgetary basis for tracking and supporting public expenditure aimed at advancing gender equality, including in sectors relevant to rural and forest development.
2017	Creation of Productive Forest Projects for Women in the Operating Rules.	Introduced a specific support concept for women, promoting their participation in forest-based productive activities, value chains and income-generating initiatives.
2018	Additional points were granted to applications submitted by women for phytosanitary treatments.	Promoted women's participation in forest health activities, including actions related to prevention, control and management of pests and diseases affecting forest ecosystems.
2022	Incorporation of the affirmative action "care for equality" within comprehensive productive projects for women.	Recognized unpaid care responsibilities as a barrier to women's participation and introduced care-sensitive measures to facilitate their engagement in productive forest projects.
2023	Prioritization criteria were introduced for Payment for Environmental Services proposals linked to women's productive projects and groups composed of at least 60 percent women.	Strengthened the connection between conservation incentives and women-led productive initiatives, while promoting collective participation of women in PES-related activities.
2024	The "care for equality" affirmative action was established as a good practice linked to the Guide of Best Management Practices under Payment for Environmental Services.	Consolidated care-sensitive approaches as part of good forest management practices, helping to reduce participation barriers for women in conservation and PES activities.
2025	Prioritization criteria were introduced for Payment for Environmental Services proposals linked to women's productive projects and groups composed of at least 80 percent women.	Increased the threshold for women's collective participation, reinforcing women's leadership and representation in conservation-linked productive initiatives.
2026	"Care for equality" affirmative actions were incorporated into several support schemes, including Forest Restoration, Payment for	Expanded care-sensitive affirmative actions across key forest programmes, facilitating women's participation in conservation, restoration, forest health, fire

	Environmental Services, Forest Health Brigades, Rural Fire Management Brigades, courses and workshops, and community forestry extension.	management, capacity-building, and community forestry processes.
2026	Creation of the support concept for women's project incubators.	Established a dedicated mechanism to support women from the early stages of project development, reducing technical and administrative entry barriers and strengthening women's access to future forest-related productive opportunities.

Source: Own elaboration based on CONAFOR'S ROP.

The current operational framework reflects several types of gender-responsive measures. First, it includes prioritization criteria for women-led initiatives, women forest enterprises, women's groups and projects that demonstrate inclusive governance arrangements. Second, it incorporates specific affirmative actions designed to reduce structural barriers to participation, such as the "Care for Equality" mechanism, which recognizes unpaid care work as a constraint on women's participation in training, productive activities, and governance spaces. Third, it promotes women's participation in areas traditionally dominated by men, including forest-fire brigades, phytosanitary treatment, technical advisory roles, community forestry enterprises and forest value chains. Fourth, it strengthens women's participation in restoration, environmental services, ecotechnologies, capacity-building, and productive incubation processes (CONAFOR, 2026). These measures are directly relevant to REDD+ because they connect women's participation with mitigation, restoration, forest conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and territorial resilience.

As described in detail in previous section 3.3, CONAFOR support programs have integrated gender-responsive features embedded in both the general framework and the specific support schemes (activities), these include those to be implemented under the RBP project (productive reconversion for SPS, PES, and women-led productive projects). The general and activity-specific gender-related prioritization criteria included in CONAFOR's 2026 Operating Rules is listed, as follows.

General gender-related criteria applicable to all CONAFOR's support programs:

- Priority for applications submitted by women or by groups that include women among their owners or legal representatives.
- Priority for young applicants (18–29 years old), including young women participating in collective organizations.
- Priority for Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Mexican communities, recognizing the intersection between gender and social inclusion.
- Additional financial support through affirmative care measures to facilitate women's participation.

Activity-specific gender-responsive criteria for activities to be supported by the RBP project, include:

Productive Reconversion:

- Priority for projects led by women, including forest nurseries, production of plants linked to productive activities, and rainwater harvesting systems.

Productive Projects for Women:

- Program specifically designed to strengthen women's forest enterprises and entrepreneurship.
- Priority for projects involving young women (18–29 years old).
- Priority for women's groups with previous experience working collectively.
- Includes a Forest Project Incubator that provides technical assistance to women's groups to develop viable business initiatives.
- Provides dedicated funding for affirmative care measures to facilitate women's participation.

Payment for Environmental Services (PES):

- Priority for productive projects implemented with at least 80 percent participation by women.
- Requires identification of women participating in conservation activities.
- Allows up to 20 percent of the productive project budget to be allocated to affirmative care measures that support women's effective participation.

Overall, these programs go beyond ensuring women's eligibility by incorporating incentives for women's leadership, entrepreneurship, participation in decision-making, and measures that address the care-related barriers that often limit their participation in sustainable forest management activities.In addition, capacity-building activities were implemented, including a gender and forest development workshops for forest fire protection personnel and awareness-raising for state management offices on women's human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights. These actions demonstrate that gender mainstreaming was not limited to beneficiary targeting, but also included institutional capacity-building, technical personnel and operational areas directly linked to REDD+ implementation.

The creation of the National Gender and Inclusion Strategy for the Forest Sector 2025–2030 further strengthens the integration of gender equality into REDD+ implementation. Although this strategy is broader than REDD+, it is highly relevant to the RBP proposal because it provides CONAFOR with a dedicated roadmap to address the same structural barriers identified during the REDD+ readiness process: unequal land tenure, limited access to subsidies and technical assistance, low representation in forest governance bodies, gender stereotypes in forest activities, unpaid care burdens and differentiated vulnerability to climate change. The strategy also reinforces the shift from viewing women only as vulnerable beneficiaries toward recognizing them as forest-sector actors, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, restoration agents, technical participants, and climate leaders. The previous section already establishes that the strategy recognizes structural, cultural, and institutional barriers affecting women in forest territories, including unequal land tenure, restricted participation in assemblies, unpaid care burdens and restricted access to technical and financial resources (CONAFOR, 2025a).

The strategic integration of gender equality in REDD+ also aligns with the Green Climate Fund Gender Policy and FAO ESS 6. The GCF Gender Policy requires climate finance to be gender-responsive, to identify gender-differentiated impacts, to promote women's participation, and to ensure equitable access to benefits. FAO ESS 6 similarly requires the promotion of gender equality, prevention of discrimination, identification of gender-based risks and prevention of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Mexico's REDD+ framework has progressively developed the institutional and operational conditions to meet these requirements through safeguards instruments, gender-responsive forest rules, participatory mechanisms, grievance channels, sex-disaggregated monitoring commitments and institutional strengthening within CONAFOR.

In addition, gender mainstreaming in REDD+ has been supported by the increasing convergence between forest policy, climate policy, rural development policy, and gender equality policy. Women's participation

in REDD+ is not limited to forest conservation activities, but is linked to broader rural development processes, including sustainable productive systems, agroecological transition, forest value chains, restoration, environmental services, and community-based territorial planning. This is important because many women in forest landscapes participate in diversified livelihood systems that combine agriculture, livestock, non-timber forest products, care work, household food security, restoration activities and community organization. A gender-responsive REDD+ strategy must therefore recognize women's multiple roles within forest and rural economies and avoid narrowing participation only to formal landholders or timber-sector actors.

Overall, Mexico's REDD+ readiness process and subsequent forest-sector reforms demonstrate a progressive institutional trajectory toward gender mainstreaming. The country has moved from general recognition of participation and social inclusion toward more specific operational measures aimed at addressing the structural conditions that limit women's participation in forest governance and access to REDD+ benefits.

4.2. Women's participation in stakeholder engagement and consultations

Women's participation was progressively incorporated into REDD+ stakeholder engagement and consultation processes through Mexico's broader approach to participatory forest governance, safeguards implementation and social inclusion. During the REDD+ readiness phase, stakeholder engagement was understood as a core condition for legitimacy, effectiveness, and safeguards compliance, particularly because REDD+ actions are implemented in territories characterized by collective land tenure, Indigenous and community governance systems, differentiated access to information and historical inequalities in participation.

Within this context, women's participation was increasingly recognized as necessary to ensure that REDD+ planning and implementation reflected the needs, priorities, knowledge, and constraints of forest-dependent populations. This recognition was especially relevant in Mexico's forest governance context, where many formal decision-making spaces are organized around agrarian rights. In ejidos and communities, assemblies are central to decisions regarding land use, forest management, participation in public programs, and benefit distribution. However, because women have historically been underrepresented among formal agrarian rights holders, they may have limited voice and vote in these spaces, even when they contribute substantially to forest-related livelihoods, restoration activities, non-timber forest production, household economies and community organization.

Mexico's REDD+ readiness process was supported by one of the most extensive participatory and consultation processes developed for a national forest and climate policy instrument in the country. The final consultation process for ENAREDD+ involved 26,360 participants and included different modalities, such as virtual participation, questionnaires, thematic forums, state forums and Indigenous and Afro-descendant consultation spaces. Although the process was not designed exclusively as a women's consultation, its results show that women's participation and gender considerations formed part of the broader REDD+ readiness process and generated substantive inputs for the design and implementation of the strategy (CONAFOR, 2017b).

Women's participation in stakeholder engagement was particularly relevant for identifying social risks and barriers that could affect REDD+ implementation. Through the readiness process, Mexico identified that women may face limited participation in community assemblies, reduced access to information about forest programs, lower representation in forest governance bodies, restricted access to land and

productive resources, and lower capacity to benefit from programs where eligibility is linked to formal land tenure or institutional representation. These findings informed the safeguards approach and contributed to the recognition that REDD+ participation must go beyond formal invitations or general consultation spaces. Effective participation requires conditions that enable women to access information, attend meetings, express their views, influence decisions and benefit from REDD+ actions (CONAFOR, 2015; CONAFOR, 2017a; CONAFOR, 2017b; CONAFOR, 2019).

The results of the ENAREDD+ consultation process provide important evidence on how women and participating stakeholders understood gender equality in the context of REDD+. The inputs received went beyond general references to women's attendance in meetings and emphasized the need to transform decision-making structures, strengthen women's leadership, create incentives for women's involvement, simplify access to resources, improve access to justice and recognize women's differentiated roles in forest and rural economies.

Several consultation inputs highlighted that gender equality should not be understood only as numerical participation, but also as effective participation in decision-making. This observation is particularly relevant for REDD+, because community forest governance, benefit-sharing arrangements and territorial planning are frequently decided through formal or informal structures where women have historically had less voice and influence. The consultation therefore anticipated one of the core gender risks later reflected in REDD+ safeguards instruments: the risk that women may be present in participatory spaces but remain excluded from substantive influence over forest management, REDD+ priorities and benefit distribution.

The consultation also identified the need to strengthen women's leadership and empowerment through concrete and context-specific measures. Participants recommended promoting mechanisms to replicate experiences of women who had served as community commissioners and municipal presidents, as a means to strengthen gender equity and empowerment within ENAREDD+. This recommendation recognizes the strategic value of peer learning, role models, and territorial leadership experiences in overcoming gender stereotypes within rural and forest governance. It is also consistent with later institutional developments in CONAFOR, including the National Gender and Inclusion Strategy for the Forest Sector 2025–2030, which recognizes women as agents of economic development, biodiversity conservation and climate action, and promotes actions to strengthen women's leadership in forest governance and decision-making spaces.

The consultation further underscored the importance of institutional incentives and affirmative measures to increase women's participation. Participants noted that incentives were needed so that more women would be interested in participating in forest and reforestation programs. This recommendation has been progressively addressed through CONAFOR's operational framework, including gender-responsive prioritization criteria, differentiated support for women-led initiatives, affirmative actions incorporated into the Operating Rules and targeted support for women's productive projects.

Another important consultation result concerned the need to guarantee women's effective participation in institutional arrangements coordinating resources and actions for Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with community norms and practices. This input is particularly relevant for Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women, who may face intersecting barriers related to gender, ethnicity, language, territory, and internal community governance systems. The current policy and operational framework have advanced in this direction by recognizing the need for culturally appropriate participation, territorial governance, and community decision-making within forest management processes, while also incorporating differentiated measures for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Mexican peoples, women and other historically excluded groups.

The consultation also called for meaningful representation of women in the National Forestry Council and other councils, in order to influence broader participation platforms at different levels. This recommendation anticipated later efforts to strengthen women's representation in forest governance bodies and aligns with Mexico's broader transition toward parity and substantive equality in public decision-making. It is directly relevant to REDD+, because councils and participatory platforms serve as institutional spaces for policy dialogue, safeguards discussion, feedback, and prioritization of forest-sector interventions.

Gender considerations were also integrated into federal REDD+ coordination platforms. In 2022, coordination was strengthened with INMUJERES, now the Ministry of Women, to incorporate a gender perspective into the actions of the REDD+ Working Group (GT-REDD+) of the Interministerial Commission on Climate Change. In that context, INMUJERES delivered the thematic session "Promoting Gender Perspective in the GT-REDD+", aimed at strengthening the capacities of group members to mainstream gender in their activities. The session addressed basic gender concepts, public policies for equality, gender perspective in territorial policy and gender mainstreaming in forest policies and was attended by 40 women and nine men from 16 institutions.

The consultation results also emphasized the need to include women in field-based activities, continuous training, nurseries, greenhouses, reforestation, and other productive and restoration activities. This recommendation is closely reflected in the progressive evolution of CONAFOR's programming. Current operational measures promote women's participation in technical training, community forestry, restoration activities and sustainable production projects, and include prioritization mechanisms for women-led projects or projects demonstrating inclusive governance structures. This shows a line of progress from consultation demands toward operational measures that expand women's participation beyond consultation spaces and into implementation roles linked to restoration, productive activities, and forest management.

Another relevant consultation input referred to the need to recognize the high value of non-timber forest resources, where women's participation is often concentrated, and to address the limited or non-existent budgets available to promote such activities. This observation remains highly relevant for the RBP, because women's forest-related contributions are frequently located in non-timber value chains, household economies, traditional knowledge systems, restoration activities and community-based productive practices that have historically received less financial and technical support than timber-oriented activities. CONAFOR's later incorporation of women forest enterprises, women's productive projects, support for value chains and differentiated incentives for women-led initiatives represents an important institutional response to this demand. However, this remains an area for continued strengthening under the RBP Gender Action Plan, particularly in relation to non-timber forest products, market access, technical assistance, and women's economic autonomy.

Inputs from the Indigenous and Afro-descendant consultation further highlighted that women's participation cannot be reduced to formal invitations to assemblies. Participants noted that it is not only about inviting women to assemblies, but about making them aware of the importance of their opinion and participation in forest and related issues. This statement captures a central distinction between formal participation and meaningful participation. For the RBP, this means that stakeholder engagement should not be assessed only by the number of women invited or attending, but also by whether women have access to information, understand the relevance of REDD+ decisions, feel safe expressing their views and can influence outcomes. This directly supports the need for gender-responsive communication, capacity-building, facilitation, and feedback mechanisms.

The consultation also generated a detailed set of inputs related to legal empowerment, access to justice, land tenure, financing and institutional requirements affecting women's participation in REDD+. Participants emphasized the need for an effective communication strategy on laws, their scope of application and available justice mechanisms, so that people can file complaints, report irregularities, and demand the protection of their rights. This recommendation is directly relevant to the RBP safeguards framework because access to information and grievance mechanisms is a precondition for effective participation, accountability, and protection against exclusion or discrimination. It also reinforces the importance of ensuring that women, including Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women, receive accessible information on eligibility criteria, rights, benefit-sharing arrangements, safeguards, and complaint channels.

The consultation also called for legal reforms in favor of women, including reforms related to agrarian governance. Participants noted that land tenure constituted an obstacle to accessing resources, particularly for women, and specifically recommended that the Agrarian Law should establish that ejido commissariats must also be composed of women. This input identified, at an early stage, the connection between land rights, community representation, participation in agrarian governance bodies, and access to forest-sector benefits.

In this regard, the 2023 reform to the Agrarian Law represented an important step forward. The reform established that the comprehensive and equitable development of the rural sector must be promoted with a gender perspective and under conditions of equality and parity. It also provided that the composition of ejido commissariats must observe the principle of parity, and that candidacies for elected positions within ejido commissariats and supervisory councils, as well as their auxiliary commissions and secretariats, must be integrated in accordance with the principle of gender parity.

This reform strengthens the legal basis for women's participation in agrarian governance and contributes to reducing historical barriers in community representation structures. However, parity rules for ejido governance bodies do not, by themselves, eliminate the structural inequalities associated with land tenure. Therefore, it remains necessary to ensure that women, including those without formally recognized agrarian rights, can effectively participate in decisions related to forest management, access to programs, benefit sharing and REDD+ activities.

Participants also requested that Operating Rules address women's limited access to land by considering different possibilities for granting support even when women are not landowners. The consultation emphasized that, if operational rules recognized diverse forms of possession, use, participation and community organization, access to resources would no longer depend solely on discretionary decisions and could better reflect the particular conditions of each region. This recommendation is especially important for the RBP because it links gender equality to program design. Inclusion cannot be achieved only through outreach or invitations; it also requires eligibility rules, documentation requirements and operational procedures that do not automatically exclude women without formal land titles.

CONAFOR has progressively advanced in the direction identified by the consultation. Subsequent Operating Rules incorporated gender and inclusion criteria, differentiated prioritization mechanisms, recognition of women-led initiatives, support for Women Forest Enterprises, productive projects for women, flexible mechanisms for women's groups and, more recently, the recognition of UAIM certificates and other operational arrangements that help reduce barriers linked to land tenure and formal representation. These measures do not fully eliminate structural inequalities in agrarian rights, but they represent an important

institutional response to the consultation demand that forest programs consider women's differentiated access to land and avoid making land ownership the only practical gateway to support.

The consultation also identified overregulation and excessive requirements as barriers to women's access to resources. Participants noted the need for institutions and financing systems to facilitate women's participation by requesting fewer requirements, simplifying loan procedures, extending repayment periods, and adapting credit conditions to productive cycles. They also called for promoting access to credit and loans for commercialization services appropriate to women. These comments are directly relevant to REDD+, because many women's forest-related activities, particularly non-timber forest products, nurseries, restoration, small-scale processing, commercialization, and community enterprises, require accessible financing, technical support, and administrative requirements proportional to their organizational capacities.

CONAFOR's later operational evolution responds partially to this concern. The creation and strengthening of support concepts for women-led productive forest projects, Women Forest Enterprises and the Forest Project Incubator for Women reflect a gradual shift toward more flexible and enabling instruments. Incubation schemes that begin with a project idea and provide technical accompaniment before requiring full technical documentation respond directly to the barrier identified in the consultation: women may have viable productive initiatives but lack the technical, administrative, or financial capacity to comply with complex requirements at the outset. This type of measure is especially relevant for the RBP Gender Action Plan because it shows how program design can reduce entry barriers and support women's transition from informal or early-stage initiatives to more consolidated forest enterprises.

Participants also emphasized that budgets were not sufficiently designed with a gender perspective, and that earmarked resources were needed to support women's advancement in agrarian and forest matters. This inputs links gender equality to public expenditure and benefit-sharing. In REDD+, gender-responsive implementation requires not only formal commitments to inclusion, but also resources for outreach, capacity-building, care support, technical assistance, productive investment, women-led enterprises, monitoring, and grievance access. The subsequent use of gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms, affirmative actions within CONAFOR programs and targeted support categories for women represents progress toward addressing this demand. However, the RBP should continue ensuring that gender actions are adequately budgeted and not treated as ancillary measures.

The consultation stressed that the benefit-sharing scheme should be equitable and transparent for owners, possessors and persons carrying out activities that support REDD+, particularly women, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and older persons. This is a key point for the RBP because it broadens the concept of legitimate beneficiaries beyond formal landowners. It recognizes that REDD+ outcomes depend on the contributions of multiple actors who may not always hold formal ownership rights, including women who participate in restoration, forest surveillance, nurseries, non-timber forest activities, community organization, fire prevention, environmental services, and sustainable production. Therefore, benefit-sharing mechanisms should be designed to recognize both formal rights and effective contributions to REDD+ objectives.

The consultation also recognized training as a pathway for the empowerment of women and youth, and several comments requested the inclusion of training on gender perspective. This input has been progressively addressed through institutional capacity-building, gender-related training for CONAFOR personnel, awareness-raising on women's rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights, and the inclusion of gender equality and social inclusion as core elements of the forest-sector strategy. For the RBP, capacity-building

should operate at two levels: strengthening women's technical, organizational and leadership capacities; and strengthening institutional, technical-advisory and community capacities to apply a gender perspective in REDD+ implementation.

Finally, the consultation emphasized the need for accompaniment by mixed or women's organizations with a real gender perspective, noting that women often participate less because engagement implies a double burden. This input is directly connected to the later development of the "Care for Equality" affirmative action and to the broader recognition of unpaid care work as a structural barrier to women's participation. It also points to the importance of working with organizations, technical advisors, and facilitators that have demonstrated gender capacities, rather than assuming that ordinary technical assistance will automatically be inclusive. For the RBP, technical accompaniment should include gender-sensitive facilitation, attention to care burdens, flexible scheduling, culturally appropriate methods, and support for women's collective organization.

The Second Summary of Information on the Addressing and Respect of REDD+ Safeguards in Mexico for the 2017–2022 period also documents participatory feedback mechanisms related to safeguards reporting. During its preparation, three virtual participatory assessment workshops were held with users of public policy from 31 federal entities. These workshops provided inputs on the usefulness, relevance, and areas for improvement of actions associated with REDD+ safeguards, including those related to gender equality, participation, and access to benefits. This reinforces the importance of maintaining stakeholder feedback mechanisms as part of safeguards reporting and continuous improvement.

Overall, the ENAREDD+ consultation results show that women and participating stakeholders articulated a comprehensive understanding of gender equality in REDD+. Their recommendations did not focus only on increasing the number of women participants, but on transforming the conditions that determine effective participation: legal rights, access to land, representation in governance bodies, simplified access to resources, gender-responsive budgets, credit and commercialization support, capacity-building, institutional accountability, and care-related barriers.

The subsequent evolution of CONAFOR's operational and institutional framework demonstrates meaningful progress in responding to several of these demands. However, these consultation inputs should continue to guide the RBP Gender Action Plan, particularly to ensure that women are able to influence decisions, access benefits, receive adequate technical support, use grievance mechanisms safely and participate in REDD+ activities without reinforcing unpaid care burdens or existing local power asymmetries.

4.3. Other gender considerations in the REDD+ strategy

As described in the previous sections, Mexico has a robust legal, institutional, and operational framework for integrating gender equality into REDD+, including safeguards instruments, affirmative measures in CONAFOR's Operating Rules, grievance mechanisms and the National Strategy for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Forest Sector. Therefore, this section focuses only on additional considerations that should inform the Gender Action Plan and the Environmental and Social Management Framework for the RBP proposal.

The ENAREDD+ consultation process constitutes a relevant baseline, as it showed that women and other stakeholders did not understand gender equality only as numerical participation, but as effective participation in decision-making, access to resources, recognition of their contributions to forest

management and a real ability to influence territorial governance. In particular, the comments received highlighted the need to strengthen women's participation in councils and decision-making bodies, replicate leadership experiences of women who had served as community commissioners or municipal presidents, include women from the diagnostic stage, and guarantee spaces where their views are heard and responded to.

A central concern identified was the relationship between land tenure, agrarian representation, and access to benefits. Participants noted that land tenure constitutes an obstacle for women's access to resources and proposed reforms to ensure women's participation in ejido commissariats. In this regard, the 2023 reform to the Agrarian Law represents an important step forward, as it established that rural development must be promoted with a gender perspective and under conditions of equality and parity and incorporated the principle of parity in the composition of ejido commissariats, supervisory councils, candidacies, commissions, and auxiliary secretariats. However, parity in representation bodies does not, by itself, resolve inequalities associated with formal agrarian rights. Therefore, the results-based payment proposal should ensure that women without formal land rights are also able to participate in decisions related to forest management, access to programs, benefit sharing and REDD+ activities.

The consultation also highlighted practical barriers related to overregulation, complex requirements, and limited access to financing. Women noted the need for more flexible Rules of Operation, simpler procedures, appropriate credit, support for commercialization and gender-responsive budgets. These elements remain relevant for the results-based payment proposal because many women-led forest initiatives are at early stages, operate through community-based forms of organization or do not yet have technical documentation, legal constitution, bank accounts or formal land rights. Therefore, gender measures should ensure eligibility and financing conditions that reduce entry barriers and strengthen women's productive and technical autonomy.

Another additional aspect is the need to recognize women's effective contributions to REDD+, even when they are not landowners or formal rights holders. The consultation noted that benefit-sharing arrangements should be equitable and transparent for owners, possessors and those carrying out activities that support REDD+, particularly women, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and older persons. This implies that benefit-sharing mechanisms should consider contributions such as restoration, nurseries, forest surveillance, fire prevention, non-timber forest activities, community organization, environmental services, and sustainable production.

Finally, the consultation emphasized the importance of access to information, justice mechanisms, and technical accompaniment with a gender perspective. This means that grievance channels, outreach activities, technical assistance and capacity-building processes should be accessible, culturally appropriate, and gender-sensitive. They should also consider unpaid care burdens and prevent risks of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or revictimization, particularly when women assume leadership roles, participate in traditionally male-dominated activities, or submit complaints.

In summary, the additional considerations for the RBP proposal are not related to the absence of an institutional framework, but rather to ensuring that existing progress translates into effective results in forest territories. The Gender Action Plan and the Environmental and Social Management Framework should therefore focus on operational, budgeted and monitorable measures to strengthen women's substantive participation, access to benefits, technical and productive autonomy, recognition of their contributions to REDD+, and safe participation in forest governance.

5. Conclusions from the assessment

This Gender Analysis outlines the significant structural inequalities for rural, Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, particularly in forest territories and climate-vulnerable regions. These inequalities limit women's effective access to land tenure, productive assets, technical assistance, financing, formal employment, education, and decision-making spaces. The analysis also highlights that gender inequalities intersect with territorial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities. States with high forest cover and strategic relevance for REDD+ implementation —particularly Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Guerrero— simultaneously concentrate higher levels of rural poverty, Indigenous population, lower educational attainment, and reduced access to productive resources. These conditions create cumulative disadvantages that may constrain the effective participation of women in forest governance, climate action and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Women in Mexico face barriers to achieve equal participation within agrarian governance and community forest management structures. Women are significantly underrepresented in ejido and community leadership positions, largely due to persistent inequalities in land tenure and agrarian rights recognition. Since access to assemblies, representation and decision-making spaces is closely linked to agrarian rights, structural barriers to land tenure restrict women's voice and influence in territorial governance processes.

The assessment further shows that women's economic participation in rural and forest sectors is constrained by structural barriers. Women are concentrated in lower-paid activities, informal markets, and unpaid care work, while facing limited access to productive assets, forest financing, technical training, and extension services. In the forest sector specifically, women's participation in timber-related value chains, technical forestry services and forest governance is comparatively low, reinforcing unequal access to economic opportunities and climate-related benefits.

The unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work constitutes another major structural constraint affecting women's participation in productive activities, technical training, community assemblies and governance processes. These limitations become particularly relevant in climate-vulnerable territories, where environmental degradation, water scarcity and extreme weather events frequently intensify care burdens and livelihood pressures for rural women.

The assessment also identifies important challenges related to statistical underrepresentation and limited availability of disaggregated information regarding rural and Indigenous women's participation in productive sectors, forest governance and climate-related programs. These information gaps constrain the design, implementation, and monitoring of gender-responsive public policies and REDD+ interventions.

To overcome these barriers, as of 2026, Mexico's legal and policy framework demonstrates increasing convergence between gender equality, climate action, forest governance and social inclusion. The combined implementation of constitutional reforms, gender equality legislation, climate and forest laws, sectoral strategies, provides a robust foundation for the implementation of the RBP Gender Action Plan under standards consistent with the GCF's Gender Policy and FAO's FESM particularly ESS 6.

Regarding the legal framework, provisions in the LGDFS are relevant to REDD+ implementation because they establish that sustainable forest development must contribute to equitable access to benefits and participation. In the agriculture sector, legal instruments such as the LGDRS and the Agrarian Law, include provisions that provide an important legal basis for strengthening women's participation in sustainable

rural livelihoods, and promote women's participation, leadership, access to productive resources and economic empowerment within rural and forest territories.

Mexico's current relevant policies include key orientations that reinforce the integration of substantive equality, climate justice and inclusive forest governance. This reflects an important evolution from earlier approaches that addressed gender primarily through social assistance programs rather than through structural transformation and substantive equality policies.

Mexico has embraced a broad range of international commitments that establish a robust normative foundation for integrating gender equality, participation, safeguards, and human rights into Mexico's REDD+ implementation framework. They also reinforce the obligation to ensure that climate finance and forest governance mechanisms contribute not only to emissions reductions, but also to substantive equality, social inclusion, and the protection of women's rights in rural and forest-dependent territories. The current Mexican legal and institutional framework reflects a progressive harmonization between these international commitments and national legislation, public policy, and sectoral governance.

Overall, Mexico's institutional framework demonstrates significant progress toward integrating gender equality and social inclusion into environmental governance, climate action and forest management. The articulation between gender institutions, environmental authorities, forest governance bodies and safeguards systems provide an important operational foundation for implementing the RBP under standards aligned with the GCF's Gender Policy and FAO's FESM ESS6. Nevertheless, institutional capacity gaps, coordination challenges and structural inequalities remain important considerations for the effective implementation of the Gender Action Plan and future safeguards monitoring processes.

Regarding grievance redress mechanisms, the analysis found that Mexico has established a range of instruments—including codes of conduct, citizen attention and grievance mechanisms, social oversight processes, and institutional protocols—to promote respectful, safe, and inclusive participation for beneficiaries, technical personnel, and community members. These instruments provide channels to report and address concerns related to misconduct, discrimination, and violence. Complementary capacity-building and awareness-raising efforts have further strengthened institutional capacities on gender equality, prevention of violence, and culturally appropriate engagement. However, challenges remain in ensuring effective access to these mechanisms in forest-dependent territories, particularly for women and marginalized groups.

Mexico's REDD+ process has progressively integrated gender equality and social inclusion as cross-cutting elements of forest governance, safeguards, stakeholder engagement, and benefit-sharing. Although not initially designed as a standalone component, gender mainstreaming has evolved through the combined effects of REDD+ readiness, the national safeguards framework, forest policy reforms, participatory governance mechanisms, and broader institutional commitments to equality. As a result, issues such as women's participation, differentiated vulnerabilities, access to benefits, land tenure constraints, and unpaid care work have gained increasing visibility within both REDD+ policy frameworks and operational instruments. The strategic integration of gender equality in REDD+ aligns with the GCF Gender Policy and FAO ESS 6.

Particularly, Mexico's ENAREDD+ explicitly recognizes that forest territories are socially differentiated and that women, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Mexican communities, and youth face unequal conditions in access to land, resources, participation, and benefit distribution. Within this context, women are not only

recognized as potentially vulnerable but also as key actors in sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, restoration, and climate resilience.

This approach has been reinforced through the gradual transformation of CONAFOR's operational framework, particularly the incorporation of gender criteria into Operating Rules. These include eligibility, prioritization, and affirmative action measures, moving toward a more systematic integration of gender equality within forest programs. Given that REDD+ implementation in Mexico relies heavily on these existing instruments, their evolution represents a concrete pathway for advancing gender-responsive REDD+ implementation.

Mexico's REDD+ readiness process was supported by an extensive consultation process through which women's participation was increasingly recognized as essential to ensure that REDD+ planning and implementation reflected the needs, priorities, knowledge, and constraints of forest-dependent populations. Overall, the ENAREDD+ consultation process showed that women and other stakeholders understand gender equality in REDD+ as extending beyond participation rates, highlighting the importance of addressing structural barriers such as unequal access to land and resources, limited representation in governance, the need for gender-responsive financing and capacity-building, institutional accountability, and care-related constraints. Although progress has been achieved through improvements in CONAFOR's operational and institutional framework, these priorities remain highly relevant and should inform the RBP Gender Action Plan. Doing so will help ensure that women are able to meaningfully influence decision-making, access benefits and technical assistance, safely use grievance mechanisms, and participate in REDD+ activities without reinforcing existing inequalities or increasing unpaid care burdens.

Finally, this Gender Analysis highlights that the implementation of the REDD+ RBP proposal would benefit from incorporating targeted measures aimed at reducing structural barriers affecting women's participation and access to benefits. This includes strengthening women's participation in territorial governance and community forest management, promoting more equitable access to technical assistance, and financing and productive assets.

The assessment also suggests that gender-responsive implementation mechanisms should incorporate intersectional and territorial approaches that recognize the differentiated conditions faced by Indigenous women, Afro-descendant women, young women, and women living in highly marginalized rural territories. Tailored outreach, culturally appropriate participation mechanisms and locally adapted capacity-building strategies may help reduce participation barriers and improve inclusiveness in REDD+ activities.

The findings also point to the importance of strengthening institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming within forest and climate governance systems, including improved gender-disaggregated monitoring systems, institutional coordination mechanisms and operational guidelines that facilitate the effective incorporation of gender considerations throughout the implementation of the RBP proposal.

The assessment highlights that reducing gender inequalities in rural and forest territories is not only a matter of social justice and human rights, but also a strategic condition for strengthening climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and inclusive territorial governance. Expanding women's effective participation in forest management, productive activities and community decision-making processes may contribute to improving the sustainability, legitimacy and long-term effectiveness of climate and forest interventions in Mexico.