

## Beyond the Blueprint: Joining hands for Gender Transformative Approaches

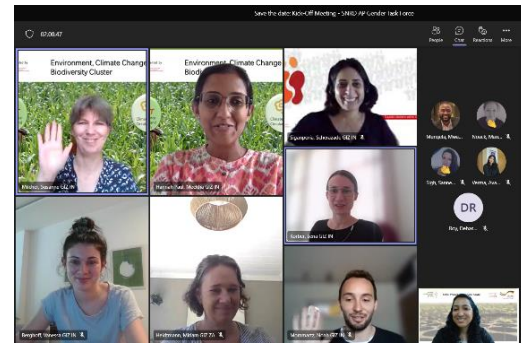
### 1. Corporate culture (50% of marks)

In India, patriarchal structures are deeply rooted in society and politics and hence, are affecting the effectiveness and impact of Indo-German Development Cooperation. Most projects that are part of the Cluster “Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity” of GIZ India are implementing activities in rural areas, targeting marginalised and poor population groups. In 2020 colleagues from different projects working on agriculture, nutrition and natural resource management **initiated regular peer-to-peer exchange on gender-transformative approaches through establishing a Cluster specific GTA Working Group**. The demand by colleagues for such exchange was based on the perception that GG1 projects needed more guidance and experience sharing on addressing (gender) inequalities in their specific context.

Against this background, the working group **provided a platform for colleagues to engage with and exchange on GTA** through discussions with (external) experts, sharing of tools and best practices and exploring potential new approaches and interventions. The working group aimed at increasing their knowledge on gender equality, gender transformative approaches and therefore, was looking at internal examples and also had discussions with external experts and networked with the SNRD Africa GTA Working Group. As a first product, the working group developed a brochure with seven examples of women empowerment in their sectors under the title [‘Small Steps Towards an Empowered Tomorrow’](#) that was published during the GIZ Gender week 2022.

To review the own project interventions further critically, each project of the working group used the Reach-Benefit-Empower (RBE) tool. The RBE approach clearly makes a distinction between Reach (e.g. including women in meetings and trainings), Benefit (e.g. an increased income, better nutrition) and Empower, which is defined as the ability of individuals to make choices for themselves concerning aspects related to income, livelihood, food and nutrition etc. without having to seek approval from others or to depend on others. One of the key objectives of the working group was also to **support projects to progress from a Reach and Benefit towards an Empowerment approach**. Based on this assessment, colleagues learned from each other and developed further synergies (for example joint gender trainings for partners, using the same training manuals or developed a local gender expert database, developed partnerships with local institutions). Given the visibility of the working group and interest by further colleagues, from climate and biodiversity, the working group grew continuously, and it **became officially the Cluster’s Working Group on GTA**. A key milestone is that the working group is now also engaged as sounding board for appraisal missions for new or follow up projects. The working group also facilitated learning between other topic specific working groups of the cluster. A series of deep dive session on digital principles organised by the Cluster’s Digitalisation Working Group was supported by the working group to learn about the development of digital solutions with a gender-lens.

Given that there were **no existing structures in the Sector Network on Rural Development Asia Pacific (SNRD AP) on gender equality**, the GIZ India cluster’s GTA working group initiated the **SNRD AP task force on “Innovations in Gender Transformation for Rural Development in Asia”** with other projects from Asia, which has graduated to a **standing working group by now**. The task force actively contributed to the knowledge management and peer-to-peer learning in the region. As a result of the task force’s reflections and learnings on GTA facilitated by an external gender expert, the task force published [“Learning Together: Toolkit on GTA in Rural Development”](#).



Launch of the SNRD AP Task Force on “Innovations in Gender Transformation for Rural Development in Asia”

With the launch of the German Feminist Development Policy in March 2023, the working group was well-equipped to operationalise the new guidelines for the cluster’s portfolio. Till then, the working group has been mostly a **bottom-up initiative**. With the FDP in place, the Cluster’s Management team tasked the working group to **develop a [roadmap on GTA](#) to provide strategic guidance for the Cluster**. They assigned 3-4 persons from each sectoral area to support the development of the roadmap. A total of 20 colleagues, with the full support of the management team and the working group facilitated the development of the Cluster Roadmap in participatory process, covering the areas of **a. political partner’s expectations, b. innovative approaches on GTA, c. internal capacity and competence on GTA, d. external networks and alliances**.

The roadmap puts forth a **vision for the Cluster’s portfolio development, implementation and competence development for the next 2 years**:  
*“Together with our partners, we co-create gender transformative approaches with respect to natural resources management, biodiversity, climate change and agri-food systems to empower women, girls and marginalized groups. Gender-transformative leadership enables inclusive teams, strengthens gender competence, structures and processes at all levels.”*



Co-creation workshop with cluster projects on GTA roadmap

The roadmap was presented to the cluster’s management team in November 2023. The MT applauded the working group’s efforts and committed to a dedicated process of review and follow up, setting aside resources for implementation. The Cluster Information Meeting (3 times a year) and the management team meeting (once in a month) will include a standard agenda item on GTA. A workshop with the MT and all the managers in the cluster will be organised in February 2024 for strengthening gender transformative leadership, getting their inputs on the roadmap and preparing them to include staff goals for their teams on GTA. The cluster roadmap will be launched in the Cluster Workshop in May 2024. The Cluster Workshop focusing on transformative approaches will also focus on GTA as a key agenda.

## 2. Gender competence (30% of marks)

Colleagues of the working group increased their own knowledge and competence on gender equality, GTA and intersectionality in the context of (Indo-German) DC **by peer-to-peer learning, participation in different networks** (e.g., Feminist Development Policy teams' channel), SNRD WG GTA and by reaching out to other clusters and to external experts. The colleagues also benefited from colleagues who had joined the **gender transformative leadership coaching** organised by SNRD Africa in 2021 and knowledge generated by global projects from SI AGER. When in 2023 the BMZ's Feminist Development Strategy was officially released, the working group was in a favourable position, given that it already built-up competence and knowledge on GTA since 2021. **Germany's FDP provided the much-needed push towards the agenda of the working group and their relevance and visibility** in the cluster. Despite the topic being intrinsic to DC and a central topic of international cooperation, limited knowledge and understanding on, e.g., the differences between, gender-sensitive, -responsive and -transformative, or intersectionality, was a challenge in bringing colleagues on board. In addition, also within the organisational unit (cluster and country office) favourable structures and incentives for GTA were largely missing.

A **structured process for building competence** within the cluster started in June 2023, when the GTA working group **conducted a sensitization workshop with the clusters management team** which led to the commitment from them to the development of a roadmap on GTA for the cluster, providing time resources for several colleagues to focus on GTA. The workshop with the cluster's MT introduced the concepts of FDP and GTA and discussed challenges and opportunities of integrating GTA into the portfolio. One opportunity identified was that Indian partners are largely demanding at least gender-responsive approaches. The G20 presidency by India has further moved women empowerment on the global agenda. A challenge identified was that GTA specific competence in the cluster is required. Therefore, to further build awareness for the topic in the cluster, the **cluster-wide 'Information Meeting' in August 2023 was devoted to GTA** – moderated by the working group. An interactive session focusing on the concepts of FDP and GTA with concrete and practical examples by individual projects was conducted with more than 60 colleagues. A highlight in this session has been the transparent and honest reflection of challenges in implementing GTA in rural areas requiring context specific approaches and sensitivity.

Following the Cluster Information Meeting, the working group facilitated a **one-day workshop with 20 colleagues from all four thematic portfolios, incl. AVs and DVs on 24 August 2023**. The workshop's objective was on the one hand to build competence and knowledge on GTA and on the other hand to co-create the cluster's roadmap on GTA. The first half of the workshop was dedicated to sensitisation and reflection by playful sessions focusing on experiential learning. Colleagues **reflected on gender inequalities and unequal power structures through "Power Walk", "Gender Box", "Breaking the Bi-nary"**



*Dedicated workshop with cluster management team on GTA*



*Gender Box Game as part of the cluster workshop on GTA*



*Reflection on GTA after Power Walk,  
Gender Box and Breaking the Bi-nary  
games*

**and exchanging on existing approaches and success stories** within the cluster. A library with mainly local feminist literature and movies has also been set up for colleagues to continue their learning. The second half of the workshop was devoted to co-creating the cluster's roadmap on GTA. Through a World Café approach, key milestones and action items were collected on a. political partner's expectations, b. innovative approaches on GTA, c. internal capacity and competence on GTA, d. external networks and alliances.

The roadmap includes a few 'quick wins' that pave the way for the more ambitious and work intensive action items. These include, among others, **that project appraisals should involve the working group as a sounding board**, which will support the strategic integration of GTA in module proposals from the very beginning. By **making use of existing structures of the Country Office** (e.g., dedicated thematic breakfast meetings organised by the Country Office), the working group will further strengthen alliance building and network development for increased gender competence.

### 3. Cooperation (20% of marks)

One challenge was the **limited understanding of the concepts of FDP and GTA** within the cluster and that gender equality was perceived as the same as women empowerment. Further, the communication to partners and other stakeholders was and still is difficult as to different understanding of the concepts (also with the terminologies of Feminism, Intersectionality etc.), also considering translation challenges for different local languages. Another challenge was that there was a **lack of a systematic approach on GTA in the cluster**.

Through collaboration at different levels – with colleagues from other clusters (urban, energy), the management team, the gender focal point from country office, SNRD Africa and Asia, sectoral department, G500, local institutions and external experts, the working group extended their network, aligned approaches, and thereby facilitated a joint understanding. To showcase the ubiquity of gender, the working group also cooperated with other topic specific working groups of the cluster, e.g., on digital development and provided technical input on gender-responsive approaches, for instance in the context of a workshop series on Digital Principles. Key **success factors** during the journey were (1) the **involvement and following commitment of the cluster's management team**, (2) the **involvement of external experts and local institutions for a better contextualisation of GTA** in India, and (3) **openly discuss the challenges faced, failures and expectations** from different sides.

Due to the collaboration across the cluster and beyond, gender competences within the cluster could be enhanced, tools were developed and disseminated and a structured process for GTA has been initiated. In an inclusive and participatory process, colleagues with different technical expertise, hierarchy, gender and experience co-created a roadmap and at the same time learned from each other and increased their understanding of GTA. The **roadmap provides a vision for the cluster and concrete milestones with action items**. One of the central already implemented achievements is the new role of the working group as a sounding board and their involvement in appraisal missions. Starting with the assessment of the module offer, one member of the working group will be participating in the 2-week mission for a new TC-module focussing on forest ecosystem services and gender-transformative approaches in the sector.