



# Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture



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MODULE 5

## The policy cycle



Pacific handbook for

# gender equity and social inclusion

in coastal fisheries  
and aquaculture

## Module 5: The policy cycle

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# Key points

- Integrating gender and social inclusion (GSI) in the policy cycle for coastal fisheries and aquaculture helps ensure that the work of the fisheries agency:
  - Promotes positive outcomes for everyone whose livelihood depends on the sector.
  - Does not perpetuate or worsen inequalities.
- There are several key phases in the policy planning and implementation cycle in which GSI approaches should be incorporated.
- Policy implementation is a continuous process, requiring ongoing review and feedback from stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of fisheries and aquaculture initiatives.

## Addressing GSI at all stages in the policy cycle

Improving social inclusion in fisheries and aquaculture policy helps ensure that all groups in the community gain equal outcomes from the development of these sectors. In Pacific Island countries and territories, gender mainstreaming is the main pathway for achieving social inclusion in government.

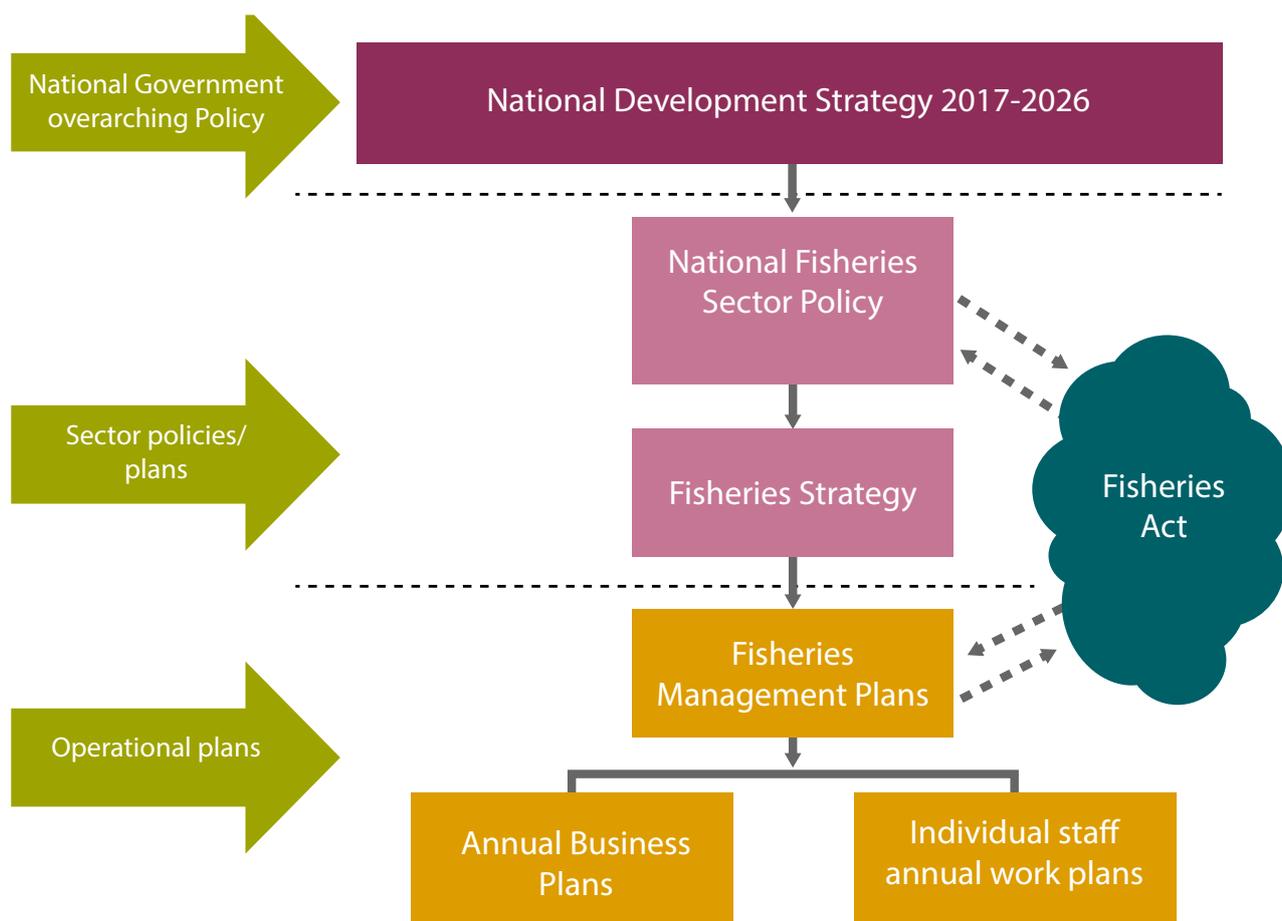
*Gender mainstreaming is 'the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated'.<sup>1</sup>*

Mainstreaming gender throughout policy and legally binding documents can take on many different forms in Pacific Island governments. Figure 5.1 details the process or flow for developing coastal fisheries and aquaculture policy, legislation and plans. In the Pacific Islands, customary law, local tenure arrangements and community rules are also important considerations in framing policies, strategies and plans for managing and conserving marine resources. GSI should be considered at every stage of policy planning and implementation.

A useful tool for checking whether GSI has been appropriately considered in the policy cycle is the *Checklist for legislation and policy on small-scale fisheries*<sup>2</sup> (attached to this module). Establishing a GSI strategy for an agency provides a solid foundation for ensuring GSI is considered throughout policy work. This handbook can help fisheries agency staff implement a GSI strategy.

1 ECOSOC. 1997. Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, Chapter IV, Coordination Segment. Report of the Economic and Social Council of the 1997, General Assembly, Fifty-second Session. New York: United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/52/plenary/a52-3.htm>

2 FAO. (forthcoming, 2019). Appendix in: Towards legislating for sustainable small-scale fisheries. A guide to implementing the voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication in national legislation. Rome, Italy: FAO.



**Figure 5.1.** Process for developing policies, plans and legislation for the Pacific fisheries and aquaculture sector. Source: SPC.

## How governance systems affect GSI

Governance systems, which include entitlements and limitations in using coastal resources, affect who can use those resources and when they can use them. These systems have the potential to benefit or disadvantage people.

Incorporating GSI principles when designing governance policies can reduce social inequalities in sharing the benefits of coastal fisheries and aquaculture among people in the community whose livelihood depends on those resources for subsistence, income, and well-being:

- The first principle is to acknowledge that different people use marine resources and coastal areas for different purposes.
- The second principle is to be aware of and make visible people's various types of involvement in coastal fishing and aquaculture activities and their respective interests regarding marine resources.

For example, women are more involved in the use of marine and coastal resources for subsistence and recreation, while the private sector may be interested in using the same resources for commercial sale. Data should be collected on all forms of coastal fishing and aquaculture, and all the people involved in each form, to produce an accurate picture for planning resource management and development. A GSI approach ensures more women and disadvantaged people participate in a project or programme, and also helps identify where and how people are excluded.

## Case study: Addressing the exclusion of women from management observer programmes



To be employed as a 'debriefing', trainer or manager for fisheries observer programmes, experience as an observer on board a fishing vessel was considered necessary. Working as an observer on male-dominated fishing vessels is considered a high risk for women and very few women work as observers. The requirement for on-board experience therefore excluded many degree-qualified women from applying for management positions in national or regional observer programmes.

In 2015, the Pacific Islands Regional Fisheries Observer (PIRFO) Certification and Training Standards were amended to permit entry into observer programme management with a minimum requirement of a diploma or degree, and work experience in fisheries administration, instead of always requiring on-board experience.

This example shows that changing the rules can make a big difference in opening up opportunities for qualified people. It demonstrates how 'inclusion' works – by identifying the causes of exclusion and transforming rules and practices that act as obstacles. In this case, relevant qualifications in the technical aspects of an observer's role remained the main criteria for employment, but the requirement for experience at sea, which was not necessary for the tasks of debriefing and management, was dropped because it excluded qualified women from promotion opportunities.

**Misconception: 'We have already addressed gender and social inclusion because the staff of our department has lots of women, including managers. There is a man with a disability working at reception and a transgender woman in finance'.**



An increasing number of women are at senior management level in fisheries agencies in the Pacific, which is important progress. But GSI goes beyond having diverse people in the workplace.

A socially inclusive organisation thinks of the people the organisation serves. Promoting the sustainable development of coastal fisheries and aquaculture may mean increasing the involvement of women, young people and people from other disadvantaged segments of the population in policy-making to ensure that policies succeed.

A gender-responsive and socially inclusive workplace also looks at working conditions, making sure that they are:

- safe for everyone including men
- accessible, especially for people with disabilities
- family friendly

For example, primary carers of children may need flexibility around the times they start and finish work so that they can combine their work duties and child-rearing responsibilities. Making workplaces inclusive does take some effort and resources; for example, providing paid parental leave, and installing ramps or lifts for accessibility. It may not be easy to achieve, but if an organisation is serious about promoting gender equality and social inclusion, it will develop and implement the necessary measures and policies. Workplaces that are inclusive and value diversity perform better.<sup>3</sup>

3 Hunt, V., Layton, D. and Prince, S. 2015. Diversity matters: Study on the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic diversity in leadership and financial performance. McKinsey & Company, London, United Kingdom. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/why%20diversity%20matters/diversity%20matters.ashx>

## Key stages of the policy cycle

Figure 5.2 illustrates the key stages of a generic policy cycle. We can apply a gender lens to each phase, asking the following questions:

- How have men and women from different segments of the population (e.g. youth, migrants, people from various ethnic or social groups) participated in the decision-making and priority-setting process?
- Do men and women from different segments of the population have equal access to information, opportunities and other resources necessary to participate and benefit fully?
- Are their respective needs and priorities being met?
- Are their specific knowledge and skills being utilised to contribute to outcomes and solutions?
- What are the expected impacts of the policy on men and women from different segments of the population – for example, in terms of access to sector resources, incomes, markets, capacity development, productivity, workload, rights, relationships, and management/control of natural resources and other productive assets?

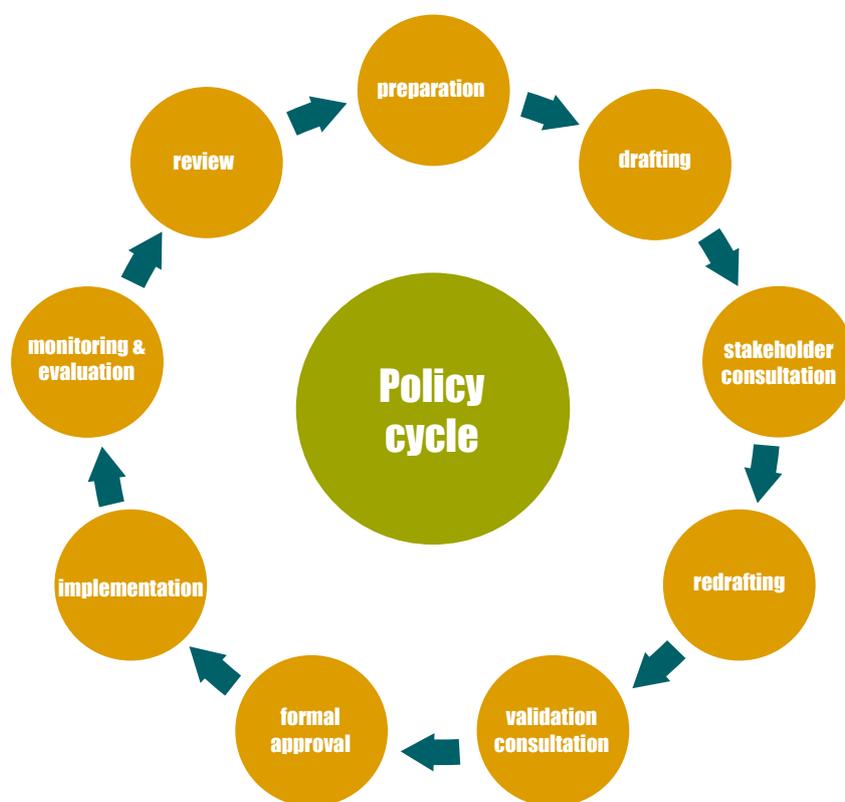


Figure 5.2. Key phases in the policy cycle. Source: SPC.

## 1. Preparation phase

Policy work starts with a directive from a government minister or parliament, and from there moves into preparation. The preparatory phase helps lay the political, organisational and institutional foundations for policy. This first phase in the policy cycle is the most crucial one for embedding GSI principles. It also sets the platform for the following phases.

### MAIN TASKS OF THE PREPARATION PHASE:

1. Raise awareness about the policy work with colleagues, senior management, government line agencies, donors, regional partners and relevant NGOs.
2. Undertake research, including situational analysis using GSI analysis (Module 2), to define problems and identify potential solutions.
3. Select an implementation approach. Define objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities.
4. Ensure the team working on the policy has the necessary capacities. Obtain stakeholder support, choose partner organisations and establish institutional arrangements.
5. Ensure there is an adequate budget for the work.
6. Design the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system for the policy (Module 3).

GSI considerations can be addressed in each of these planning tasks (see Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1:** Examples of GSI consideration during the preparation phase.

Activities	What to do to ensure thorough GSI consideration
Scoping key stakeholders and raising awareness with stakeholders	Agency responsible for gender and youth should be recognised as a key stakeholder and be made aware of the intention to develop a fisheries policy
Collecting and collating documents	Should include overarching government policies, gender policy and policies for other key stakeholders including, youth and marginalised groups
Raising awareness among staff of fisheries agency	All staff should be made aware of, and be free to be part of the policy team or to contribute if they wish
Creating a policy team	Include a staff member who is a gender contact point in the agency or who has had some gender awareness training

Awareness materials should explain that marine resource management and development are for everyone in the community, and that women, men, youth and other groups are affected differently due to their roles, responsibilities, access to resources and participation in decision-making.

### QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP EMBED GSI IN THE PLANNING PROCESS:

- Are women and youth and other disadvantaged people who depend on coastal fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods included in the planning process?
- Is the approach well suited to the socio-cultural context?
- Are the objectives and outputs gender reinforcing, gender accommodating, gender transformative? (See Definition of terms.)
- Do the outcomes include empowerment of marginalised groups?
- Will both women and men from different segments of the population have their respective needs addressed, considering their different capacities?
- Will activities address the needs and capacities of all segments of the population who depend on coastal fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods?

### Current status

An important part of the preparatory phase is research to produce a status report with baseline data on the social, cultural, economic and environmental context, and information on the political and institutional environment (Fig. 5.3). This report should include:

- identification of types of relevant scientific information and expert support;
- existing relevant policies, such as the national gender equality policy;
- cost-benefit analyses of solutions;
- priorities and solutions for policy, with an explanation of the process for identifying these.

Including GSI analysis in the research can identify ways of doing marine resource management and development that bring about long-term positive change for all groups in coastal communities (see Module 2: GSI analysis). To understand how GSI research can inform the planning stage of the policy cycle, the following should be considered:

- Data should be disaggregated by sex, age, caste, social status, socio-economic grouping, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- Look at the data for evidence about what people do, rather than reinforcing existing stereotypes. For example, do not assume that no women fish or that women are only interested in value-adding activities. Keep an open mind.
- The different roles of women and men in livelihood systems, in households and in communities, and their knowledge and capacities, should be documented to determine how the policy problem affects groups of people differently.
- Avoid worsening inequalities, for example, by increasing women's workloads.
- Costs and benefits should be disaggregated by sex, age, caste, social status, socio-economic grouping, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- Ensure appropriate attention is paid to the social context, not just to environmental or economic conditions.
- Ensure that people from every group are able to participate fully in identifying priorities.
- Document the process of priority selection considering GSI impacts (that is, which groups will benefit from these priorities) and how these were considered.



### Team capacity and establishing stakeholder support

All team members should be aware of and committed to addressing gender issues in the sector. Where necessary, training for staff and stakeholders should be provided at the outset to ensure there is a common understanding of the importance of GSI in marine resource management and development, including aquaculture.

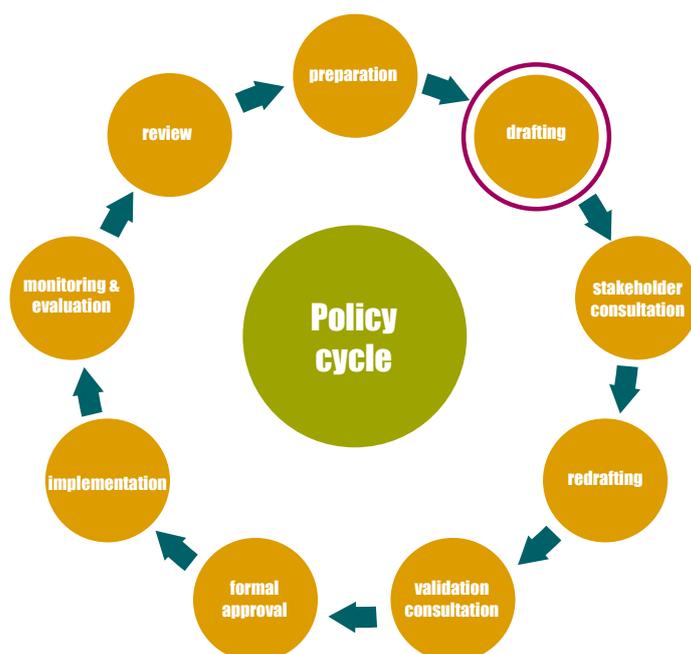
- Is the team gender balanced?
- How many team members have training and experience in GSI analysis or mainstreaming?
- How many team members have demonstrated their commitment to addressing GSI problems in their previous work?

The organisations responsible for coordinating and steering policies should identify the support needed to integrate GSI throughout the cycle in this phase. Partners should be chosen on the basis that they can provide support, e.g. women's organisations. Collaborating organisations could include the ministry responsible for women's affairs or community development, and civil society organisations working on human rights. Interagency committees and stakeholder groups can guide and support gender mainstreaming in fisheries agencies, which are likely to have less skills in GSI.



**Figure 5.3.** The pieces that together create the institutional environment. Source: SPC.

## 2. Drafting phase



The purpose of this phase is to produce strategic documents that clearly articulate policies and plans of action for fisheries and aquaculture management and development. These documents might include revised sections of the National Sustainable Development Strategy; fisheries and aquaculture policies; the Fishery Management Act; management plans for specific species; aquaculture development plans; and GSI strategies for fisheries agencies.

### THE DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE BASED ON AND INCLUDE:

- The directive that initiated the policy development.
- Information gathered, analyses conducted, and decisions reached during the preparatory phase, including a literature review.
- Relevant existing national policy documents and plans (including gender policy, plan, strategy), and ratified regional and international guidelines.
- An overview of relevant sectors (coastal fishery, aquaculture, environment, economy, etc.).
- Linkages between the national development strategy and sectoral policies and programmes for management and development of fisheries and aquaculture;
- An implementation strategy.
- Targets and indicators for a MEL plan (see Module 3: MEL).

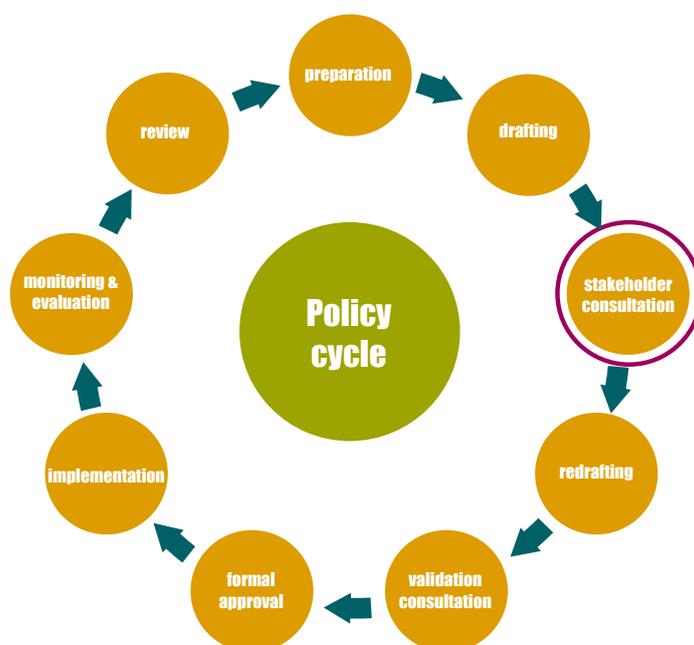
The draft should include GSI considerations. These could be in the form of indicators and processes to measure the effectiveness of the policy in benefiting all groups in the community equitably. The indicators may make explicit reference to groups within communities, e.g.:

- 50% of men, women and youth in coastal communities indicate that their incomes have improved as a result of measures implemented through the policy. Or
- Fisheries management (or environmental protection) measures incorporating GSI principles have been implemented in 10 provinces.

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF WRITING GSI CONSIDERATIONS INTO DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENTS INCLUDE:

- Integrating GSI in contracts for technical assistance and other jobs, procurement rules, and steering committees.
- Building in GSI training as part of implementing the policy.
- Specifying a GSI action plan with defined stakeholder roles and responsibilities, with activities identified to be reported on.
- Explicitly including GSI in MEL goals, objectives, activities and indicators to ensure it is monitored and reported on. Indicators should be disaggregated by sex, age, caste, social status, socio-economic grouping, ethnicity, religion, etc. so different impacts can be measured (see Module 3: MEL).

### 3. Stakeholder consultation phase

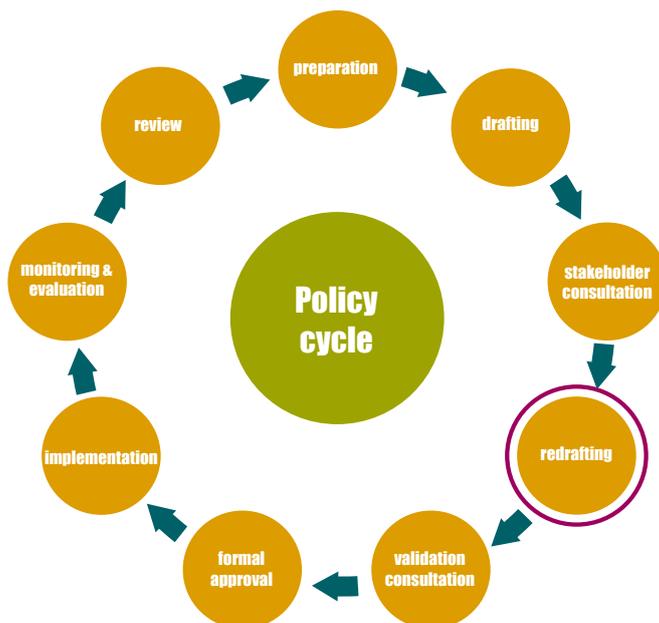


Various groups of stakeholders should be consulted on the draft policy. These groups may include other government agencies; communities depending on fishing and aquaculture for their livelihoods; private sector businesses involved in fishing and aquaculture; and civil society organisations.

Ensure that the perspectives of all social groups, including women, are heard during the consultations. This requires devising consultation questions to bring out sector-relevant GSI information and perspectives (a module on *Community engagement* is currently being drafted for this Handbook). It is important to allow the perspectives of all groups, not just of the dominant group (in many cases, older men), to come out. It may be best to talk to different groups (e.g. women, youth) separately.

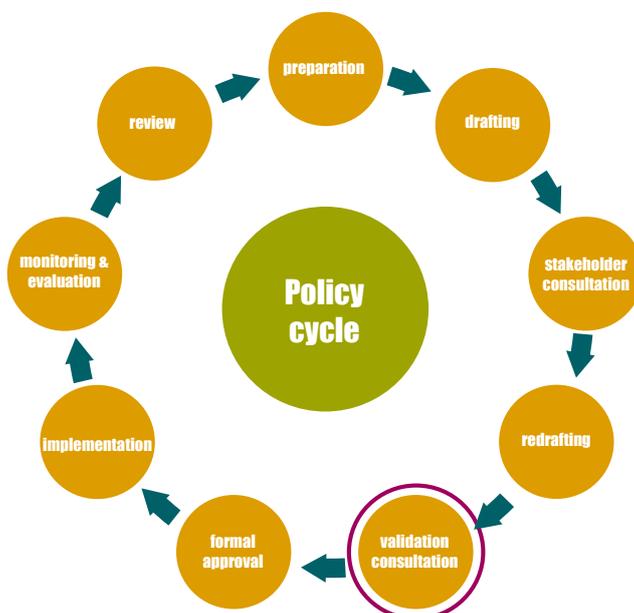
The GSI perspectives gathered in the consultations should then be faithfully documented in the records of the consultation, which will be used in redrafting the policy.

#### 4. Redrafting phase



Check that GSI considerations which were incorporated in the first draft, including from the GSI analysis, have not been weakened or lost in the redraft. Apply any new GSI considerations emerging from the consultations.

#### 5. Validation consultation phase

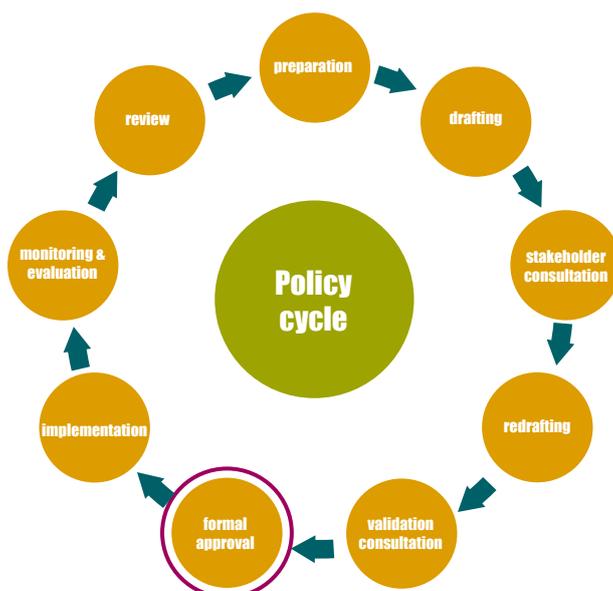


In general, the approach for this round of consultation should follow the approach for the initial stakeholder consultation, with some additional points:

- Check that GSI considerations applied in the first draft have not been weakened or lost in the redraft.
- Apply any new GSI considerations emerging from the consultations.
- Are the results of the GSI analysis still incorporated in the redraft?
- Have GSI factors that emerged in the consultations been considered in the redraft?
- Specify GSI-aware processes used in the consultations. Are these processes clearly articulated?
- Specify sector-relevant GSI information and perspectives from the feedback.
- Consider GSI in the plan for the way forward.
- Have the GSI information and perspectives gathered in the consultations been faithfully communicated?



## 6. Formal approval phase

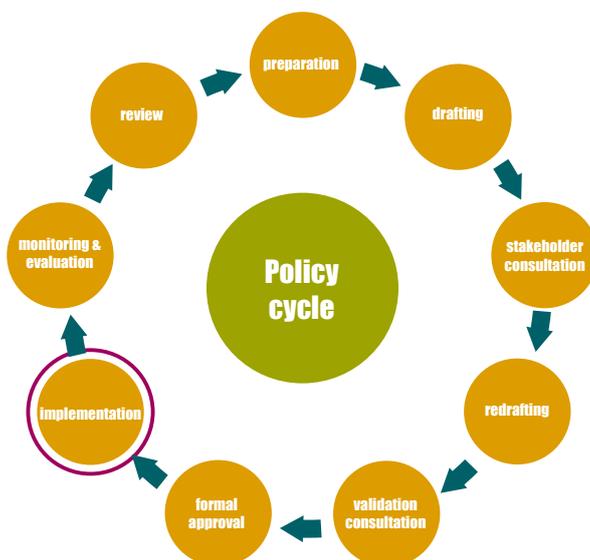


At this stage, staff prepare papers for cabinet/parliament, e.g. briefing documents and presentations, which should include:

- An explanation of why GSI is important for this policy area.
- Links to national, subregional, regional and international policies that highlight the importance of GSI in coastal fisheries and aquaculture, e.g. specific coastal fisheries and aquaculture policies, the Melanesian Spearhead Group fisheries roadmaps<sup>4</sup>, *A new song for coastal fisheries*<sup>5</sup>, and the *Small-scale fisheries guidelines*<sup>6</sup>.

Be aware of where there might be issues or resistance to GSI. It will be important to build relationships with ministers across ministries to get their support before submitting the policy to cabinet or parliament.

## 7. Implementation phase



This is another phase where it is important to fully embed GSI considerations, or risk making fisheries and aquaculture management and development less effective than it could be. For example, development might be unsustainable, or benefits inequitably distributed in communities.

Implementation must not increase inequalities, such as by increasing women's workloads or skewing resources towards coastal fisheries and aquaculture projects for men. Care must be taken to avoid reinforcing marginalisation of young people, people with disabilities, and any other socially excluded group.

<sup>4</sup> Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development 2015–2024

<sup>5</sup> SPC. 2015. *A new song for coastal fisheries – Pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy*. Noumea: SPC.

<sup>6</sup> FAO. 2015. *Voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication*. Rome: FAO.

Integrating GSI in the implementation process requires skilled individuals taking intentional steps to make sure relevant factors are identified and acted on. This is where the policy steering committee and GSI training conducted earlier will be valuable. For example, advice can be sought on draft terms of reference and job descriptions for staff and consultants to make sure there is equity and diversity in recruitment.

### Hypothetical case study:

#### Sea cucumber (beche-de-mer) harvest



On the Island of Pasifika, the people of Coral Village depend on the sea for their income and nutritional needs. In particular, the men and women of the village harvest sea cucumbers to earn cash. They boil and dry the sea cucumbers and sell them to traders. Some species of sea cucumber live in deeper waters, and these are mainly harvested by young men who dive for them. The species of sea cucumber that live in shallow waters close to the village, including the valuable sandfish variety, are harvested by all villagers, including women.

Sea cucumbers have been harvested in the Pacific for over 200 years for export. Over the last three decades, exploitation has been intense, with a 'boom-and-bust' pattern. Recognising the need to take strong action due to overfishing, many Pacific countries (e.g. Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga) have closed the fishery for periods by banning exports of sea cucumbers.

In 2018, some women from Coral Village took some dried sea cucumbers to the local trader to sell. They found out that the Ministry of Fisheries had recently imposed an export ban, and that they had actually broken the law by fishing for sea cucumbers at that time. The women were taken by surprise as they were not aware of the ban. They later found out that two men from Coral Village had been invited to government consultations about the closure. The consultations had taken place in a nearby village five days earlier. The intention was that the men who attended the government consultations would communicate the news throughout the village. They had informed the other men, but no-one thought to tell the village women.

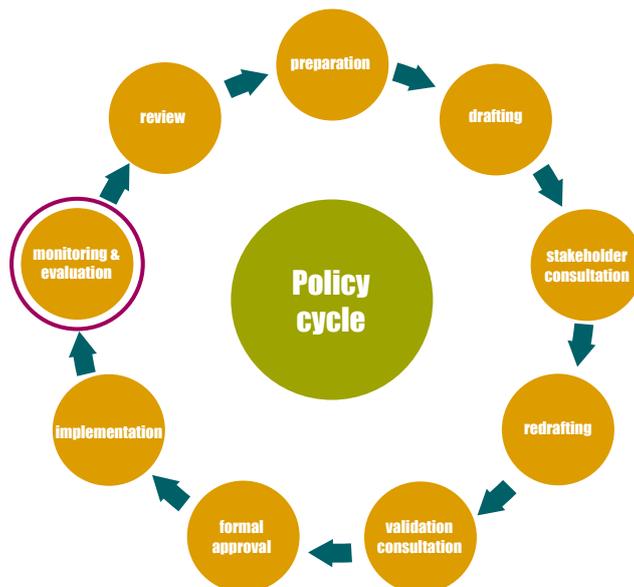
#### ACTION POINTS FOR LEARNING:

- When considering closing a fishery, it is important for government fishery officials to (1) be aware of the gendered roles men and women play in harvesting the natural resource, and (2) know what the resource is used for. How will this closure affect the fishers who use this resource differently? How long will it last? Who will police it?
- When disseminating information, it is important to ensure it is not just distributed to village heads or circulated among the men, especially if women are involved in harvesting, or in post-harvest processing and marketing.
- It is important to provide training in gender-sensitive engagement strategies to agency staff to ensure national policies or decisions are communicated to all stakeholders, including marginalised groups.

To draw on all available knowledge and skills, women, men, youth and all segments of communities involved in coastal fisheries or aquaculture should participate at all stages of implementation. Special attention will be required to ensure women and other marginalised groups can participate effectively and have equal access to benefits from training or income-generating activities. This may mean adapting approaches to overcome barriers restricting the participation of women, youth, people living in hardship, or people of a certain caste, etc. For example, it may be best to hold separate meetings, and to ensure the set-up of these meetings encourages women, or other groups who do not normally speak at meetings, to feel comfortable in expressing their views.

- Do all segments of the communities have opportunities to participate in decision-making and in beneficial activities?

## 8. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) phase

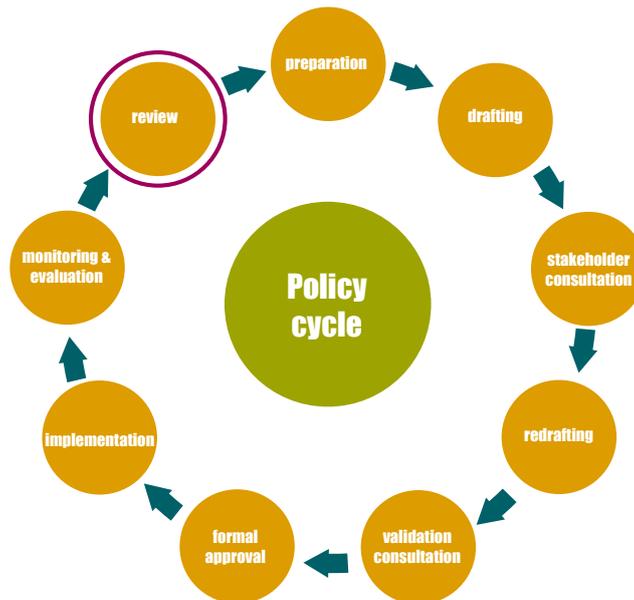


Sharing challenges, successes and best practice for GSI is part of continuous learning for teams that drive human resources development in organisations.

Module 3 describes how to embed GSI in MEL processes. In addition to using Module 3, here are some questions that can help make sure the MEL for the policy addresses GSI considerations:

1. Is there a gender and social inclusion expert on the independent evaluation committee?
2. How will key outcomes and lessons learned be documented and shared among all stakeholders, such as evaluations of:
  - The roles of women and men from different segments of the communities in achieving outcomes.
  - Impacts of interventions on women and men from different segments of the communities concerned.
  - Whether, and how, the intervention empowered women or other disadvantaged people.
  - Whether, and how, existing stereotypes and relations have been challenged.

## 9. Review phase



Policy implementation is a continuous process requiring ongoing review and feedback from stakeholders to ensure coastal resource management and development initiatives are fully effective. It is important to avoid falling back into habits of focusing only on technical solutions to problems for coastal fisheries and aquaculture. If social aspects are not considered, and feedback only comes from the people who turn up to meetings, then the effectiveness of policy implementation will suffer.

There are several occasions when a policy might be reviewed, e.g. when it expires, when its expected outcomes are not achieved, when marine resources decline or recover, or when there is a major change in government direction. Communicating the results and lessons learned from reviews of policies, and associated projects and interventions, can influence public perceptions and political decisions about the sector. This can then feed into policy renewal. Champions who understand the importance of GSI in the fisheries and aquaculture sector can help to keep it on the political agenda.

- Has the policy review included input from a GSI expert with local knowledge?

This module contributes to the following outcomes of *A new song for coastal fisheries*<sup>7</sup> and *the Small-scale fisheries guidelines*<sup>8</sup> (SSF)

- *SSF 10* – Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration
- *A new song Outcome 5* – Strong and up-to-date management policy, legislation and planning
- *A new song Outcome 6* – Effective collaboration and coordination among stakeholders and key sectors of influence

7 FAO. 2015. Voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication. Rome: FAO.

8 SPC. 2015. A new song for coastal fisheries – Pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy. Noumea: SPC.

