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Guide to strengthening gender integration in climate finance projects

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About the author

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This guide would not exist without the candid, thoughtful, incisive and enthusiastic reflections, ideas, and recommendations shared by the persons interviewed. Each interviewee contributed to make this a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges and possibilities in the work of integrating gender in climate finance. Unfortunately, not all of these ideas could be conveyed within this guide, and any faults in collating, framing and sharing this collective wisdom are the author's.

List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Adaptation Fund
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CIFs	Climate Investment Funds
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
GCCG	Gender and Climate Change Group
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDA	National Designated Authority
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Executive summary

Aim

This guide presents a framework of recommendations for strengthening gender integration in climate finance projects, with concrete examples and resources to show how it can be done. The guide also shares broader enabling factors and recommendations to inform advocacy and action beyond individual projects, at the climate fund level.

Who should read this guide

This guide is designed for project teams preparing, designing, implementing and monitoring climate finance projects in developing countries under the four primary multilateral climate funds – the Adaptation Fund (AF), Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) – as well as for those overseeing the approaches of project teams:

- **Implementing entities:** National, regional and international entities responsible for the design, implementation and monitoring of climate finance projects in developing countries, often working through individual project teams.
- **Country focal points:** Developing country government actors who have key roles in project development, prioritisation and oversight.

Framework for strengthening gender integration

The guide's set of recommendations provides a simple framework for thinking about direct and powerful complementary opportunities for advancing gender equality. The recommendations stem from interviews with key stakeholders engaged in project development, design and implementation. The recommendations highlight important opportunities within the project cycle for strengthening gender integration. The framework also suggests enabling factors and Fund-level recommendations to enhance the gender responsiveness of climate action: these can inform work at the portfolio level.

Recommendations: Project teams may use the following recommendations as core building blocks for integrating gender equality. Implementers may also examine, add to and codify these recommendations for their respective institutions and country and/or project contexts – to create more comprehensive, tailored frameworks.

- **Lead with local gender expertise:** Prioritise working with gender experts who originate from and have in-depth experience within the project's geographical area. Complement their expertise and analysis with feedback from gender specialists from the entities and climate funds, where appropriate.
- **Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions:** Insist that in-country gender expertise and processes inform analyses and understandings of gendered dynamics. Include direct, meaningful engagement with local organisations focussed on women's rights and gender equality, as well as gender-related institutions (e.g., the national government bodies working on gender equality and women's issues, such as the ministry or department of gender equality, women's or social affairs).
- **Collect the right gender data from the start:** Ensure that baseline data on gender-differentiated roles, relationships and impacts is gathered to inform project design. These data should move beyond simple measures of participation rates and beneficiary statistics to understanding nuanced and dynamic issues, such as access to resources, allocation of time and labour, and status and adherence to laws and policies that create or impede greater equality. Continued analysis and data collection can facilitate adaptive management by informing subsequent implementation.

- **Integrate gender specialists within the team:** Formulate project team roles for gender specialists and provide them with the resources, access and authority to contribute to overarching project design so that gender is neither siloed nor secondary. Embedding these roles in project teams, especially in decision-making positions, leads to informed input, increases team capacity on gender integration, and advances equality in outcomes.
- **Ensure continuity between design and implementation:** Create intentional processes for sharing data between the project design team and the implementation team. Include explicit explanations of how the project team made complex decisions and highlight underlying assumptions, so that the multifaceted elements of the design process are efficiently translated into implementation.
- **Pursue team-wide capacity-building opportunities:** Identify and require capacity-building exercises that demonstrate links between gender and climate across teams so that advancing gender equality throughout the project is appreciated and fostered. Developing broad appreciation for gender strengthens the capacity and resources for, and likelihood of, integrating gender expertise throughout the project.

Enabling factors

While the above recommendations relate to processes within individual projects, interviewees also identified enabling factors that exist beyond the bounds of a single project. These factors reflect institutional variables and elements among the implementing entities or within climate funds, or even country-level dynamics. Leveraging these enabling factors can greatly improve the ability and/or willingness of project teams to implement the above recommendations.

- **Advocates for gender equality:** Individuals with the knowledge and passion to drive forward institution-level advancement within implementing entities and partner organisations can serve as gender equality champions. These advocates, often in leadership roles within institutions, can help to emphasise the many reinforcing benefits of advancing gender equality in combatting the climate crisis.
- **Existing gender experience and expertise:** A foundation of gender expertise and formalised processes for gender-related assessments within institutions increases the likelihood that gender will be strongly integrated in projects. Lessons from those experiences and structures can guide further capacity-building.
- **National-level planning and policies:** Having gender-responsive processes already integrated into national frameworks and policy instruments on climate and development contributes to the political will, capacity and guidance to design and implement projects with strong gender dimensions.
- **Fund-level requirements:** The Funds' recent improvements to various templates, procedures and resources with updated gender-related policies is pushing the bar higher throughout the project cycle and across projects, as well as creating increased accountability for gender equality. Applying learning and procedures across projects – those implemented prior to new standards and those under other climate funds – can raise the quality of the overall climate-finance portfolio.

Considerations for the funds

The study has revealed two areas best addressed by the climate funds themselves to better recognise the significance and speciality of gender and climate change expertise.

- **Work directly with project-level gender experts:** Rather than focusing primarily on institutions and entities, the funds should recognise the role of individuals with expertise at the nexus of gender *and* climate in enhancing gender-responsive approaches toward transformative gender-

equality outcomes. Direct engagement with a pool of gender and climate experts can facilitate their connections to entities and promote higher quality analysis, design and implementation.

- **Cultivate integrated platforms for sharing experiences:** By realising the value of sharing experiences and knowledge across funds as well as implementing entities, spaces for inclusively and transparently examining processes and outcomes can be created, enhanced and supported over time.

Integrating gender in climate finance projects: A closer look

This guide includes examples of how climate projects from different scales and sectors have attempted to advance gender equality, in alignment with the framework above. It uses examples from projects in developing countries across the four major funds. Lessons are drawn from both the presence and absence of key approaches.

These project examples demonstrate the importance of ensuring a human rights-based approach in all climate action, which recognises the agency of women and girls in all their diversity and ensures opportunities for their participation and leadership. Even within projects in sectors where gender considerations are more widely understood (e.g., agricultural resilience projects), it is imperative to create mechanisms for gender analyses and accountability for applying gender-responsive approaches. The examples also highlight that integrating gender equality concepts and practices into climate finance projects remains a complex and ongoing challenge, requiring adequately tailored approaches and financial and technical resources for each project and its context.

Key resources

The guide also provides links to key resources for the climate funds so readers can examine existing manuals and guidelines for gender mainstreaming and refer to these when developing proposals. Valuable examples and many relevant resources already exist to guide team efforts, particularly in climate projects in developing countries.



Modjadji Women's Climate Smart Agriculture project, South Africa. © Farai Hove, CHoiCE Trust

I. Introduction

The purpose of this guide

It is widely acknowledged that a gender lens should be integrated into climate finance projects to achieve transformative gender outcomes, as well as effective climate action and sustainable development.^{1,2} Advancing gender equality through climate action is needed to achieve international gender-related goals and commitments as envisioned in Agenda 2030. However, successfully integrating gender is also recognised as positively contributing to increased climate ambition, generating more effective climate action and facilitating a just transition for developing and developed countries alike.³

This guide introduces recommendations and offers promising examples for integrating gender equality concepts and practices into climate finance projects, with a focus on the four primary climate funds: the Adaptation Fund (AF), Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF). It brings together project-level learning from these four climate funds and offers evidence and tools for key actors engaged in projects, whose support is vital to the success of efforts to integrate gender. The findings here should be used to:

- assess and reflect upon approaches to integrate gender in climate finance projects;
- identify key strategic activities and entry points to advance the integration of gender; and
- connect to resources, such as a guide to gender integration under a specific climate fund, to facilitate those activities.

Who should read this guide

IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES AND THEIR PARTNERS

This guide is designed for the entities that develop and implement climate finance projects as well as other institutional actors that support this work. Referred to as 'implementing entities' in this publication, they include multilateral, regional or national implementing entities under the AF; the 18 partner agencies for the GEF; accredited entities within the GCF; and the five multilateral development banks that work with the CIFs. These entities have similar functions and responsibilities, including in terms of their interactions with governmental focal points as well as their roles in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

This guide is also intended for those contracted by these funds to consult on designing proposals, engaging with various levels of the funding apparatus, or helping develop country focal points and other stakeholders in-country or externally.

This guide is also designed to be useful in different ways to entities with different capacities for gender integration, recognising the range of entities that implement projects under the four funds. For national entities and direct access entities, the considerations outlined in this guide may catalyse institutional-level changes and/or the development of new processes and procedures to promote more robust integration of gender. For multilateral entities with considerable gender equality expertise and infrastructure, these recommendations may prompt reflection and discussion, particularly at the project level.

GOVERNMENT FOCAL POINTS

A second audience for these insights is the governmental focal points working with each of the climate funds, i.e., the designated authorities within the AF, the focal points for the CIFs and

GEF, and the National Designated Authorities for the GCF. These individuals are in a position to demonstrate significant leadership on comprehensively integrating (or spearheading projects that integrate) a gender lens. They often play an important role in setting expectations that can contribute to, or detract from, the effort and resources directed toward gender integration as well as the quality of outcomes. In addition, their engagement in mobilising and directing resources for capacity-building can also help support the adoption of approaches that advance gender equality.

METHODOLOGY

This guide collates the insights of over 20 stakeholders with gender-related experiences with at least one fund. The vast majority of interviewees have experience across more than one fund and across multiple projects. These interviewees were selected based on their experience with the full cycle of project design and implementation. Among these interviewees were gender staff at each of the climate funds, staff at various regional and international entities who lead project design and implementation (including consulting firms), and individual consultants who have managed the gender work on various projects.

Interviewees also included people who had evaluated climate finance projects from a gender perspective; and local gender and climate change specialists who were involved in country processes. ([See Annex I](#) for the list of interviewees.)

These semi-structured interviews were designed to uncover interviewees' knowledge and perspectives, drawing from their individual experiences over the years across what is estimated to be thousands of projects. As narratives and hypotheses offered by interviewees were shared anonymously with subsequent interviewees, where relevant and appropriate, the process created a sense of conversation about these topics. This led to the emergence of grounded and cautious, yet robust, recommendations on how to frame the need to increase and scale-up the integration of gender.

Desktop evaluations were also conducted for 16 projects across the four funds. Given this small project sample size no specific trends are emphasised, as these projects cannot inform any larger assessment of the climate funds. Instead, these individual projects – selected to encompass a variety of types, sizes, sectors, geographies and other variables – are used to highlight examples of strong gender integration, alongside missed opportunities, based on the documents reviewed. These examples ultimately ensure the framework in Section 2 is contextualised and grounded for readers who may have questions about the integration of gender and goals of the recommendations. Several of the projects assessed were proposed by the interviewees to ensure the best chance of being useful for readers of this guide. ([See Annex II](#) for the list of projects.)

Intersectional approaches to gender and social inclusion are encouraged that consider the strengths and vulnerabilities of women, men, girls and boys while considering age, ethnicity, education, disability and other identities and characteristics that affect people's access to opportunities and resources, and shape inequalities. This guide focuses on gender integration generally and contributes to a foundational understanding of the importance of intersectional gender expertise that future work can further explore with regard to the intersectional approaches that all climate finance projects merit.



Women and Gender Constituency being interviewed at COP24. © Annabelle Avril, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)

BOX 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONS GUIDING INTERVIEWS

How do the climate funds' gender policies and other policy frameworks influence focal points and implementing entities in terms of gender-related procedural practices as well as normative expectations?

What processes and procedures prior to or during project design enable or constrain effective gender mainstreaming? What role may be played by gender capacity-building or technical assistance? Who are the key actors in these processes?

What are the key moments in designing or implementing a project with strong gender mainstreaming? How do the type, scope, sector and other aspects of a project influence the project's openness to, and integration of, gender mainstreaming?

What project conditions and internal processes translate strong design into strong implementation, and which ones hinder them?

What evidence and arguments are most persuasive to both individual and institutional actors resistant to gender mainstreaming?

BOX 2: WHAT THIS GUIDE IS NOT

This guide is not a how-to manual for gender mainstreaming. Guidance to that effect exists within each fund as well as in other resources (see [Key resources](#)), which contain comprehensive and detailed approaches to conducting gender analyses and assessments, designing gender-responsive activities and monitoring frameworks, and implementing projects that advance gender equality.

This guide is not a checklist to ensure a better project. This guide presents a framework for improving the integration of gender that should be adapted to the specific context. It may not be appropriate for each project to adopt every single recommendation.

This guide is not an analysis or a comparison of gender approaches across the funds. The funds' various histories and gender-related policies and procedures are well-explored in other resources (see [Boxes 4-7](#)). While some higher-level recommendations have emerged from the research for the funds to consider, the goal of this work is for institutional actors to improve their integration of gender into climate finance projects. This guide, therefore, does not outline how to achieve a specific fund's standard of gender integration, such as gender mainstreaming, but rather aims to provide useful insights across the climate finance landscape.

BOX 3: A NOTE ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

While this document does not set forth a standard such as gender mainstreaming, the term is often used generally. The definition of gender mainstreaming, drawn from the 1997 agreed conclusions of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), 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. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."⁴

Framing and reflections

Here are a few notes on the framing and choice of terms used in this guide.

The interviewees – whose lived experience designing, implementing and assessing gender in climate finance projects makes them the foremost experts on this subject – were not comfortable with identifying their observations, ideas and insights as “best practices”. Their perceptions and experiences focus on the struggle rather than the success of integrating gender equality concepts and practices into climate projects.

Despite the attention to gender and climate finance in recent years, this work is nascent, complex and ongoing. While some projects are better equipped or have had better results than others, there are no shining, golden examples of perfection achieved: indeed, good practices exist that promise the best is yet to come. Even widespread replication of elements of some currently remarkable projects would not be enough to fully address the concerns of inadequate attention to gender in climate finance. Moreover, suggesting that the top performers of today are the standard to be reached could potentially limit the possibilities for truly transformative work on gender.

Gender and climate change work is still largely conducted by individuals or groups with niche experience and by international consultants who have more experience linking gender within the funds. Local-level expertise has yet to be broadly integrated in climate financing and projects in developing countries. Therefore, the guide aims to:

- capture a better understanding of what this expertise could look like (see “Understanding gender expertise” [on page 10](#);
- enable international consultants to communicate the imperative of this approach; and
- voice suggestions from local-level experts on their inclusion and engagement.

This proposed shift in framing is not only about locating appropriate expertise, but also drawing attention to how the short-term, individual gender consultant model is dominating the landscape and is not best suited to the task.

Furthermore, the climate funds have only recently put into place some of the most robust work in terms of requirements and reporting. The limited information on actual implementation of projects under the funds’ most updated – and advanced – gender policies and practices hinders a thorough assessment of what has been working well.

How are the funds approaching gender integration?

In its opening words, the Paris Agreement recognises gender equality and women’s empowerment as an element of effective climate action.⁵ The climate funds charged with allocating and implementing climate projects had been integrating gender-equality considerations to some degree into their operations and programming prior to the Paris Agreement, although the nature and scope of gender considerations and obligations within the climate funds has evolved.

Gender capacity, approaches and requirements have developed in different ways for each of the four funds; however, the general trend over the past decade has been to design and subsequently update gender policies while establishing the gender capacity of staff and assigning roles dedicated to advancing gender equality. More details on the funds’ gender policies and their relevance to implementing entities are provided below.



See the latest edition of the [Climate Funds Update: Gender and Climate Finance](#) for a brief but contextualised overview of the funds’ approaches to gender.

BOX 4: ADAPTATION FUND**Key gender moments**

- The [Environmental and Social Policy](#), first adopted in 2013, includes a specific principle on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- In 2016, the AF adopted a [Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan](#) (2017-2019).
- In 2021, the Fund updated its [Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan](#).

Current gender requirements

The AF's Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan are applicable to all Fund projects and programmes regardless of implementing entity. Gender capacity, commitment and having a gender-related grievance handling mechanism are requirements for implementing entities to be accredited and re-accredited.

BOX 5: CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS**Key gender moments**

- The CIF undertook an [Environment, Social and Gender Assessment](#) in 2011 and a [Gender Review](#) in 2013.
- In 2014, the CIF recruited a senior advisor on gender and social issues.
- The CIF Gender Action Plan – Phase 1 (FY 15-16) was adopted in 2014, followed by the CIF Gender Action Plan – Phase 2 (FY 17-20) in 2016, and the [CIF Gender Action Plan – Phase 3](#) (FY 21-24) in 2020.
- The CIF [Gender Policy](#) was adopted in 2018.

Current gender requirements

The CIF Gender Policy governs gender equality efforts across all CIF activities. However, the policy does not supersede any gender policies and requirements of the multilateral development banks that the CIF work with, as those continue to hold primacy at the project level. The CIF Gender Action Plan – Phase 3, jointly implemented by the CIF and Multilateral Development Banks, orients greater focus toward gender-related technical support to country systems.

BOX 6: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY**Key gender moments**

- The GEF approved a [Policy on Gender Mainstreaming](#) in 2011 and developed a [Gender Equality Action Plan](#) in 2014.
- In 2017, the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office conducted an [Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF](#).
- The GEF adopted the GEF [Policy on Gender Equality](#) to replace the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and the GEF Gender Implementation Strategy in 2018.
- A progress report on the [GEF Gender Implementation Strategy](#) is compiled and published annually; the [third progress report](#) (June 2021) includes feedback on how lessons learned may inform the next cycle of GEF programming.

Current status of gender requirements

The GEF's Policy on Gender Equality, effective in 2018, applies to all GEF Partner Agencies, while the Gender Implementation Strategy guides the implementation of the policy with a focus on four priority areas, including increasing partner agencies' capacity and tracking gender-equality results.

BOX 7: GREEN CLIMATE FUND

Key gender moments

- *The Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund* (2011) embedded gender, the first climate fund to recognise gender from the start.
- The GCF adopted its first Gender Policy in 2015 with an updated GCF *Gender Policy* and *Gender Action Plan of the GCF 2020-2023* following in 2019.

Current gender requirements

The updated GCF Gender Policy outlines responsibilities for accredited entities and project-level requirements. The accompanying Gender Action Plan primarily outlines GCF Secretariat activities, but reinforces that it is the accredited entity's responsibility to budget for gender support at the project level.



Women and children riding the Lahore Bus Rapid Transit service in Pakistan. © Asian Development Bank

Understanding gender expertise

What does a “gender expert” or “gender-related capacity-building” look like? This question is fundamental to ensuring that attempts to integrate gender equality concepts and practices in climate finance projects are not limited to a sprinkling of gender-related words or intermittent references to women in project proposals and documentation.

This guide’s expert insights and recommendations are underpinned by understanding the need for contextualised “gender and climate expertise”, the engagement of “gender experts” and the strengthening of “gender capacity”. As terms, these can mean different things in different contexts. For example, the level of gender integration in a project often has less to do with whether gender experts (often external, international consultants) were engaged, but *why* and *when* they were engaged, and *how* their expertise was integrated into projects.

Implementing entities and project teams may find it helpful to develop a portfolio of gender experts with sector-specific skills and identify strategies to engage them collectively in project design. This should include ensuring equal recognition of time and effort (e.g., compensating a representative from a local community group for participating in a consultation in the same way as you would pay for an outside expert’s time).

TYPES OF GENDER EXPERTISE

- Knowledge of legal and policy frameworks as entry points for integrating gender equality in project development.
- Knowledge of local and national gender contexts – i.e., social and cultural norms and practices, statistics and policies, such as those related to labour and skills.
- Knowledge of methods for data collection, analysis and assessment, including impact measures that move beyond counting the numbers of women to measures that capture issues of rights, resources and voice.
- Knowledge of, and connection to, women’s rights, social justice and feminist movements as well as an understanding of the models they use and the ways in which they operate, and how to work with them.
- Understanding key concepts in relation to gender equality, i.e., sex versus gender, social reproduction and care, gender-responsive budgeting, intersectionality (the intersection or overlap of gender, race, class and other systems of discrimination and oppression that result in particular inequalities).
- Specific knowledge of gendered issues and gender dynamics and opportunities within a sector, such as energy, agriculture, health, infrastructure or transportation.
- Ability to manage and monitor gender-relevant activities, such as overseeing the operationalisation of a gender action plan, when projects are implemented.

EXAMPLES OF “STRENGTHENING GENDER CAPACITY”

- Requiring “Gender 101” training of all staff on key concepts in gender equality as well as aspects of gender mainstreaming, particularly linked to specific climate-relevant sectors or projects (and more broadly for a systems-thinking approach).
- Conducting specific training on collecting intersectional, sex-disaggregated data, carrying out gender analyses and monitoring gender equity during implementation phases.
- Holding workshops with the entire project team at the start of project development to introduce the panel of gender experts and discuss how they will be engaged.

- Developing a matrix of women and community groups, organisations and gender experts engaged in a project's local context and encouraging project implementers to connect with their work, writing and research.

TABLE 1: How to engage different types of gender experts

These are some indicative ways you could engage different types of gender experts to contribute these skills to a project team:

LOCAL ORGANISATION OR WOMEN'S GROUP	
Example:	Mongolian Women's Fund (MONES) or GenderCC Southern Africa
Why engage:	To develop effective, demand- driven projects that understand local gendered dynamics and relationships; to enable cooperative models of programme design; and to connect with key beneficiaries and centre them in decision-making.
How to engage:	• Provide support to local women's groups to engage in programming and readiness activities for climate finance. Invite them to contribute to gendered strategies, approaches and assessments, starting from project conceptualisation through to design and implementation, and remunerate them for their time. • Ask for their guidance to connect with local-level stakeholders and communities for participating in the design and implementation of the project (e.g., partner with them to conduct stakeholder engagement workshops). • Partner with them in the project monitoring and evaluation process to carry out assessments and make recommendations as appropriate, depending on their role in the project implementation process. • Collaborate to share local gender and climate change knowledge and practices with all project stakeholders.
NATIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM	
Example:	Sudan's national Gender and Climate Change Group (GCCG) or a country's National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
Why engage:	To ensure alignment with national priorities; to gain access to national data indexes and identify gaps into which projects can feed; and to connect with key partners and stakeholders who can contribute to project conceptualisation, design, implementation and monitoring.
How to engage:	• Work with national coordinators to access relevant gender data and information to inform gender analysis and planning. • Reach out to them for their direct input into project conceptualisation and planning. Ask for assistance to invite other gender specialists in the country or region to specifically participate in a project (i.e., conducting a gender analysis, scoping of gender in climate projects in the country and/or region, drafting gender mainstreaming strategies, developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks inclusive of gender and social considerations, etc.). • Collaborate to share gender and climate change knowledge and practices with all project stakeholders. • Contribute to national-level planning that is gender-responsive, such as GCF country programmes and CIF investment plans, and will influence projects across the portfolio.

GLOBAL ALLIANCE OR ORGANISATION

Example:	Women and Gender Constituency (observer group of the UNFCCC); National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network
Why engage:	To connect with other examples of projects and/or solutions that are working; to gain access to general data and identify gaps into which projects can feed; to connect with key partners and stakeholders who can contribute to project conceptualisation, design, implementation and monitoring.
How to engage:	• Request their general advice on project documents as they are developed and engage them in project implementation. • Ask for connections to other gender experts in the country or region to specifically participate in a project. • Collaborate to share high-level gender and climate change knowledge, frameworks, practices and expectations with project stakeholders.

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

Example:	Specialist or group of consultants, with some of the specific knowledge outlined in Types of gender expertise
Why engage:	To connect with other examples of projects and programmes to share technical guidance and solutions that are feasible in the context of the project; to develop effective, demand-driven projects that recognise gendered dynamics and relationships.
How to engage:	• Directly contract to develop strategies, approaches and analysis for specific projects. • Contract advice on project documents as they are developed and engage them in providing inputs to guide project implementation. • Bring them onto the project team to lead project implementation and monitoring. • Collaborate to share examples and lessons from other relevant projects.



A member of the Women and Gender Constituency participating at COP24. © Annabelle Avril, WECF

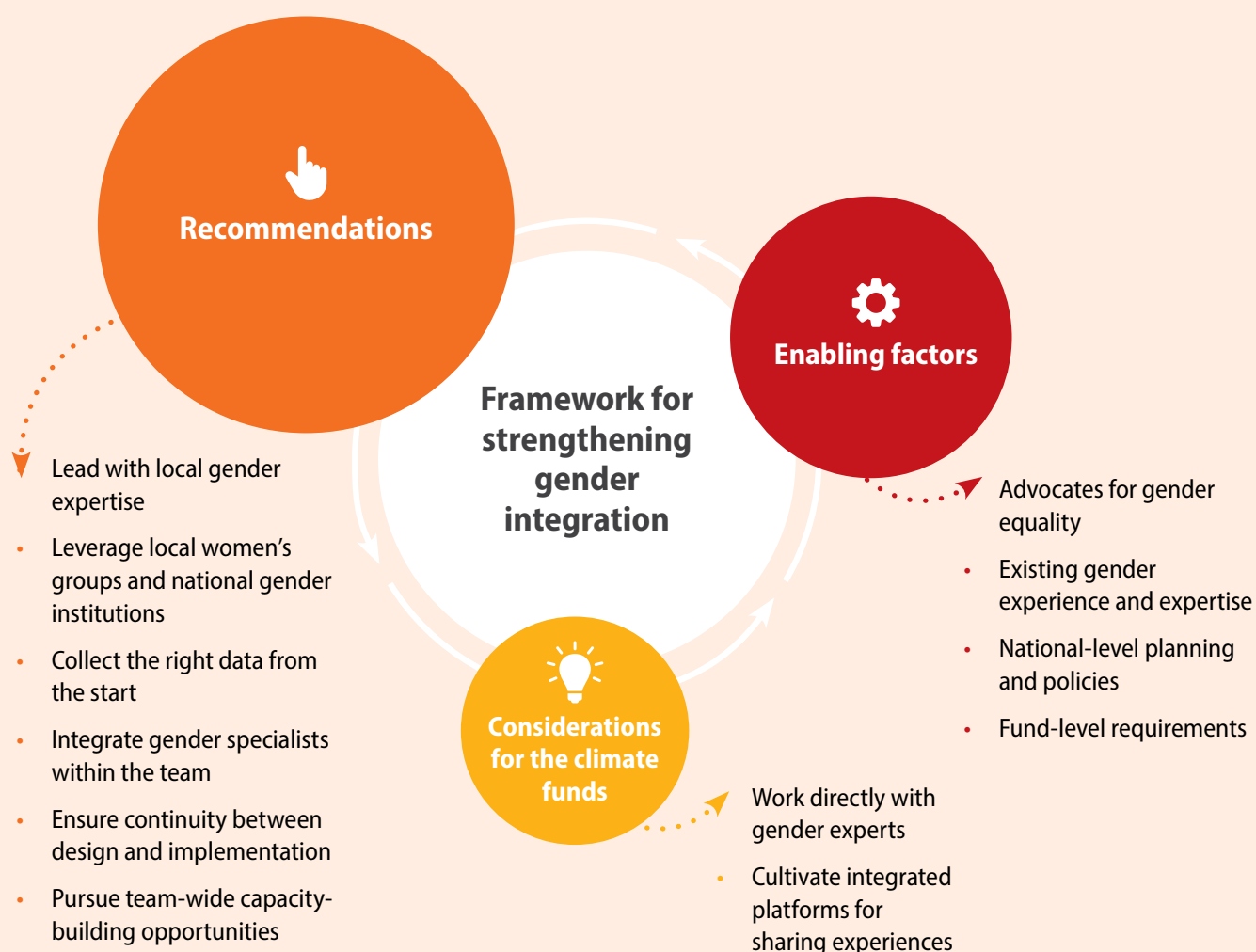
II. A framework for strengthening gender integration

Introduction

From the consultations across a range of stakeholders and actors with varied experience integrating gender equality in climate projects, trends emerged regarding concerns, challenges and entry points for ensuring gender-equality outcomes. There was general consensus and high-level agreement among stakeholders, as interviews built on one another. Statements from previous interviewees were introduced to test, provoke or complement statements by current interviewees. This helped to gauge shared experiences, perspectives or analyses, as well as consider more accurate language for these ideas. The recommendations made here attempt to grapple with the complexities of interviewees' responses by offering caveats and insights into divergent experiences and views.

Six recommendations surfaced that can steer project-level approaches and inform the expectations of those overseeing and commissioning projects. They are grounded in the belief that strengthening gender integration in financing climate change projects can be achieved, in part, by choosing certain approaches and activities that are often under-valued, under-resourced and/or simply not contemplated. Additionally, three key considerations of context also emerged that are relevant at higher levels of decision-making and capacity-building. These enabling factors are presented with some short guidance for applicability so that these insights are not couched solely as observations. Lastly, considerations for the climate funds are presented.

FIGURE 1: Framework for strengthening gender integration



Recommendations

These recommendations are key considerations for project teams that highlight the *key chances and missed opportunities for mainstreaming gender-oriented decision-making*, which can make the most difference to a project. The framework also outlines potential challenges and barriers for implementing the recommendations. Additionally, each recommendation carries at least one note of caution for when such an approach may be inadequate or misguided.

LEAD WITH LOCAL GENDER EXPERTISE

What is the context? At the heart of being able to mainstream gender within a climate project is understanding how the norms, perceptions, experiences, risks and access to resources within the communities targeted by the project are gendered. Gender consultants are often employed to contribute to the vital task of researching, assessing and analysing these dynamics. These aspects should typically be captured within various project documents (including environmental and social assessments) in the design and implementation phases. They are also included in environmental and social safeguards, which are policies designed to set out requirements that projects must meet to eliminate or minimise risk of harm and promote positive benefits. However, it is the selection of individual experts – and the connections they have to community knowledge – that is critical for comprehensive and accurate assessments. Local gender experts not only help to ensure appropriate project activities and approaches, but also provide insight into gender dynamics in the scope and context of the project.

What is the recommendation? Prioritise appointing gender specialists from the local area who possess local knowledge to lead the gender work within a project. The implementing entity should recruit and then support these local gender specialists to deliver comprehensive assessments and plans for gender integration within the project. Gender experts from the country where the project is based add value, but considering and engaging experts from the particular sub-region of a country, with requisite cultural/ethnic background and language capability, is also important. Methodologies grounded in in-person stakeholder engagement and often tied to parallel environmental and social safeguard processes are encouraged, as opposed to desktop-developed strategies based on secondary data.



See recommendation **Collect the right data from the start** to consider how local expertise can contribute to robust data collection.

What are the benefits? Interviewees asserted that local gender experts' experience of gender dynamics typically leads to better methodologies and outcomes. This is in contrast to the sole reliance on international consultants who may have fund and/or sector expertise, but are less familiar with the project's geographic area and the local social and cultural dynamics. Knowledge of local languages, customs and behaviours enables a deeper level of engagement with community members and other stakeholders and, therefore, a better understanding of key concerns, practices and patterns.

What are the challenges for implementing this recommendation? The typical project cycle as well as the availability of gender consultants and capacity limitations related to linking gender with climate change impede the timely recruitment of talented local experts. Indeed, even the inclination to conceptualise gender expertise as residing in a single individual, often a consultant, poses challenges to capturing local knowledge. The following practices contribute to limiting the pool of eligible candidates available for the contract: tight timelines for proposal design, short timeframes for circulating opportunities to potential experts, a lack of awareness of the existence of national and/or local gender consultants and, once identified, the short timeframes for gender consultants to conduct their work.

Gender experts with solid environmental and climate qualifications are perceived to be rare, though some interviewees felt their area did have a strong pool. A member of one project team reported that it had taken years to create a roster of good potential consultants for their project areas. Limited resources for proposal development can also contribute to a preference for a desk-based gender assessment, which can bias projects toward published and/or academic experts as opposed to local expertise, which may be more based on lived/practical experience.



See recommendation **Integrate gender specialists within the team** to consider balancing the challenges of finding the right expert(s) on a short timeline and ensuring an integrated approach to the proposal.

BOX 8: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GENDER SPECIALISTS

Other research on climate finance and gender has also highlighted the value of gender specialists:

“Supporting projects with a gender specialist, or even a gender focal point, has been intermittent, limiting expert knowledge on gender dynamics, or provision of advice on gender-responsive practices or sufficient integration in projects. This could have resulted in a fragmented, compartmentalised and scattered vision to project implementation for a thoroughly gender-responsive approach. This in turn could have limited comprehensive and effective gender equality outcomes beyond women as project participants, or economic beneficiaries.” Issue identified in AF report, *Assessing Progress: Integrating Gender in Adaptation Fund Projects and Programmes*.⁶

“Most of the reviewed projects appeared to have access to some gender expertise, but it was limited in both person-months and time allocated. To achieve expected gender results and sustain the commitment to mainstreaming gender, greater investments need to be made in hiring human resources with specific expertise in gender and climate change.” Recommendation in the Asian Development Bank (ADB) report, *Building Gender into Climate Finance, ADB Experience with the CIFs*.⁷

What are the caveats to this recommendation? Specialists bring different kinds of knowledge, experience and skills to a project. While some experts will be critically important to understanding the local context, others may be needed to provide insights into the requirements of a specific entity and/or fund. It is important to acknowledge the value of various types of expertise and deploy specialists appropriately. National and local expertise is not synonymous and can bring different perspectives depending on the country context. Particularly for large countries and countries with high ethnic, cultural and social diversity, a national gender expert may have critical knowledge of national policies and frameworks that is important to inform the national implementing entity’s work. However, a local gender expert, steeped in the language, culture and custom of the specific locality where the project will take place, may be needed to round out the project’s perspectives and actions – and make them more effective.

A system of support and cooperation among gender staff, both within the implementing entity and the firms contracted to contribute to design and implementation, can help combine different types of expertise. Reviewing formal methodologies and assessments as a team can help leverage the experience of the local expert(s) to ensure that some outputs are framed to meet the expectations of the entity and fulfil the fund’s requirements. To achieve this, project documents need to be developed collaboratively over time, rather than reviewed by gender experts at a single instance.

LEVERAGE LOCAL WOMEN'S GROUPS AND NATIONAL GENDER INSTITUTIONS

What is the context? Effective project design requires data, assessments and understanding of the project landscape, including gender dynamics; all of which necessitate the engagement of local communities. National government bodies working on gender equality and women's issues – for example, the ministry or department of gender equality, women's or social affairs – are also sources of data, information and connection to stakeholders. Ensuring projects include diverse perspectives and levels of engagement leads to appropriate contributions and design, which shapes effective project implementation. The participation of and leadership by women and women's groups improve the effectiveness and efficiency of development and climate funding.^{8,9,10}

What is the recommendation? Connect with women's rights and gender-related groups, from the local to the national level, to enrich and enhance project design and implementation, ensuring effective approaches are tailored to the project and community context. National governments' gender institutions can be engaged in the process of proposal development to support gender analyses and assessments alongside local women's rights organisations. They can also help in identifying national/local consultants to engage in this work.



See recommendation **Lead with local gender expertise** to understand the significance of including those who have local and/or regional origins and knowledge.

What are the benefits? National gender institutions hold vital information and expertise for collecting and compiling data as well as understanding the national and sub-regional contexts of law, policy and practice. Access to their data (and knowledge of policy and programming generally) can help avoid duplicating efforts so that resources can be better directed toward primary data collection, for example. They can also share insights from their experiences that can inform the assessment methodology as well as suggest the most appropriate activities and approaches to for the project design. Furthermore, national institutions can facilitate introductions of the project team to appropriate stakeholders in the project area, such as women's rights organisations. These local groups may be grassroots civil society organisations based in the area, or local chapters of national federations of women's groups, but directly engaging these organisations also helps make interventions more appropriate and effective.



The Bungule Women's Group in Kenya producing arts and crafts. © Geoff Livingston

What are the challenges to implementing this recommendation? National gender institutions may be poorly resourced, and the advantages of connecting with them will vary from country to country. Many offices and ministries are also less conversant in gender-climate linkages than they are in traditional development approaches. While collaborating to build a shared understanding of how their work applies to climate projects may be worthwhile, the short time frames for proposal development are ubiquitous, and working with governmental bureaucracies can often pose challenges for timelines.

Building trust and collaboration with local women's groups may also take time and dedicated processes. The traditional under-resourcing of women's organisations must be considered in the context of ensuring project activities are not increasing the labour and drudgery of women's workloads. Correspondingly, to encourage the engagement of under-capacitated women's organisations that have not been working directly on climate issues, project teams may need to explain gender-climate linkages, particularly risks and opportunities, within the project context. Dedication to collaboratively working with women's organisations may, thus, require a solid commitment to pursuing partnerships and flexibility in considering their priorities, needs and ways of working.

What are the caveats to this recommendation? National gender institutions will vary in their systems and context by country, and recognising the specific resource and political constraints is critical before creating any connections. Sometimes women's ministries and departments are politically marginalised, and they may also be disconnected from the departments and focal points where climate finance projects are developed, potentially hindering the endorsement of the gender-responsive activities within the project plan. Resource limitations may also mean datasets are out-dated and so assessments should not overly rely on them. Project teams should consider the advantages of connecting with each identified national institution on a case-by-case basis.

BOX 9: TIMING OF ASSESSMENTS

The critical nature of a robust gender assessment is undeniable, but some interviewees suggested that comprehensive work might be best performed at project inception rather than during the proposal process. Starting the project with an assessment can ensure more resources are available and that relevant data is captured and then applied to project activities. However, this approach should only be pursued when technical and financial resources are secured to ensure gender-related assessments, stakeholder engagement and other preparatory work is, indeed, conducted at the beginning of the project timeline. Such a caveat is necessary given the potential difficulty of securing gender and climate expertise and examples where gender elements of projects have been delayed due to the gender team not being in place ([see Box 13](#)). Furthermore, there is the risk that this sequence of activities would lead to gender-responsive project activities being identified only after implementation budgets are approved. In other words, a gender-responsive budgeting approach would have to be retrofitted to an existing budget and if resources were insufficient, then the gender-responsive and transformative aspects of the work may not be taken forward.

COLLECT THE RIGHT DATA FROM THE START

What is the context? Gender analyses and assessments require extensive data and understanding of the gendered dynamics within an area. Pertinent information includes national and local law and policy frameworks, traditional and customary practices, and patterns and opportunities in all applicable sectors. Information, both quantitative and qualitative, may be gathered through desktop assessments of secondary data, primary data collection, or, usually, a combination of both. The initial data gathered provides the baseline that contributes to understanding project progress and impact.

What is the recommendation? Ensure baseline data of gendered roles, relationships and impacts is researched and defined – moving beyond measures based on participation and beneficiary data. Gathering data and information for a baseline should include understanding issues of: a) access to resources, b) time and labour allocation, and c) status and adherence to laws and policies that create greater equality. Surveying and understanding official laws as well as customary laws and practices, which may vary regionally, would be an example of vital data that often informs gender-differentiated roles, access to resources and participation in decision-making. Project design should capture and integrate quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the project's thematic and geographical scope and set the stage for continued data collection throughout implementation. Collecting the right data from the start can help ensure that sex- and gender-disaggregated data on climate risks and climate project benefits (and unintended positive or negative consequences of project implementation) is regularly collected and discussed, with projects managed adaptively in response.

BOX 10: MODELS OF DATA COLLECTION



W+

<https://www.wplus.org/>

Each of the six domains of the W+ Standard™ – 1) Time, 2) Health, 3) Knowledge & Education, 4) Food Security, 5) Income & Assets, and 6) Leadership – is associated with a questionnaire and method to capture project outcomes and their impact on women's lives.

2x challenge: Financing for women

<https://www.2xchallenge.org/criteria>

Achieving one direct criterion – outlined for entrepreneurship, leadership, employment, and consumption – makes an investment two times more eligible.

Data2x

<https://data2x.org/what-is-gender-data/>

This initiative analyses gender data, including identifying gaps in data, across six key areas of development: economic opportunities, education, environment, health, human security and public participation.

What are the benefits? Robust data are important to project design and gender responsive targeting and delivery throughout the project cycle. Sex-disaggregated baseline data and gender analysis that is relevant to the climate change adaptation and/or mitigation goals of the project should drive appropriate activities and their implementation. Data and analysis should drive, for example, the project objectives and key performance indicators (measures of success) over the life of the project. They should also underpin monitoring, evaluation and redesign. In addition, a broad range of data is necessary to capture gender dynamics in the project scope to ensure implementation is far-reaching when it comes to advancing gender equality. Projects often embed the assumption that all gender-related activities are positive contributions. For example, if 0% participation can be reported as a "baseline" because no community meetings about this project have taken place, then some/any increased percentage of women's participation is assumed a notable achievement.

Comprehensive data about participation in community decision-making, access to resources, time allocation, and laws and norms ensures the right information is tracked over time. This knowledge protects against gender inequality being unintentionally exacerbated and forces the project to design activities that will improve equality in a substantive way. Correspondingly, data points can unlock opportunities for intervention and leverage as well as identify potential risks.

What are the challenges to implementing this recommendation? Barriers to gathering relevant baseline data include inadequate resources and timelines for project preparation as well as inadequate resources and infrastructure for monitoring and evaluation once project implementation begins. In addition, project teams need to reframe their expectations and demand more and better gender-related data. The lack of sex-disaggregated data and knowledge of methods for its collection has been long-recognised, and so the expectation for robust data is often weak. However, this can lead to blind spots in the design of data methodologies, including erroneously assuming that existing, secondary datasets are adequate and appropriate to new projects, emphasising quantitative data over qualitative, or focussing only on the direct results of project activities.



This recommendation connects to the recommendation **Lead with local gender expertise and Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions whose substantive inputs are not limited to project and programme design, but can also extend to assisting in data collection and monitoring.**

What are the caveats to this recommendation? With a greater scope and depth of data collected, more positive indicators of progress may be revealed during implementation, pointing to the imperative of understanding connections between the project and the data. While data should be collected comprehensively to understand both risks and opportunities, beginning with key data during project design to shape project activities and provide a baseline, a robust theory of change is essential to ensure data are applied appropriately. During implementation, datasets that include broad changes across the country or region should not necessarily be associated with project impacts, as the project may be only one contributor to that change. Tracking gender-inclusion in regional planning processes for various related sectors, for example, may reveal greater recognition of gendered dynamics in these processes over time, and merit tracking from the project's beginning, but improvements should not be attributed to the project without a clear logframe underpinning those connections. Likewise, an over-reliance on qualitative self-reporting can obscure real project results. Data collection must be embedded within a strong monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure it is applied appropriately to understanding project impact.

INTEGRATE GENDER SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE TEAM

What is the context? Gender elements of a climate finance proposal are often separated for visibility. For example, the gender assessment and Gender Action Plan of a GCF proposal are submitted and available as annexes – rather than being integrated into the body of the proposal and its logframe. One interviewee asserted that the annexed nature of the GCF projects' assessment and action plan is fundamentally indicative of a lack of mainstreaming: to effectively mainstream gender would require its inclusion in the primary proposal design. An alternate argument could be made that less attention is given to gender when there is not a categorical focus, which these separate, complementary documents allow.

The gender specialists solicited to conduct this work are, likewise, often separated from the overall proposal or implementing teams. Correspondingly, gender experts may be brought on as supplemental consultants for short periods of time – as “add-ons” to the project team – to complete specific research and documents that contribute to the overall funding proposal.

BOX 11: THE EXPERIENCE OF GENDER SPECIALISTS

Often relegated as an additional or ad hoc support person, gender experts say their skills are sometimes perceived as so-called “soft science”, in contrast to team members with specialisms in physical or natural science disciplines, infrastructure design, planning or engineering. Gender experts who are not valued within their teams are seen as having limited knowledge of the larger climate change implications of actions, or policies and processes. These perceptions can contribute to their marginalisation within a team or process. Other technical experts may seek to discredit or disregard gender experts’ ideas or input to the broader project.



I feel like I’m the social person, and the others are more technical [because they couch ‘technical’ expertise in far narrower terms]. So, the people used to take sides, and whenever you think which is more important, or which one is the one that is going to pay [for] this project, it’s going to be renewable energy, it’s not going to be gender.



– Independent gender specialist

What is the recommendation? Gender experts should participate and serve the project team for the same duration and be valued in the same way as other technical experts on the team, contributing their knowledge to the overall project design. Terms of reference should outline the ways in which the gender expert should contribute and interact with the team, and adequately account for the time and resources needed to integrate a cross-cutting and gender-responsive human rights-based approach across all project activities and outputs. Gender specialists can also serve in authoritative, decision-making capacities within teams. At a broader level, gender expertise – not only that provided by an individual consultant or team – should influence the project assumptions, approaches and goals from the start.

What are the benefits? The benefits are not only pragmatic but also give a signal to the project team. Gender cannot be mainstreamed if it is considered separate, and the physical and time-related separation of gender experts from other proposal team members naturally leads to the consideration of the gender elements of the project as secondary to the primary project activities. First, when a draft gender assessment and/or action plan is delivered after the proposal has largely been conceptualised, for instance, there is little chance the proposal will be informed by that work except in superficial ways. This practice raises doubts about whether the implementation phase will be informed by data in the gender analysis or use a gender-responsive approach. Second, ensuring that gender experts who are brought on are recognised as experts alongside other technical experts indicates the recognition of gender equality, demonstrating that a comprehensive approach to gender is a priority and contributing to other team members’ support for gender mainstreaming. An expert brought in later in the project cycle faces challenges in asserting equal voice and authority and efficiently contributing their experience and expertise into the overall framework.

What are the challenges to implementing this recommendation? Reconceptualising the gender expert role may require changes to standard contracting and consulting practices that are becoming out-dated and inefficient. To ensure gender experts engage throughout the project design process, the terms of reference should focus on these inputs rather than restricting

deliverables to solely producing gender-related documentation, e.g., a gender assessment and Gender Action Plan. Additionally, depending on the proposal development process, it is likely some engagement will be full-time (e.g., conducting a gender assessment) and some part-time (e.g., taking place over a longer time frame and expanding beyond the initial work of developing the major deliverable). For instance, a gender expert would need to be as involved and engaged as others on a project team when feedback is received from first-level proposal reviews. Ensuring equal prominence to gender experts may have budgetary implications. On a practical level, too, it may be difficult to recruit gender experts on the same timeline as other experts, especially if there is limited local expertise. One response would be to initiate earlier outreach to potential consultants, depending on the constraints of the development timeline. Another option would be to partner with organisations to build the capacity of gender experts.

What are the caveats to this

recommendation? Given the challenges of identifying local expertise, trade-offs need to be considered: waiting for a local expert to be available may mean that she or he is separated from the project team, while adhering to the original timeline may result in a less qualified expert being brought in or relying on an international consultant focused on desk research and less contextual knowledge.



This recommendation must be considered within the context of the Lead with local gender expertise recommendation.



What makes strong implementation is sound identification of social impacts and risks in the design phase.... If there is an apparent risk with gender, gender equality and gender empowerment, [the] plans should describe very well the role and responsibilities of the [implementing] entities.



– Climate fund staff member

ENSURE CONTINUITY BETWEEN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

What is the context? From a gender perspective, the purpose of effective design is to ensure the project theory of change and activities integrate appropriate gender considerations and aim to generate outcomes that advance gender equality. This process is underpinned by gender data and information, starting with the baseline assessment stage. Gender consultants may design and conduct primary data collection in addition to analyses of secondary data. Assumptions and analyses used regarding gender may fundamentally shape the approach to gender in the project proposal, and thus outcomes.

Interviewees consistently reiterated that the strength of initial gender assessments is highly correlated with the strength of gender integration in any given project. It is obvious that without an accurate understanding of gendered dimensions and planning of appropriate activities, gender mainstreaming cannot be successful. Yet, the project teams responsible for design and implementation are often separate, even housed within different institutions and geographical locations. There are also time lags between design and implementation due to the proposal feedback and approval processes. Additionally, fund-level requirements for demonstrating a commitment to gender-responsive project elements may be inconsistent across the project cycle. There's often an over-emphasis on gender in preparatory materials, such as Gender Action Plans, which embeds the assumption that including planning documents assures implementation.

BOX 12: DIVERGENT PERSPECTIVES ON PERSONNEL CONTINUITY VERSUS INTEGRITY

Having distinct project teams and a lack of personnel continuity is a feature for many entities; however, individuals closer to projects (design and implementation) are more likely to perceive it as a failing.

Concerned about experts effectively creating future work for themselves through the design of activities and roles they are best suited and poised to perform, entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ADB require that proposal writers cannot implement activities, in order to guard against such conflicts of interest.

Those engaged with designing a project's gender activities, however, are more likely to perceive this lack of continuity as a missed opportunity, particularly given the dearth of similarly competent and experienced gender experts and the importance of the foundational knowledge established through the design process.

For a representative of a local women's organisation, the imperative for continuity seemed obvious: "Absolutely, it's important that organisations, like ourselves, have total control from planning to implementation." This organisation felt that they "had been used as a token" when asked to contribute their expertise to a planning process for a specific climate fund project, but then not meaningfully engaged in implementation. As models of leveraging the expertise of women's groups emerge, new frameworks for thinking about continuity should emerge as well. Evolving from an individual-as-gender-expert approach to intentionally integrating more local gender expertise will require flexibility and a model rooted in partnership.

What is the recommendation? Ensuring continuity between design and implementation requires an intentional process for project design teams to share experiences, information, data, appraisals and assumptions that inform the design of the proposal and its gender elements. Simply sharing the final documents associated with the proposal, or other key internal documents outlining project plans resulting from the design team's process, may not provide an adequate roadmap of what is needed and expected between personnel. Surfacing and exploring the context and history of decisions – and appreciating the approach taken as the result of these decisions – can be critical when different staff are brought on to implement the designed activities. One example of how to share this knowledge is the "note to file" written directly from the gender lead to the incoming implementation team, as has been observed in UNDP practice. Another gender specialist recounted her method of adding an "explanation" column to a plan, where she could highlight terms she felt would not be understood by fellow team members, such as an environmental engineer and economist. These two processes emphasise the importance of and help enable full team buy-in from conception to ultimate implementation.

What are the benefits? Institutionalising such intentional transition processes, and adequately resourcing them, reinforces to all stakeholders that the proposal is not an accomplishment in and of itself, where access to funding is seen as the achievement. Rather, the proposal is acknowledged as a means to the end of enacting climate action that integrates gender effectively. Additionally, putting into place these processes can improve team morale and bolster associated productivity benefits, as working on a plan that one fears or suspects will not be implemented as envisioned can be frustrating and demoralising. Likewise, receiving a plan that is not supported with explanatory details is challenging in its own right.

BOX 13: SECURING GENDER EXPERTISE IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

While one critical moment for securing gender expertise is during project design, implementation also requires gender expertise and this lagged in several projects reviewed (for example, see the project [Enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities, especially women, to cope with climate change induced salinity](#) on page 59). Interviewees reflected on the challenges of securing gender experts for this phase of work, which can be hindered by the political context. These projects and their associated selection processes sometimes need to bridge various institutions and departments, which can complicate the selection of gender experts and their choices of roles.

While suggesting approaches to resolving these tensions is outside the scope of this work, it is imperative not to delay the selection and appointment of key personnel. Efforts focussed on integrating gender into project design will be invalidated if the activities are launched and gain momentum with only cursory attention given to gender dimensions. Bringing in gender expertise later in the project can reinforce the false idea that assessment after the fact – such as evaluating sex-disaggregated data about project beneficiaries – is the key gender activity and that gender is a separate stream of work.

This process provides an explicit space for individuals to share implementation insights and recommendations that were not included in design documentation. Furthermore, intentional transition ensures primary data, for example, is not lost, and the context and assumptions informing and shaping the planned activities are clear. As conditions may change over time, especially considering time lags between initial concept and project inception, successfully managing projects and being able to re-calibrate based on new data or the evolving context is predicated on having this information.



This recommendation connects to the recommendation to [Integrate gender experts within teams](#): forcing a reframing that sees required gender documents not as hoops to jump through to receive funding, but as the foundational work to inform more robust implementation and monitoring.

BOX 14: THE CHALLENGE OF A PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH

Some fund staff said that problems can arise related to different review processes and timelines for programmes with sub-projects that were not fully identified at the time of approval. This complicates the connection and timeline between design, approval and implementation of projects, and also disrupts continuity of personnel and institutional memory.

Civil society often sees unidentified sub-projects as a challenge that risks undermining climate funds' gender requirements, since it is more difficult to understand how an unknown future subproject can fulfil the programmatic Gender Action Plan, as well as have accountability for the gender planning for that subproject. For example, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) [Green Cities programme](#) under the GCF was approved in 2018 as a programme that encompasses many subprojects. As those subprojects have been announced over time, civil society observers have [called out](#) the lack of disclosure of the individual gender assessments for subprojects as a major risk for project implementation and effectiveness in line with the Gender Action Plan for the approved programme.

What are the challenges to implementing this recommendation? Planning continuity requires building this transition process into the terms of reference for gender consultants engaged in design. Transition responsibilities must take into account time and resource constraints and reflect approaches that provide an appropriate amount of information, without detracting from the depth of work required to prepare the proposal and/or planning documents. Uncertainty regarding when projects may be implemented, as the timeline may be years, means the most feasible option is ensuring adequate written documentation about the project baseline, assessment of activity options and rationale for key project objectives and targets.

The different institutions and firms that may be involved can also hamper the coordination of an effective transition from design to implementation. This again makes the most likely default scenario a series of notes rather than more interactive and dynamic processes. Uncertainty regarding the skill set and knowledge of the yet-to-be-identified new implementation team members can make the task of preparing handover notes particularly onerous. Models for transition and continuity should be developed as projects reflect on key learnings, but interrogating gaps and false assumptions in implementation is unlikely to involve design teams as well, since design and implementation teams are often different for the reasons outlined above.



Whenever you are writing something, people are going to have translation, another interpretation of the action plan that you make.



– Independent gender specialist

What are the caveats to this recommendation?

Capturing data, critical information and recommendations from gender experts engaged in design is not a replacement for securing gender specialists to provide expertise for project implementation and monitoring. Gender expertise is required throughout project lifecycles and should be adequately budgeted for and supported accordingly, without the onus being placed entirely on a short-term design assignment and a team member later tasked with carrying out the blueprint. Active participation of gender experts in delivery is important, as it enriches the substance of the work. Furthermore, appropriate and continual monitoring of project activities may lead to discoveries that challenge original assumptions or provide data that point to new opportunities. Updated gender assessments may be needed as a result of changing conditions or further funding.



Participatory process for developing Peru's gender and climate change action plan, 2015. © Peru's Ministry of Environment (MINAM)

PURSUE TEAM-WIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

What is the context? The challenges of recognising and integrating a gender perspective into environmental and climate projects are long documented, with the relatively recent emergence of climate funds' gender policies and the GCF, the newest fund, being the first to embed gender in its founding documents. Calls to integrate gender are often matched by calls for the data detailing gender-climate linkages. Expertise in this arena is often emerging or limited to a select few people in the area who could be potential team members. In some cases, team member(s) who have had some exposure and inclination toward questions of gender equality may be assigned to conduct gender assessments and advise on gender elements and approaches for a project, without having sufficient preparation and support.

BOX 15: CAPACITY-BUILDING AND FUND GENDER POLICIES

The secretariat staff at the various climate funds tended to agree that there is a strong, positive correlation between knowledge of gender-climate linkages and support for gender mainstreaming in climate finance. This assumption is not surprising since several climate fund gender policies support capacity-building of implementing entities, and secretariat staff are often tasked with delivering this capacity-building. One secretariat staff member interviewee highlighted a positive experience of building support for gender integration with in-person training for other secretariat staff, which included an explanation of the climate fund gender requirements, an exploration of gender mainstreaming in climate projects, and discussion of how to better integrate gender considerations throughout each part of the fund's operations and approaches. While the training experiences within a climate fund secretariat and within a project team will have differences, this experience demonstrates that in-person training can serve as a space for rich discussion and identifying improvements.

What is the recommendation? Provide and require capacity-building on gender and climate for entire teams. Modalities and content may vary, from specific training modules such as the GEF's Gender and Environment course (see Box 16), which is being deployed as a staff training requirement in some settings, to in-house learning opportunities led by gender advocates and experts, based on examples from shared projects and rooted in discussion-based learning. (Interviewees provided several examples of this type of learning working to enhance capacity of teams.)



This recommendation connects to the recommendation to **Integrate gender specialists within the team. Processes of sharing data and discussing approaches within a team can be structured as learning opportunities as well as a vital team undertaking.**

What are the benefits? Improving everyone's baseline understanding contributes to an appreciation of gender mainstreaming and gender expertise, as well as strengthening project outcomes. Such capacity-building, alongside a culture where gender experts are equally regarded within the team, can improve team buy-in and support for gender integration. Likewise, such efforts to build capacity across the team may help counter the noteworthy tendency to assign "gender work" to an interested and somewhat knowledgeable team member who may not actually be trained. Exploring the complexity of gender-climate inter-linkages and the role of gender expertise can lead to an evaluation of what actual expertise exists and a recognition of gaps. Lastly, with improved understanding, team members may be able to better contribute to identifying, developing and deploying appropriate activities to advance gender equality in their own respective areas of expertise, for a more comprehensive approach with enhanced results.

What are the challenges to implementing this recommendation? The design and duration of capacity-building, coupled with the frequency and depth of opportunities to deploy new skills and perspectives, influence the efficacy of capacity-building initiatives. Coordination with existing capacity-building opportunities and trainers and the development of in-house materials requires time and resources. Project teams also have competing priorities. In addition, it may be difficult to motivate for allocating already-constrained time and resources to capacity-building on gender when expertise has already been secured. Despite the professed positive outcomes, circumstances may arise where individuals' improved understanding may not be correlated with greater motivation to support gender equality.

What are the caveats to this recommendation?

Capacity-building is not a guaranteed path to better outcomes, and one-off capacity-building sessions such as a lunchtime presentation, for example, do not make one a gender expert. These activities are not a substitute for gender expertise. Rather, capacity-building should be understood as a longer-term process, often requiring a series of engagements, events and trainings over a significant period of time. Ensuring well-resourced and intentional capacity-building opportunities also takes time. The implicit expectation that gender consultants also serve as gender trainers must be addressed by either including such activities within remunerated job responsibilities or arranging other pathways for capacity-building.



Gender [experts] need to change the messaging we are working with: [where] people are feeling like [integrating] gender [equals] more paperwork to do. They are not seeing this as an opportunity, and we need to show gender [integration] is an opportunity to get more benefits, to get more people included, to close the gender gaps.



– Independent gender specialist

BOX 16: OPEN ONLINE COURSE ON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT

In 2018, the GEF, in partnership with several of its partner agencies, debuted a free, web-based course with six modules, including one focused on climate change. [This course](#), available in English, French and Spanish, has attracted over 10,000 users. The UN: CC Learn Platform hosts access and issues certificates for completion. Interviewees engaged with course development highlighted that it helps participants to improve their understanding of gender and environment inter-linkages and responds to the demand for more data and training on these topics.



Members of the Women and Gender Constituency participating at COP24. © Annabelle Avril, WECF

Enabling factors

Stand-alone recommendations cannot independently enhance the integration of gender in climate finance projects; they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Enabling factors also affect this integration. Four key enabling factors that influence project-level integration of gender arose throughout the interviews. These enabling conditions are not an exhaustive list of the many enabling circumstances that may contribute to gender integration, but rather reflect the themes that interviewees shared most often. Under each enabling factor, an example is provided as well as some key implications for its application.

ADVOCATES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender champions can play key roles in advancing new developments and innovations. This is particularly the case within the current system, which often relies on individual gender experts' inputs into proposals, alongside teams that may remain resistant to gender mainstreaming, more likely through ignorance or misperception than hostility. These individuals – especially those in leadership roles – can use their position to advocate for greater recognition, prioritisation and uptake of gender equality and can shape individual projects as well as institutional policies. Gender expertise is not a requirement for being a gender-equality advocate: appreciating the linkages between gender and climate change and being dedicated to advancing gender equality are the fundamental criteria. This enabling factor speaks to the powerful role of individuals in influencing project and departmental orientation.

Example: A project leader who has a personal passion for gender equality, women's participation and women's leadership – largely based on their own background and experiences – ensures a local gender expert is recruited, well-resourced and supported by everyone on the team. This project, in turn, becomes an example of strong gender mainstreaming, but this project leader's history of support for gender equality was not actually considered in her recruitment. Her position of authority and influence over the project is a matter of chance, even while her advocacy for gender equality in the project has substantially raised the bar for the actors involved.

Implications: Because these gender champions arise in an ad-hoc fashion, the question is less how to make more of them, but rather how to leverage their ideas and enthusiasm across the board and support their position on gender equality with action, results and sharing of the process for other leaders. Entities should consider:

- Who are our advocates for gender equality?
- What authority, resources and platforms can we give our gender equality advocates to speak to their peers and advise our leadership?
- What are the common practices of our gender-equality advocates and can we build procedures around those practices?
- Who are advocates for gender equality that could benefit from more support and leadership, or ownership for taking this on?
- How can this advocacy be recognised in performance reviews, and how can commitment to gender equality be prioritised as a selection criterion as people move into more senior positions?

EXISTING GENDER EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

Implementing entities vary in their capacity for and experience with gender integration. Larger, more established entities may have gender capacities and in-house procedures that can fulfil and even exceed climate fund requirements. (The correlation between capacity and quality is not definitive, however. Smaller entities have demonstrated gender mainstreaming of great quality, while large multilateral development banks have displayed gaps and weaknesses in specific projects as well as across portfolios.)

Example: A consulting firm often contracted for proposal development has only one full-time staff member dedicated to gender (and gender may not be his sole responsibility), while a multilateral development bank has a department and in-house system for evaluating gender within all projects.

Implications: Conversations are emerging as to how international entities can support the development of national and regional entities' capacities on gender linkages and how to better integrate gender in the project cycle. Within the GCF, for example, supporting capacity development is a formal requirement of all international accredited entities with respect to direct access entities within countries, although the reports on this work are not publicly available. Entities with more limited capacities should consider:

- How can we generally build capacity on gender within our team? (See [Key resources](#))
- How can the capacity of specific climate project teams be built on gender linkages, considerations and opportunities for integration?
- What mechanisms and relationships do we have to access support and resources for capacity-building?
- What are the models in place elsewhere, and are they applicable?

NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING AND POLICIES

Some interviewees highlighted national planning and processes both within and outside the climate finance arena as central to guiding the development of climate finance projects, and the prioritisation of gender within them. These include investment programmes through the CIFs,¹¹ national adaptation plans (NAPs), nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as domestic poverty, sustainable development and gender equality frameworks. The gender-responsiveness of climate-related domestic processes can contribute to both the orientation and capacity for project-level gender mainstreaming. In addition, strong national planning and budgeting on social elements can provide impetus for robust gender expectations and standards within individual projects.



Women protest peacefully outside the UN climate talks in 2015. © Christine Irvine, Survival Media Agency

Example: A country's gender-responsive NAP process, supported by the GCF readiness programme and the participation of the NAP Global Network, builds momentum within the GCF National Designated Authority (NDA) for gender-responsive processes. In turn, these processes that integrate gender create further connections with key stakeholders, raising their awareness on gender in climate activities/projects, enabling these stakeholders to better contribute to project design and implementation, including national gender institutions and women's rights organisations.

Implications: Country focal points and entities are expected and often mandated to be familiar with existing relevant protocols and policies. Project development and design phases also highlight key guidance and mandates, such as recognising relevant legislation in gender and related social assessments. In addition to this assessment of the existing landscape, country focal points and entities should consider:

- What ongoing national processes are occurring on what timelines, and how may those intersect and influence our project portfolios? Are there opportunities for engagement, capacity-building, or resources associated with these processes?
- How can we leverage or re-convene key actors and stakeholders from these processes in project development and implementation?
- How can we create mechanisms as well as accountability for ensuring alignment with appropriate processes and policies, and uptake of recommendations?



The importance of gender in [this country's] poverty strategy...gave a mandate politically to go forward.



– Climate fund staff member



A woman with her roadside broom stand in Ahmedabad, India. © Paula Bronstein

FUND-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

The expectations for climate projects are set forth by the climate funds. Fund staff repeatedly cited the requirements these funds make – via gender policies, project-cycle processes, and templates – as a critical variable in whether improvements in gender integration were made over time. Requirements, as well as the expectations they help cultivate, drive higher standards and innovation. The climate funds have moved forward several key measures recently, so the full picture of how these changes are catalysing progress is not yet available for public scrutiny.

Example: The AF has been iterating and enhancing the integration of gender elements within their project performance report template. By asking project teams for more detailed information beyond general lessons learned and data on beneficiaries, the new template will better track implementation progress on gender-responsive elements and identify capacity gaps.

Implications: Project teams are required to understand and fulfil the specific requirements of the climate fund under which they are working. However, with implementing entities often working across multiple funds, and project teams working across multiple projects over several years, there are many opportunities for cross-learning. Implementing entities can reflect on the following questions to generate improvements across their portfolio:

- What processes and procedures were put into place to meet the (new/fund-specific) requirement? Which ones worked best, and could they benefit other projects under different or previous requirements?
- What did this (new/fund-specific) process reveal about strengths or blind spots?
- What lessons about this approach to gender in design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation can strengthen other parts of the project cycle?

Considerations for the climate funds

While the research for this guide was intentionally orientated away from analyses of the climate funds, interviewees indicated certain aspects where funds are best positioned to lead. These considerations may inform and influence stakeholder advocacy related to the climate funds.

WORK DIRECTLY WITH GENDER EXPERTS

Fund-level work to date has emphasised entity and country-level processes, such as accreditation (or limited rosters of partner entities in the case of the GEF and the CIFs) and readiness of countries to receive climate finance. Capacity-building efforts have also focused on these national implementing or accredited entities. Given the significant role of gender experts throughout the life cycle of projects, however, allocating greater attention to their individual circumstances, backgrounds, and capacity may be merited. Accomplishing the gender equality aims of funds is ultimately determined by the capacity and actions of these individuals. New fund-level interventions may play a role in assuring appropriate capacity, given the efficiencies introduced through organising and coordinating at the fund level. This is especially the case since smaller implementing entities tend to lack resources and capacity. Interviewees highlighted two worthwhile endeavours for this engagement:

1. Developing a specialist/consultant platform for identifying and recruiting gender experts; and
2. Providing capacity-building for gender experts on climate-relevant sectors, issues and policies.

As identifying gender consultants with local, national and regional knowledge and networks within given timelines is challenging yet critical, facilitating connections between potential consultants with the right capacity and project experience would be both efficient and effective. Such an effort would respond to the recommendations that gender experts be integrated into project teams and would propel efforts that firms engaged in implementation are making to build capacity. One interviewee, for example, recounted delaying the timeline for a project's gender consultation because none of the known gender experts were available. Another interviewee explained how developing a decent roster of trusted gender specialists in the region had taken a number of years.

An AF initiative shows promise for coordinating efforts to identify and organise consultants with technical capacity in gender and climate analyses. The AF Gender Action Plan, adopted in 2016, mandated the "development of a roster of gender expert consultants". Unfortunately, the Secretariat encountered challenges with operationalising that roster, including legal considerations of how potential individuals are identified and selected to be included. The AF is now working to host the list with the UNFCCC gender team and partner organisations, such as the GEF and the Climate Technology Centre and Network.

While questions of both inclusion and access are complex, and some remain to be answered, any effort to identify this pool of individuals will not only be immediately practical in improving the ability to match consultants with projects, but could also catalyse knowledge-sharing and capacity-building at various levels. Addressing the issue of consultant identification is about quantity – the ability to recognise how many potential consultants may be available – and quality. Quality criteria need to consider a number of trade-offs that weigh understanding of the local context, gender and sector expertise, accessibility and climate/sectoral capability. Without a robust approach to ensuring inclusion of different types of gender expertise and the full representation of local and regional experts, such an effort could backfire and limit rather than expand the perceived pool of specialists.

In addition to establishing a roster or other coordination system, the funds could play a direct role in providing training opportunities for gender experts. A capacity-building programme could address gaps in gender and/or climate expertise as well as clarify fund processes and set expectations for advancing gender equality through fund activities. Introducing a coordination system for identifying consultants can incentivise demand and participation in any training and capacity-building opportunities, whether or not they are directly coupled with certification or standards for inclusion.



Member of the Women and Gender Constituency speaking at COP24. © Annabelle Avril, WECF

National entities with the mandate, authority and resources to drive gender equality forward within their respective projects must support individual consultants. These approaches to individual cadres, however, must be complemented by continued entity-level capacity-building.

CULTIVATE INTEGRATED PLATFORMS FOR SHARING EXPERIENCES

Interviewees enjoyed the process of reflecting on their experiences, and a few expressed the desire for more opportunities to share learning and ideas. The role of gender staff within the climate funds and implementing entities is equally as vital as individual gender experts contracted at the project level. These in-house gender specialists are exposed to a multiplicity of projects and approaches across diverse sectors and regions. Harnessing their insights in a collective and collaborative fashion could be a powerful mechanism to advance the expectation and practice of gender responsiveness in climate finance.

Forums to bring together gender staff could be spaces to share practical tools, such as templates for gender consultancies, as well as to learn from other processes. Sharing case studies and reflecting on procedures and practices provide an opportunity for reflection and learning. Creating visible platforms for communication and collaboration can help staff to identify as part of a group focused on similar goals. Firms contracted by implementing entities to design proposals, for example, are not a transparent part of the process, hindering the ability to identify who has designed an innovative approach. Bringing these firms and their staff into these spaces will deepen knowledge exchange, ensuring those most directly engaged in this work are able to share their reflections and insights.

One existing model of cross-agency learning is the Gender Partnership of the GEF. Focused on the 18 partner agencies of the GEF, the Gender Partnership facilitates discussion among senior gender consultants and other key gender stakeholders, such as the UNFCCC Gender Focal Point, and provides opportunities for feedback on GEF processes and documents. Creating similar inclusive spaces for entities with comparatively less capacity could also facilitate fruitful exchange. Such long-term initiatives focused on gender and made available for various institutions could advance work often highlighted only briefly during conferences and meetings, such as the GCF's Structured Dialogues.

A platform to catalyse individual learning across entities could also facilitate collaborative processes for system-wide assessment. While reviews have been conducted to assess projects' gendered dimensions, efforts at highlighting case studies are currently ad hoc and fund-specific. A collective system to highlight and celebrate strong examples across the funds could uncover best practices over time and, at the least, ensure recognition of flagship projects and capture lessons learned more broadly. A shared platform could also contribute to the coordination of approaches that engage civil society and academia in these efforts.

Creating a community of practice can be pursued at any level or scale, such as country-level or regional-level learning exchanges. These endeavours, though, require resources to design and host, and determining which actors have the appropriate capacity must be considered. Climate readiness funding through the GCF, for example, could perhaps support such platforms.



Women from the Keyo pottery women's group produce cookstoves in Kenya. © Peter Kapuscinski, World Bank

III. Integrating gender in climate finance projects: A closer look

Introduction

The structure and format for the gender assessment process and integration of gender equality concepts and practices varies with fund requirements, entities, project teams and consultants. This research attempted to question interviewees about how these processes were best conducted without specifying an approach or aim – gender-sensitivity, responsiveness, mainstreaming or transformation, for example. Likewise, examples gleaned from various projects highlight admirable elements as well as missed opportunities or misguided approaches, without measuring against a specific standard. This focus is the most flexible given the variation of approaches across funds as well as interviewees' opinions and differences. The overall goal is to provide a resource that can support project teams to strengthen their approaches to gender integration, whatever their starting point.

Regardless of the approach to presenting gender within climate finance proposals, the integration of gender equality considerations must be comprehensively reflected across all aspects of the project cycle and across the entire scope of the project activities to align with the highest expectations.

The following brief review of five projects highlights key examples of how gender can be well-integrated into a project, as well as noting when there are missed opportunities for advancing gender equality outcomes. (See [Annex II for the 16 projects reviewed](#).)

Direct grant and loan projects

PROJECT EXAMPLE 1: A SMALL GRANTS FACILITY FOR ENABLING LOCAL-LEVEL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Adaptation Fund

The lesson: *Providing services and activities that may benefit rural women is not synonymous with advancing gender equality. Sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries should serve as the starting point of exploring different gendered experiences within a project, not the last word.*

This project in South Africa is often referenced as an exemplary model of providing enhanced direct access to climate finance within the AF and as a potential model for scaling in the GCF. This project is designed as a Small Grants Facility, a modality long promoted by gender advocates. Ensuring grant-based support directly to locally-led activities is a key strategy to redirect funds away from top-down, market-based mechanisms with consistent histories of tokenistic engagement of women. However, the modality does not guarantee strong gender outcomes.

Project reporting consistently highlights the number of women as project beneficiaries among the small grants recipients as a sufficient measure of gender equality. One project performance report asserted that “gender equity and female empowerment remain at the forefront, owing to the fact that rural women are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Therefore, small grants recipients continue to disaggregate their beneficiary data by gender and report on it quarterly.”¹²



There is a disconnect between what technical projects are doing and what beneficiary communities need, and that disconnect is in the gender and social space.



– Climate and development practitioner

Providing services and activities that may benefit women does not necessarily advance gender equality. The impact on gender equality cannot be observed through this basic reporting of sex-disaggregated data. The failure to capture better information on the gendered impacts of the project may obscure real gains. Without evaluation, impact assessment and reporting in greater depth, the outcomes are unknown. Tracking the number of men and women beneficiaries is not a substitute for more robust data collection on the qualitative experiences of beneficiaries, nor does it allow for the intentional assessment of actual vulnerabilities to climate change.

PROJECT EXAMPLE 2: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PHYSICAL ADAPTATION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA'S NORTHWEST MCKINNON'S WATERSHED

Adaptation Fund and Global Environmental Facility (co-finance)

The lesson: *Looking at who is engaged in governance and decision-making is as valid and significant for advancing gender equality as considering the gender balance of project beneficiaries.*

This watershed management project has three key components, one of which is a revolving loan fund for homeowners to improve the climate resilience of their homes. The project has focused not only on sex-disaggregation of loan recipients (48% of loan applicants are women), but has also identified the gender imbalance within and across two different committees: the Financial Evaluation Committee (0% women) and the Technical Evaluation Committee (20% men). Both committees play important roles in reviewing and approving a loan. The 2017-2018 project performance report reflects on these gender composition differences and draws attention to the various dimensions of gender inequality. This shift in emphasis demonstrates how looking at beneficiaries/end-users alone can obscure important considerations of gender imbalances in participation and leadership and, therefore, in decision-making power and authority.

The original proposal for this project also refers to the importance of considering gender in the design of waterway restoration, highlighting the importance of gender-responsive consultations. This project shows that the existence of one gender-responsive element in a project, such as a financial service benefitting women, does not mean gender considerations must not be integrated across *all* other project elements. This understanding is at the heart of gender mainstreaming.

PROJECT EXAMPLE 3: MSME¹³ BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAMME IN MONGOLIA FOR GHG EMISSION REDUCTION

Green Climate Fund

The lesson: *Achieving gender balance targets may include working over time to build the capacity or pool of potentially eligible beneficiaries, and not simply ensuring and promoting access to women.*

This Mongolian project involves granting a greater level of loan concessionality to women-led businesses pursuing energy efficiency and transitioning to renewable energy, as well as building capacity for financial intermediaries to address gender biases in lending. While the programme is labelled as "women-centred", the target for 50% of loans distributed to women-led businesses is simply equality of beneficiaries (and unlikely to be equivalently labelled "male-centred"). Although this focus on women-led businesses acknowledges the historic difficulty of women's access to loans, the *definitions* of women-led businesses call into question what is being emphasised. Beyond the to-be-expected, "51% or more ownership by women" definition, two other criteria qualify as women-led in this project's definitions: "at least 30% women on the Board of Directors or in senior management positions," or "at least 40% women employment".

While setting ambitious targets such as 50% of loans distributed to women-led businesses is appreciated, reaching for the appearance of gender equality in ways that obscure ongoing power imbalances, such as redefining women-led businesses as not being majority-led by women, is a disservice. Better approaches include designing appropriate measures to build women's ownership or setting progressive targets over time to ultimately advance toward 50%, rather than solely redefining, through targets, what it means to be women-led. If this project's inaccurate redefinition of ownership by women reflects concern about the capacity of businesses actually led by women to access these funds, then capacity-building should be a stronger focus of the project. The purpose of a gender assessment, for example, is to identify points of leverage that could be expanded upon within project activities.

Across these projects, the funding modality of direct grants and loans matters for overall gender-responsiveness, but is not a substitute for specific attention to gendered dynamics or careful consideration of an ecosystem of supportive measures.

Sector-based projects

PROJECT EXAMPLE 4: GREEN BRT KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Green Climate Fund

The lesson: *All sectors, including transportation, and all interventions, including mitigation projects, can embed meaningful gender-related activities that improve the experiences of project beneficiaries, while also considering gender dynamics within power structures.*

Several interviewees praised this project's Gender Action Plan for being a strong example of gender mainstreaming. Looking beyond the number of beneficiaries/users of the new bus rapid transit (BRT) system, the plan outlined qualitative processes to capture user experiences of safety, convenience and comfort, with programmes to improve those experiences over the course of the project. In addition to sex-disaggregated data, other variables such as age, ability, ethnicity, employment and economic situation were considered across various activities and targets.

The connection between the gender assessment and Gender Action Plan, and how the first informed the second, was clear. In addition to evaluating country-level dynamics around women's education and participation in the labour force (including the study of mobility and transport dynamics and barriers specifically), the project included data from a [*Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*](#). This 2014 data may not have been originally collected for this GCF gender assessment, but it was directly relevant to the Gender Action Plan, which outlined not only preventive safety measures (lighting, visible CCTV cameras, awareness campaigns), but also established mechanisms to report harassment.

Many interviewees highlighted the importance of dedicating significant resources to gender mainstreaming, and this was the largest project reviewed. While all projects should meet the gender requirements set forth by their respective funds, projects with greater resources and capacity may have more opportunity – and longer timelines given their development process – to create robust plans. To act upon any opportunity where resources are available, though, first requires attention to gender equality concepts and practices. The attention given within this project's planning phase highlights how large-scale infrastructure projects to achieve mitigation, all-too-often considered gender-neutral, can, in fact, hold great potential for meaningful and comprehensive gender integration.



With those [water] projects I think there are immediate and inherent ways one can ensure the project mainstreams gender considerations. Women are the primary users of water at a household or entry level, [so it is] obvious that you will be benefiting women. [However,] we have seen a risk of stopping at that point, accepting the inherent benefits, assuming that you have done enough.



– Project consultant at firm contracted for GCF and GEF projects

PROJECT EXAMPLE 5: PROMOTION OF CLIMATE-FRIENDLY COOKING, KENYA AND SENEGAL

Green Climate Fund

The lesson: *Focusing on women's roles and labour as the end goals of a project must be complemented by considering gender equality in the project methodology and processes.*

A clean cookstove project, also under the GCF, highlights a nearly opposite lesson to the fourth project example. In the Karachi BRT project, many interviewees noted how effectively a project in a sector often not associated with gender (transportation) was able to integrate gender equality concepts and practices. By contrast, this project on a topic long-associated with gender relevance (clean cookstoves) neglected to recognise additional opportunities for considering gender beyond its focus on women as primary users of cookstoves.

Similar to loan or grant programmes focused on women beneficiaries, certain projects may fail to consider gender-responsiveness across the entire project because of the assumption that the type of project – here, clean cookstoves – automatically benefits women (as the primary cookstove users). The emphasis on women as the end-users may contribute to limited consideration of women in other roles related to the project, such as business owners.

Women and women's groups were considered vital to distributing improved cookstoves, and integrating 8,000 local women's groups was explicitly tied to achieving the project's distribution goals. However, the project provided less information on the sex-disaggregation of cookstove producers.

The financial model of the project is predicated on supporting the expansion of artisanal cookstove producers via support packages and technical assistance. The gender dynamics associated with these producers – patterns of ownership, leadership and employment across different types of producers – were not fully explored by the available data, which only indicated differences in employment and participation by type of stove and potential profit.

The project planning suggested awareness of the potential risk of the project given these differences. Strengthening the economic position of existing male producers to transform the clean cookstove market could entrench discrimination and biases, making it even more difficult for women entrepreneurs to enter this space. Accordingly, the Gender Action Plan set a target for 60% of the participants in trainings, including training on entrepreneurship and business skills, to be women. The project, however, absolved itself from targeting the gender balance of those ultimately employed or in positions of leadership and ownership in production, citing a "lack of control" rather than committing to understanding and addressing barriers that may exist between receiving training and then transitioning to working in production.

These two sector-based examples highlight that while some types of projects lend themselves to more visible gender integration, all projects should capture the specific opportunities for advancing gender equality across project activities and explore all available dimensions within their project scope, sector and approach.

IV. Key resources

The climate funds and other institutions have produced a suite of resources to support project development and gender integration as well as to summarise and analyse the gender approaches of select projects. These resources provide a starting point for learning more after reading this report.

TABLE 2: General guidance to inform project development and design

TITLE	DATE	HYPERLINK	DESCRIPTION
<i>Designing for transformation: A practice-oriented toolkit for mainstreaming transformational change in programme and project preparation processes</i>	October 2019	https://publications.iadb.org/en/designing-transformation-practice-oriented-toolkit-mainstreaming-transformational-change-program	This comprehensive toolkit includes a section on gender inclusion frameworks that covers multi-level perspectives and approaches for recognising how gender can and should play a role in achieving transformational change. It was commissioned by the CIF's Evaluation and Learning (E&L) Initiative and guided by the ADB and the IDB Group (comprised of the Inter-American Development Bank, IDB Invest and IDB Lab).
<i>GCF proposal toolkit 2020: Toolkit to develop a project proposal for the GCF</i>	June 2020	https://cdkn.org/resource/guide-green-climate-fund-gcf-proposal-toolkit-2020	This Acclimatise CDKN toolkit recognises that for a GCF project to be “good”, it must engage in “actively promoting gender equality”. It examines the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan as key design elements of a good project and focuses on the production of the gender assessment and Gender Action Plan. This report/toolkit should be read in conjunction with other guidance (see above and below) on the importance of including gender objectives, targets and activities in a project's theory of change and logframe.
<i>GCF programming manual: An introduction to the GCF project cycle and project development tools for full-size projects</i>	July 2020	https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-programming-manual.pdf	This is the official GCF guide to developing proposals. The manual focuses on gender documentation as part of due diligence in completing the proposal and, in doing so, outlines the various levels and points in the project cycle where attention to gender is mandated.

TABLE 3: Guidance on gender

TITLE	HYPERLINK	DESCRIPTION
<i>Mainstreaming gender in GCF projects</i>	https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/guidelines-gcf-toolkit-mainstreaming-gender_0.pdf	This GCF publication, emerging from a workshop with UN Women, looks at readiness (see Enabling factor: National-level planning and policies) as well as the project cycle, providing basic guidance on appropriate activities as well as GCF-specific insights, such as mapping GCF results areas to gendered vulnerabilities, capacities and gender-responsive indicators.
<i>GEF guidance to advance gender equity</i>	https://www.thegef.org/publications/gef-guidance-gender-equality	This GEF document walks through GEF-specific decision-points, requirements and approaches, such as GEF gender tagging, while providing general checklists and templates for ensuring gender mainstreaming within projects.
<i>Guidance document for implementing entities on compliance with the AF gender policy</i>	https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/guidance-document-implementing-entities-compliance-adaptation-fund-gender-policy-2/	Similar to the other Fund-specific guidance publications, the AF walks through the project cycle and the requirements at each stage, providing tools and tips that highlight how compliance – and stronger gender outcomes – can be achieved.
<i>Gender and renewable energy: Entry points for women's livelihoods and employment</i>	https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/research/gender-and-renewable-energy-entry-points-womens-livelihoods-and-employment	Though focused on renewable energy, this CIF publication is a complement to the other Fund documents outlining opportunities and providing tools for gender integration along the project cycle.
<i>Guidelines or other tools for integrating gender considerations into climate change related activities under the Convention</i>	https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/tp/02.pdf	This UNFCCC technical paper outlines approaches and resources for various steps across the project cycle, including gender-responsive budgeting.
<i>Gender toolkit: Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise finance and development</i>	https://www.adb.org/documents/gender-toolkit-micro-small-and-medium-sized-enterprise-finance-and-development	Though not climate specific, this ADB toolkit provides guidance on outputs, activities, inputs, indicators and targets to inform project conception and design, recognising the interplay between ADB staff and project consultants across these activities.
<i>Toolkit for mainstreaming gender in Multilateral Investment Fund projects</i>	https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Toolkit-for-Mainstreaming-Gender-in-MIF-Projects.pdf	Though not climate specific, this manual is a straightforward look at how to integrate gender in the Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB) projects, and its clarity of definitions and frameworks make it a more universal introductory tool.

The CIF and AF have published case studies relating to gender and climate finance from their portfolio, while information on GCF and GEF projects is contained in other compendiums.

TABLE 4: Select case studies on gender

TITLE	HYPERLINK	DESCRIPTION
<i>How private sector investment can support gender-responsive, climate-resilient development in Tajikistan</i>	https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/gender_guidance_note_web_september2019final.pdf	This CIF guidance note explores the gender-responsive elements across the project cycles of three projects under the Tajikistan Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), each under a different implementing entity. The EBRD's Tajikistan Climate Resilience Financing Facility CLIMADAPT (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) built capacity for targeting financial products such as loans to women. The World Bank's Environmental Land Management and Rural Livelihoods Project ensured women's participation in community-led programming through the use of facilitating organisations, local women's councils, and women leaders. The ADB's Enhancing Climate Resilience in the Pyanj River Basin promoted women's engagement in water user groups as well as the percentage of loans going to women. Using these projects, the guidance note presents the business case for gender mainstreaming, demonstrates the integration of gender issues across the project cycle, and presents a selection of output-, outcome- and impact-level indicators that are gender-sensitive. Serving as a complement to the gender guidance provided above, this publication provides insights and resources for conducting gender analyses and engaging stakeholders, with good practices outlined for financial services, capacity-building and communications, among others. While using case studies from Tajikistan, many of the tools and resources are universally applicable.
<i>Building gender into climate finance, ABD experience with the CIFs</i>	https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif_enc/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/gender-climate-finance.pdf	The nine projects reviewed in this study cut across several of the CIFs and qualified under the ADB as either "effective gender mainstreaming" or "gender equality as a theme". The study focuses on examining both mitigation and adaptation, identifying "standard gender equality design elements".
<i>Engagement of women and gender-related groups in the CIFs: An assessment</i>	https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/wedo_final_report_7april2020.pdf	This study, including a review of 15 countries across various regions and in-country consultations for Jamaica and Bangladesh, examined the engagement of women and gender-related groups in both investment programme development and individual project planning and implementation. In addition to the key learnings on this engagement and its influence on programmes and projects, the information on the enabling environment for each country provides useful examples of information to be considered.

<i>Empowering Indigenous women to integrate traditional knowledge and practices in climate action</i>	https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/empowering_indigenous_women_summary.pdf	This study focuses on the use of Traditional Knowledge and Technology (TKT) by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities women to build climate resilience, noting the ways in which Indigenous women have shared their knowledge, the challenges they face, and good practices for gender-responsive TKT in climate action. It concludes with operational and policy recommendations for supporting gender-responsive TKT.
<i>Voices of women in the Burkina Faso Dedicated Grant Mechanism: Evidence and experiences</i>	https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/burkinafaso_voice_of_women.pdf	Each of these case studies reviews the Dedicated Grant Mechanism in their respective country, recognising emerging themes among women-led groups that received sub-project or micro-project grants. While sharing vignettes of these small projects, the publications consider themes including dynamics of decision-making and benefit-sharing, how technical capacity changed time and labour allocation, patterns of improved income, and language barriers to participation. In Burkina Faso, the authors recognised that project limitations and challenges included “provision of services such as water and electricity, rather than only strategic gender interests such as leadership development and access to finance”. In Brazil, unchanged land tenure rights remain a key barrier to achieving transformative change.
<i>Voices of women in the Brazil Dedicated Grant Mechanism: Evidence and experiences</i>	https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/voices_of_women_in_the_brazil_dedicated_grant_mechanism_en.pdf	
<i>Assessing progress: Integrating gender in AF projects and programmes</i>	https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AF-Integrating-Gender-2020-web.pdf	These five case studies – based on projects in Mongolia, Morocco, Ecuador, Rwanda and the Seychelles – are reviewed to capture AF learning on mainstreaming gender throughout a project lifecycle. The case studies point to common elements of successful gender mainstreaming.
<i>From words to action: Projects with innovative solutions to promote nature conservation, climate action and gender equality</i>	http://americalatinagenera.org/newsite/images/cdr-documents/2020/06/ONU_PANAMA_EN_WEB.pdf	This selection of case studies focuses on the GEF and includes seven projects, one co-financed by the GCF. Each project, all Latin American and receiving technical assistance from UNDP, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), or UN Women, is evaluated against the GEF gender policy requirements in its planning and implementation. The benefits of gender mainstreaming and the recommendations for activities to advance gender equality are also delineated within each project, with attention to the project context.

IV. Conclusion

This guide highlights the importance of how project teams, and specific individuals within those teams, can contribute to gender mainstreaming in climate finance. However, individuals are not solely responsible, either. Climate fund and implementing entity policies, procedures and processes also play vital roles, but their roles do not directly answer the question of how to influence a specific project to better integrate gender.

It is with this understanding that a set of recommendations that capture promising practices are presented in this report. The focus is on the project level, while also recognising the connections with other levels of decision-making and standard setting. These aspects are explored in the broader framework where enabling factors are discussed.

Promising practices often reside in decisions made within the project cycle that enable projects to integrate gender meaningfully, and this is what contributes to substantive progress on gender equality. At the project level, these decisions begin with choosing who leads (local gender specialists) and who contributes (local women's groups to national gender institutions) in creating a baseline and methodology for gathering the appropriate data to identify opportunities, mitigate risks and track real progress toward gender equality. As project teams bring their projects to life, they need to have the correct processes in place to ensure gender expertise is part and parcel of project development and implementation, that decisions and their rationales are captured for future team members, and that everyone builds their capacity to understand and recognise the role of gender equality in climate action.

These recommendations for strengthening gender integration, therefore, represent decisions that can be made at this moment, in any project. Resources and planning are necessary, but these recommendations are directly implementable. Each recommendation also reinforces the significance of integrating gender throughout the project cycle. Starting right is good, but a good gender assessment and Gender Action Plan is not enough – what matters is:

- **Recruiting lead gender specialists** who understand what is (and is not) happening on the ground;
- **Working with women's organisations** that can keep project design, implementation and monitoring on track;
- **Employing monitoring frameworks** that set high expectations and track progress;
- **Supporting team members** who encourage input and collaboration relating to gender as well as being attuned to and appreciative of gender mainstreaming; and
- **Insisting on** the expectation that insights must be **carried forward into future work**.

It is vital to share knowledge and expertise within and across projects, as well as within and across all entities and institutions engaged in climate finance. Lessons should be gleaned and shared across projects and portfolios to raise the capacity of every actor, so that, ultimately, every project is at the very least gender-responsive. While there are many existing tools and templates to assist in this work, the value of local expertise in shaping community-based approaches is unparalleled. Resources and choices must align for each project to fulfil its opportunity to successfully integrate gender.

Endnotes

- 1 GCF. (2019). *Updated gender policy and gender action plan 2020-2023*. GCF Board document GCF/B.24/15. Incheon, South Korea: GCF. Retrieved from: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b24-15.pdf>
- 2 AF. (2021). *The updated gender policy and gender action plan*. Decision B.35-36/25. Retrieved from: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Decision-B.35-36.25_updated-GP-and-GAP.pdf
- 3 UNFCCC. (2019). Decision 3/CP.25. 'Enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan.' Madrid: UNFCCC. Retrieved from: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2019_13a01E.pdf#page=6
- 4 United Nations. (2000). *Gender mainstreaming: Extract from report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997*. A/52/3, 18 September 1997. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>
- 5 "Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity." (Dec. 1/CP.21, 2015)
- 6 AF. (2020). *Assessing progress: Integrating gender in Adaptation Fund projects and programmes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AF-Integrating-Gender-2020-web.pdf>
- 7 ADB. (2016). *Building gender into climate finance: ABD experience with the Climate Investment Funds*. Retrieved from: https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/gender-climate-finance.pdf
- 8 Adams, L., Zusman, E., Sorkin, L. & Harms, N. (2014). *Efficient, effective and equitable: Making climate finance work for women*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/42881/climate-finance-work-women.pdf>
- 9 Schalatek, L. (2020). *Climate funds update: Gender and climate finance*. Retrieved from <https://climatefundsupdate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CFF10-ENG-2020-Digital.pdf>
- 10 Wong, S. (2016). 'Can climate finance contribute to gender equity in developing countries?' *Journal of International Development*, 28 (3): 428-444. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jid.3212>
- 11 No interviewee mentioned the GCF country programmes in this context, but these are a much newer set of documents, not yet developed for many countries engaging in the GCF, and any oversight may be incidental rather than demonstrative.
- 12 Project Performance Report (PPR) for October 1, 2017-September 30, 2018. 'Taking Adaptation to the Ground: A Small Grants Facility for Enabling Local Level Responses to Climate Change'. AF/SANBI.
- 13 This project uses MSME in its title, an acronym denoting micro, small, and medium enterprises. This terminology is often used to refer to a variety of small businesses. Women entrepreneurs are disproportionately represented within this segment of business, and the smallest businesses on the spectrum are the most underserved financially. MSME-focused work, particularly that oriented toward micro and small businesses, is thus quite gender-relevant.
- 14 The AF does not require co-financing and so information about whether projects are co-financed or how is not readily available and, therefore, not included here.
- 15 GEF projects include project preparation costs in their funding amount.

Annex I: Interviewees

1. Kavya Arora, Development Professional and Sustainability Advocate Manager, Policy and Planning at Development Alternatives, India
2. Faustina Boakye, Independent Consultant, Ghana
3. Ciara Daniels, Policy Specialist, Gender and Environmental Finance, UNDP
4. Angie Daze, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Associate
5. Cristina Dengel, Knowledge Management Officer, AF
6. Martina Dorigo, Programme Analyst, AF
7. Sara Frazee, Herding for Health Climate Project Director, Conservation International
8. Margaux Granat, Independent Consultant, EnGen Collaborative
9. Emma Jones-Phillipson, Climate Change and Environmental Consultant, C4 EcoSolutions
10. David Kerkhofs, Programme Coordinator for Climate Change Adaptation, Humana People to People
11. Anne Kuriakose, Senior Social Development Specialist, CIFs
12. Young Lee Hee, Governance Specialist, AF
13. Winifred Masiko, National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point, Uganda
14. Ndivile Mokoena, GenderCC-South Africa
15. Karl Morrison, Chief Conservation Programme Officer, Planet Women and Gender Consultant to the GCF
16. Sharmind Neelormi, Gender Consultant
17. Seblewongel Negussie, Gender and Social Specialist, GCF
18. Imelda Phadtare, Senior Consultant, E Co
19. Kalyani Raj, Independent Consultant and non-profit organisation professional with specific focus on climate and gender, India
20. Saraswati Rodriguez, Independent Consultant on gender and the environment, Ecuador
21. Gabriella Richardson Temm, Senior Gender Specialist, GEF
22. Liane Schalatek, Associate Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Washington, D.C.
23. Shaila Shahid, Gender and Climate Change Expert, Bangladesh
24. Caroline Solik, Engagement Manager, Pegasys
25. Kame Westerman, Gender and Conservation Advisor, Conservation International
26. Zonibel Woods, Senior Social Development Specialist, ADB
27. Nozipho Wright, Independent Consultant with expertise on gender and energy, Botswana
28. Elaine Zuckerman, Gender Action

Annex II: Review of projects

This review of projects across the four Funds highlights elements of gender integration to demonstrate the variety of approaches and considerations and illustrate how this information may align with the [Framework for Strengthening Gender Integration](#).

While many of these elements indicate strong efforts toward gender integration, others are notably absent, and the projects' admitted approaches vary, from rudimentary gender-sensitivity to effective gender mainstreaming. As all projects contained in this Annex are approved projects, each one is assumed to be fulfilling the gender requirements of its fund, even in ways that may not be evidenced through publicly available documentation. As such, the project reviews contained in this guide do not provide a detailed explanation of how each project meets its respective fund's gender policy.

Each review includes:

- key background information;
- the objectives of the project;
- the project's approach on gender integration, highlighting key assertions or elements of the project's stated approach to gender, and;
- a commentary on the degree to which the project aligns with the Framework for Strengthening Gender Integration contained in this guide. Using the six recommendations generated through the research for this framework, this section highlights moments where project teams have, have not, or could still (based on project implementation status) make fundamental decisions about who to engage. It also outlines the ways in which the intention to integrate gender actually translates into the concrete implementation of gender-responsive approaches and activities.

The pertinent enabling factors (see section on [Enabling Factors, page 27](#)) are only occasionally referenced because gender equality advocates could not always be identified and Fund-level requirements are so embedded into each project's documentation that it is highly challenging to extricate this information project-by-project.

Limitations of desktop assessments: Desktop reviews are inherently limited in capturing a full understanding of a project; thus, the interviewees' experiences were central to the analysis presented in the main report. Interviewees included people on project teams and people who have engaged with project teams, as they often have insight into dynamics and details that are rarely captured in reporting documentation. One trend that emerged is how the ambition of project design documentation is often unmatched in implementation (though many projects here are still early in their implementation as we sought projects under the latest fund gender policies and practices and, thus, have limited information). Another trend is that reporting is constrained, with information limited to the expected template, or simply not captured due to lack of resources or perceived relevance.

Terminology and alignment with non-annexed documents: Note that while this guide generalises the term "implementing entity" in discussing trends across the climate finance landscape, the key information presented below uses each fund's precise terminology, such as "accredited entity" for the GCF. The guide also generalises the term implementing entity to refer not only to the top-line entity with responsibility for project implementation, but also to others, such as executing entities, which are not detailed here.

Adaptation Fund projects



TAKING ADAPTATION TO THE GROUND: A SMALL GRANTS FACILITY FOR ENABLING LOCAL-LEVEL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Link: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/taking-adaptation-to-the-ground-a-small-grants-facility-for-enabling-local-level-responses-to-climate-change/> and https://southsouthnorth.org/portfolio_page/small-grants-facility/

Objective: As climate change-induced weather and precipitation patterns exacerbate the vulnerability of poor, rural communities in the Mopani and Namakwa Districts, the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility seeks to increase climate resilience through the provision of small grants. These grants are intended to help identify and implement adaptation measures and capture knowledge to inform future small-grants models.

Key information

- Fund: AF
- Implementing Entity: South Africa National Biodiversity Institution (SANBI)
- Country: South Africa
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$2,442,682 (N/A¹⁴)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender integration

- Recognition of gender in project context through mention of women's experiences with regard to climate change, especially with food insecurity, and the high number of female-headed households in these districts
- Commitment to a "participatory, gender-sensitive approach" with "equitable representation" among beneficiaries in capacity-building and in decision-making/management structures (largely fulfilled in implementation)
- Meeting of the AF's Environmental and Social Policy principles, including "gender equity and women's empowerment" and performing an inclusive consultative process
- Acknowledgment of the work of some women's groups and organisations in the districts, along with field visits to a women's rights organisation (GenderCC) during the consultative process and considering GenderCC as a facilitating agency (though not ultimately contracting them)
- Indication in the proposal that grant recipient training would include gender mainstreaming

Commentary



Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

Implementation reports indicated fulfilment of the commitment to the inclusion and participation of women as beneficiaries of small grants at an aggregate level (55% of total beneficiaries), noting variations by project topic and sector. The final reflections on gendered differences in experiences, skills and access to different project sectors and decision-making spheres could have been considered earlier and interwoven into project goals and implementation with more differentiated data across sectors from the start.

Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

An intention to collaborate with a national gender and climate change group, including working with them in initial consultations, was not carried over into implementation once the discovery was made that the organisation would not be a good fit for the role of facilitating agency. Without insight into that determination, considering other ways of integrating this expertise beyond design and into implementation could have secured an ongoing mechanism to integrate this valuable expertise.



ENHANCING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY AND INCREASING RESILIENCE OF SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS IN PURULIA AND BANKURA DISTRICTS OF WEST BENGAL

Link: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/enhancing-adaptive-capacity-and-increasing-resilience-of-small-and-marginal-farmers-in-purulia-and-bankura-districts-of-west-bengal/>

Objective: Targeting 5,000 rural farming households in small and marginal communities, this project seeks to improve adaptive capacity through new land and water-use planning, improved and accessible early warning systems, technology adoption, and knowledge capture and management.

Key information

- Fund: AF
- Implementing Entity: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
- Country: India
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$2,510,854 (N/A)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender integration

- Recognition that women's roles in firewood and water collection and associated time and labour could be reduced by project interventions, and assumption that regained time could be allocated toward income generation
- Assumption that project components, such as technical support for home vegetable gardens and improved cookstoves, are primarily associated with women's work and, therefore, benefit women the most
- Introduction of technological interventions to women members of the household first and reliance on their adoption of it to influence men
- Notation of the number of female-headed households within targeted households

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

Design and reporting assume interventions such as biogas cookstoves reduce drudgery. However, gender and climate change specialists, who are more familiar with the rich literature and challenges of sustained use, along with local experts are better able to capture whether these pathways of reducing women's labour are, indeed, appropriate.

 Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

This project's approach of recognising women as early adopters suggests that women's groups should be key collaborators in the assessment of women's needs with regard to time and labour allocation, and that women's groups can assist with efficiency and eliciting additional insights.

 Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

With key results rooted in the goals of reducing women's workload as well as their exposure to smoke, measurements to capture time allocation and health metrics would be necessary to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions.

 Recommendation: Pursue team-wide capacity building opportunities

No approach to gender is outlined or mentioned in the project inception report, and reported assumptions are that interventions that *should* benefit women *will* do so. With a greater appreciation of the complexities of gender and climate change, the team should consider reorienting attention to gender integration as a key concern in the implementation phase.



AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PHYSICAL ADAPTATION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA'S NORTHWEST MCKINNON'S WATERSHED

Link: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/integrated-approach-physical-adaptation-community-resilience-antigua-barbudas-northwest-mckinnons-watershed/>

Objective: To increase the resilience of a watershed, this three-pronged project will support engineering work and ecosystem-based adaptation to improve drainage among the waterways, create a revolving loan mechanism for households and businesses to invest in adaptation measures, and strengthen the resilience of community buildings against disaster.

Key information

- Fund: AF
- Implementing Entity: Department of Environment, Ministry of Health and the Environment (ABED)
- Country: Antigua and Barbuda
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$9,970,000 (N/A)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender integration

- Inclusion of a revolving loan component noted as gender-responsive, along with the recognition of women's lack of access to capital, and inclusion of gender considerations into the waterway drainage component
- Noting that local area vulnerability studies informed project design, especially given high number of female-headed households
- A policy of gender-neutrality when hiring contractors
- Noted alignment with AF's Mid-Term strategy theme of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- Commitment to sex-disaggregated reporting on revolving loan applicants and decision-making committees

Commentary

Recommendation: Integrate gender specialists within the team

According to the staffing information available, only 10% time of one position (ESS and Gender Officer) is allocated to this work, including implementation of environmental and social safeguards. This human resource commitment may not orient the team towards gender integration.

Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

The intent expressed in project conception and design for gender-responsiveness seems delayed due to lack of indicators and measurement, which illustrates some failure in process between design and implementation. The mid-term evaluation notes the lack of receipt of gender monitoring reports and no reporting on gender-sensitive indicators. The project performance report notes that gender indicators are delayed in development due to Covid-19.



ENHANCING THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE ISLAND COMMUNITIES IN FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Link: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/enhancing-climate-change-resilience-vulnerable-island-communities-federated-states-micronesia/>

Objective: Through improving institutional and regulatory frameworks, implementing water and livelihoods interventions, building infrastructure and knowledge capture, this project aims to increase the social, ecological, and economic resilience of the communities targeted.

Key information

- Fund: AF
- Implementing Entity: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- Country: Federated States of Micronesia
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$9,000,000 (N/A)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender integration

- Noting of “gender perspectives” in project goals as part of the mechanism for increasing resilience
- Invitation for the National Gender Focal Point to join the Steering Committee, based on project inception workshop discussions
- Inclusion of gender in Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference as assurance of consideration in project planning and implementation
- Specification that gender is mainstreamed in the project output of adopting a new National Water and Sanitation Policy, which is informed by a gender and climate change assessment
- Planning for gender-sensitive consultations, including women’s only groups, and demonstrations on water and sanitation technologies
- Trainings on “gender and climate change tools” and “gender perspectives in coastal management and coastal monitoring” for various stakeholders
- State technical advisory groups to include gender and education specialists and gender and climate change trainers.

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

A gender specialist will be tasked with developing the project's new Gender and Social Inclusion Plan, a key opportunity to ensure this specialist/team understands local gender dynamics and concerns.

Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

While the inclusion of the National Gender Focal Point is well-noted, there seems to be concern about the results of community outreach in terms of the significance of women's inclusion. Women's rights organisations should be key partners and collaborators that are leveraged for this work.

Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

The proposal and inception workshops show a clear dedication to the idea of gender integration, with initial first steps taken to assure continuity over time. Further, the new mandate to develop a Gender and Social Inclusion Plan as part of project restructuring likely offers an opportunity to align intent with implementation.

Recommendation: Pursue team-wide capacity-building opportunities

The most recent project performance report notes the "need for training" on gender and social inclusion for all staff.

Enabling factor: National-level planning and policies

Alignment with the National Gender Policy, as presented by the National Gender Focal Point, was proposed at the project's inception workshop and could provide a foundation for the project's new Gender and Social Inclusion Plan.

Global Environment Facility projects



MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY-BUILDING IN THE SOUTHERN STATES OF MEXICO (CAMPECHE, CHIAPAS, AND OAXACA)

Link: <https://www.thegef.org/project/sfm-mitigating-climate-change-through-sustainable-forest-management-and-capacity-building>

Objective: A mitigation effort aligned with a larger project to improve the lives of those living in forested areas, this project aimed to avoid greenhouse gas emissions and better sequester carbon through sustainable forest management, planting of new plantations and supporting livelihood alternatives.

Key information

- Fund: GEF
- Implementing agency: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Country: Mexico
- Funding amount¹⁵ (Total with co-financing): USD \$5,100,000 (USD \$17,139,356)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Completed

Approach to gender integration

- Commitment to gender mainstreaming in project design
- Increasing women's participation and decision-making noted as one pillar of the implementing agency's three-pillared poverty-reduction approach in the country
- Recognition of women's lack of access to decision-making power over natural resources and lack of land rights as key context for this work
- Training for community members included a range of topics to demonstrate the importance of women's participation and gender mainstreaming
- Training for operations and monitoring team members on gender and forest linkages and assessing gender indicators in the field, including apparently qualitative assessments of gendered division of labour, decision-making and distribution of benefits
- Women's participation and leadership in performance indicators of the logical framework, with targets varied by topic

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

The project design document demonstrated a commitment to advancing gender equality through gender mainstreaming by indicating consideration of gendered experiences across various project elements and indicators. In contrast, however, the proposal document under-valued gender expertise by stating, "The Project recommends the hiring of a gender expert as part of the group of technicians; one of the technicians at the State level could also be a woman and/or have experience in gender." Identifying gender expertise is not synonymous with identifying an interested woman to join the project. (See also, [Understanding gender expertise](#))

Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

Despite a focus on youth, women and Indigenous Peoples, little in the design indicated the connection between these identities, which are not mutually exclusive, nor was there baseline information on any forms of engagement. Data and indicators should reflect the project approach, and thus even before the complete failure in data collection during implementation and monitoring, this recommendation could not be fulfilled. The project did not capture beneficiary data by gender.

Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

The project evaluation states that no gender specialist was ultimately brought onto the team, and in noting the plan to focus on including women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, a mid-project mission discovered "these intentions were only generic statements with little support in concrete affirmative actions".

REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND INCREASING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND VARIABILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN NEPAL

Link: <https://www.thegef.org/project/reducing-vulnerability-and-increasing-adaptive-capacity-respond-impacts-climate-change-and>

Objective: This project sought to support adaptation in food and agricultural policy and practice, improve early warning systems on climate risks to inform adaptation, increase awareness of climate impacts and adaptation through farmer field schools, and facilitate investment in adaptive

agricultural technologies. This was done through connecting national and local policy, encouraging capacity-building among governmental officials and agencies, and promoting participatory approaches with farmers.

Key information

- Fund: GEF
- Implementing agency: FAO
- Country: Nepal
- Funding amount (total with co-financing): USD \$2,739,498 (USD \$15,729,498)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Completed

Approach to gender integration

- Recognition in the project background of the specific vulnerabilities of women (alongside children and the elderly) because of lack of rights, including land tenure and access to resources
- Recognition in the project background of the increased workload of women (alongside children and the elderly) because of migration of men to seek either seasonal or permanent off-farm work due to livelihood instability exacerbated by climate change
- Alignment with the National Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action and its mandate for inclusive dialogue and decision-making, extending to local level implementation with the Manual for Local Adaptation Plans for Action, including tools for gender and social inclusion
- Noting of overlaps and alignments with other projects with gendered elements regarding nutrition, food security and agriculture
- Specification of outreach to women's groups as part of the communication strategy, and discussion of how women's cooperatives could be leveraged, as well as consulting with women farmers during project design

Commentary

Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

The qualitative reporting in the project implementation review indicates that the recognition of women's particular challenges in this context and strategies for inclusive consultation resulted in reportable outcomes indicating an improvement in women's lives. A key reported result was that "technology to reduce women's drudgery was identified, demonstrated and adopted by the farmers' groups", though additional information was not available.

Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

The community-focused adaptation approaches apparently included skills development and knowledge sharing beneficial for the organised farmer groups, which were ultimately 74% female. The reported results may indicate the importance of having a project that is centred in participatory approaches and learning within groups. (Interviewees did emphasise that while every project can integrate gender, certain project types and approaches better lend themselves to that.)

Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

The project focussed attention on collecting the right data by having a gender specialist assist in monitoring and evaluation, but gaps in data remained that would have provided key context.

While only 21 of 108 staff trained in Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis were women, the sex-disaggregated breakdown of all eligible staff was unknown. Over 40% of the participant farmers were Indigenous Peoples, but no sex-disaggregated data across Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants appears available. Collecting the right data should enable understanding the importance of what has/has not been achieved, given the complexities, nuances and intersectionality of advancing gender equality.

Enabling factor: National-level planning and policies

The alignment with the National Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action was a central organising tenet of this project, providing an impetus for a gender-responsive approach in the project component focused on Local Adaptation Plans for Action.



LEAPFROGGING TUNISIA'S LIGHTING MARKET TO HIGH-EFFICIENCY TECHNOLOGIES

Link: <https://www.thegef.org/project/leapfrogging-tunisia-s-lighting-market-high-efficiency-technologies>

Objective: Focusing on transforming the national market regarding energy-efficient lighting technology, this project adopts a four-pronged approach through improving regulations to enforce efficiency standards; supporting policies to increase adoption; fostering strong monitoring, verification, and enforcement processes; and creating a national system for recycling and disposal of lighting products.

Key information

- Fund: GEF
- Implementing Entity: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Country: Tunisia
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$2,449,541 (USD \$18,187,541)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender

- Commitment to gender mainstreaming and gender-responsiveness
- Inclusion of in-project activities to conduct a sector-specific gender assessment, examining the informal sector and decision-making regimes, and updating the Gender Action Plan correspondingly
- Setting of 30% targets in the initial Gender Action Plan for women's participation across various activities, including training, participation in a market study and consultations
- Commitment to gender-sensitive recruitment and staff training on gender

Commentary



Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

The project outputs, activities and partners framework leads with recognising a “gender mainstreaming expert (national)” as a partner. This acknowledgement is notable for specifying the level of expertise/site of hiring as national, which is appropriate given the project scope.

 Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

The project aspires to connect to civil society and non-profit organisations “promoting gender equality and empowerment of women (providing them with equal voice)” and working on gender and climate change, as well as consulting governmental focal points for gender.

 Recommendation: Integrate gender specialists within the team

A potential indication of how the project values the gender mainstreaming specialist's technical expertise is the framing of the position in the list of partners alongside the “efficient lighting expert (national)”, suggesting the project team's various technical experts, including regarding gender, could be valued equally. However, at another point, the gender expert is referred to as “ad hoc”, suggesting the position may not be permanent. The Terms of Reference for consultants and experts also demonstrate a commitment to being gender-responsive.

 Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

The project specified that gender assessment is a key activity within the project itself, rather than only a part of project's design. This is a noteworthy approach to fulfilling the need for implementation activities to follow through on a project's intent regarding gender in the conceptualisation and design phase.

 Recommendation: Pursue team-wide capacity building opportunities

The planning documentation indicates staff will be trained on gender issues.

Climate Investment Funds projects



COASTAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT, BANGLADESH

Link: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/projects/coastal-climate-resilient-infrastructure-project> and <https://www.adb.org/projects/45084-002/main>

Objective: By improving the resilience of coastal infrastructure such as roads, bridges and culverts, cyclone shelters and killas, ghats, and markets, the project outcome was to specifically benefit the poor and women. The project employed a comprehensive approach, deploying engineering improvements as well as enhancing maintenance and planning, early-warning systems, capacity-building, and knowledge and awareness-raising.

Key information

- Fund: CIFs, Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR)
- Implementing Entity: Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Country: Bangladesh
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$30,000,000 (USD \$150,000,000)
- Funding instrument(s): Mix of grant and loan support
- Status: Completed

Approach to gender

- Noting of gender equity and mainstreaming as a project “driver of change”
- Inclusion of women in project consultation in the role of traders, including poor and vulnerable women

- Gender action planning with clear, varied targets for women's participation and employment across different project elements; attention to women's land tenure rights
- A project output on constructing women's market sections, with goals for Indigenous women's participation, facilities for breastfeeding, and associated support and training for women shop-owners on business and finance

The project qualifies for the ADB's category of "effective gender mainstreaming".

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

The project Gender Action Plan signifies the intent to select a gender focal point for coordinating the gender integration, referring later to this role as a "gender consultant". Without specifying the selection process or criteria, however, it is unclear if the preference was for filling this role with someone with local gender and climate change expertise. While this single-focal-point approach is typical, other models of integrating local expertise, such as through working with a women's group, are possible, especially with a project of this size and complexity. Given that low participation by women in stakeholder consultations during project implementation is associated with cultural practices, local gender expertise would be ideal in assessing the situation and formulating potential responses.

Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

While the latest available PPCR report highlights this project for its delivery of climate-resilient infrastructure, no information on gender was featured. A project's outputs being on track is no guarantee that the commitment to gender integration has been upheld throughout implementation, as that requires ongoing monitoring to deliver on prescribed activities, and incorporating key framings and approaches emerging from contextualised knowledge to adapt implementation as required. Comprehensive, inclusive reporting is necessary to examine whether a project is truly successful in advancing gender equality, rather than risking the continuation of the unequal status quo, or even worsening the state of affairs. The most recent social monitoring report, in contrast, states that over 10,000 stakeholders were consulted, yet only 2.83% were women, making it clear that a project can be incredibly productive without integrating gender.

Recommendation: Pursue team-wide capacity-building opportunities

Plans to orient staff on their monitoring of the Gender Action Plan, including collecting sex-disaggregated data, incorporated responsibility for delivering on gender across the team. Moreover, stating that the Gender Action Plan should be monitored in review meetings demonstrated that the project valued gender integration equally to other project components. It also provided an opportunity for all team members to understand, analyse and input into implementation issues.

Enabling factor: National-level planning and processes

The value of gender equality was reinforced through the linkages to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy, which consider gender parity an important contributor to poverty reduction. One of the interviewees highlighted the significance of this enabling factor, specifically citing poverty reduction strategies as exemplar frameworks at the national level that institutions find compelling in turning attention toward gendered dynamics.

DEDICATED GRANT MECHANISM FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN BURKINA FASO/LOCAL FOREST COMMUNITIES SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Links: <http://www.dgmburkinafaso.org/> and <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/projects/dedicated-grant-mechanism-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-burkina-faso> and <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P149434> and https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/burkinafaso_voice_of_women.pdf

Objective: The Local Forest Communities Support Programme distributes grants for sub-projects and micro-projects to targeted local communities to reduce deforestation, increase sustainable practices, and improve livelihoods in alignment with the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programme. Specific project components include building the managerial and technical capacity of the local communities and developing sustainable natural resource activities.

Key information

- Fund: CIFs, Forest Investment Programme (FIP)
- Implementing entity: World Bank and IUCN
- Country: Burkina Faso
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$4,500,000
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender integration

- A focus on gender with a plan to develop a roadmap for gender elements
- Commitment to the involvement and interests of women, but no targeted outreach methodology
- Inclusion of a gender specialist on the project team
- Allocation of positions and authority to women via the National Steering Committee, including a role in project selection

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

A devolved granting mechanism ensures the guidance and leadership of activities are rooted in local understanding and appreciation of cultural dynamics. Approaches to gender equality emerging from this mechanism should be contextualised and specific.

Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

Many of the micro- and sub-project grantees are women's groups and organisations, such as the Association of Boromo Widows in Solidarity and the Communal Female Non-Timber Forest Product Processors' Union of Dassa. Nearly half of the approved sub-projects in the first round of calls for projects, and more than half of the approved sub-projects in the second call, were for those led by women's organisations. This was despite the fact that no outreach methodology had targeted women. Not only does this grant mechanism ensure local experience, it capitalises on the existing organisational architecture and ideas of these groups. Indeed, indications are that the grants strengthened the willingness of the organisations and women to work through collective structures.



DPSP III: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR BRAZIL ENERGY EFFICIENT CITIES (FINBRAZEEC)

Link: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/projects/dpsp-iii-financial-instruments-brazil-energy-efficient-cities-finbrazeec> and <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P162455>

Objective: To support urban sub-projects for efficient street lighting and industrial energy efficiency, this project creates a new facility to unlock private financing and provide sub-loans and credit enhancement, and complements this new funding mechanism with technical assistance to support and shape projects in early stages.

Key information

- Fund: CIFs, Clean Technology Fund (CTF)
- Implementing Entity: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (World Bank)
- Country: Brazil
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$20,000,000 (USD \$1.329 billion)
- Funding instrument(s): Convertible grant or contingent recovery grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender integration

- Assertion of a goal of gender mainstreaming
- Recognition of women's likelihood of harassment within public spaces, citing data from gender assessment
- Provision of street lighting in areas where victimisation is high
- Workshops and trainings on gender-sensitive policies for businesses
- Promotion of women's employment in energy efficiency jobs
- Training on gender inequality for employees of participating companies

Commentary:

Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

The responsibility for two of the four Gender Action Plan components – gender-awareness training and promoting women's employment – is assigned to a Caixa Econômica Federal (CEF) and a World Bank gender specialist. While appreciating the skill of a World Bank specialist in delivering compelling learning experiences that may be honed through presentations worldwide, failure to localise and contextualise key messages also holds a risk. Alignment with this recommendation would ensure cooperation at the very least with the national CEF specialist, as stated, as well as looking for additional local input to shape these efforts by identifying key barriers of both perception and structure. Women's business associations, gender (and climate change) specialists from civil society, and representatives from national gender institutions could each contribute to designing trainings that catalyse dialogue as well as action.

Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

The approach assumes that better lighting in key areas will improve perceptions as well as experiences of safety based on crime data and criminology studies. This understanding may be incomplete without directly capturing contemporary, qualitative data on gendered experiences of safety in the areas to be targeted. As the Gender Action Plan marks baseline data "to be determined during implementation" and observes that targets cannot be set within this data, ensuring that such data is context-specific will help reinforce the Gender Action Plan's theory of change, while enabling the most appropriate activities are shaped and driven by progressive sets of data.

Green Climate Fund projects



PRIMING FINANCIAL AND LAND-USE PLANNING INSTRUMENTS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION, ECUADOR

Link: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp019>

Objective: Support to Ecuador's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Action Plan to implement its activities across four components: build institutional capacity for an enabling environment to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable agricultural and livestock practices without encroachment on forested lines through financial and economic incentives; restore, conserve, and connect key ecosystems with a consideration of water management; enhance project management; and promote the REDD+ institutional framework.

Key information

- Fund: GCF
- Accredited Entity: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Country: Ecuador
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$41,172,739 (USD \$84,008,647)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender

- A lack of quantified, disaggregated tracking and targeting of gender among anticipated beneficiaries
- General orientation towards equal participation by men and women in project activities, entailing inclusive dialogue and consultation spaces and inclusive capacity-building
- Recognition of the equal rights of men and women with regard to property, land tenure and access to natural resources
- Commitment to greater participation of women in land-use planning, facilitation of women's producer organisations to have access to the financial incentives, and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits
- Expressed alignment with existing REDD+ gender mainstreaming work

Commentary



Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

The reporting on gender activities, such as the trainings on environmental management considering human rights and gender, lacks insight into design and delivery. While proposals can often provide some insight into the processes that will be followed during implementation, highlighting, for example, whether local gender experts or existing CSO curricula will inform the creation and delivery of new trainings, such detail was not provided here.



Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

The proposal indicates a commitment to basic principles of equal participation; however, it predates the GCF's requirement of a Gender Action Plan for every project proposal, so gender activities are mentioned without an overarching or comprehensive strategy. (Of course, Gender

Action Plans are not synonymous with coherent strategies.) In the first and only available annual performance report, an interim Gender and Sociocultural Strategy is being implemented, while a Gender Action Plan is also being developed. Who is leading these processes and what they look like is unknown. With a five-year project timeline, design processes are spilling over substantially into implementation. Though the disadvantages of lost time and potential failure to capture baseline data are likely, there may also be some advantage in the framers' understanding of the implementation challenges so that the ultimate Gender Action Plan is constructive and context-specific.



MSME BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAMME FOR GHG EMISSION REDUCTION, MONGOLIA

Link: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp028>

Objective: By supporting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) with concessional loans to facilitate their investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy, this revolving loan project, led by a bank, responds to the financial barriers businesses face in transitioning to low-carbon operations.

Key Information

- Fund: GCF
- Accredited Entity: XacBank
- Country: Mongolia
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$20,000,000 (USD \$60,000,000)
- Funding instrument(s): Mix of loan (USD \$19,500,000) and grant (USD \$500,000)
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender

- Outlining the increase in women's access to climate finance as one of the four programme goals
- Assertion of being a women-centred MSME programme because it created a target of having 50% of the loan programme recipients be women-led businesses and offers greater concessionality
- Definition of women-led businesses as "a) Firms with 51% or more ownership by women; or b) Firms with at least 30% women on the Board of Directors or in senior management positions; or c) At least 40% women employment"
- Orientation of the Gender Action Plan largely around categorising inquiries and loan recipients to achieve the 50% target, and setting a 50% target for external advisors to be women
- Recognition that women are underserved by the market, with higher rates of rejection for loans applied for by women-led MSMEs
- Training for bank staff to assist in formalising women-led MSMEs that are often informal
- Intention to work with the Asia Foundation Women in Business Centre and local women's economic empowerment NGOs to implement Gender Action Plan activities

Commentary



Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

Partnering with the Asia Foundation Women in Business Centre is an indication of finding gender expertise in the sector, while the value of local women's economic groups is noted by the

commitment to “undertake knowledge-sharing...in both directions”. Employing these groups as messengers of this programme while ensuring real mechanisms for their input would be acting on the premise of this recommendation.

 Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

Though the project aspires to mainstream gender in its goals, the extent to which the project will assign funding, capacity and specificity to achieving these goals is unknown in the Gender Action Plan. The branch offices, marketing team, and banking department are generally assigned responsibility for the Gender Action Plan activities, with the indication of some gender expertise being incorporated through the partnership with the Asia Foundation Women in Business Centre. (While the project has been under implementation since 2017, the GCF has not made the annual performance reports public as this is a private sector project.)

 Recommendation: Pursue team-wide capacity-building opportunities

With the XacBank team being assigned responsibility for the Gender Action Plan implementation, ensuring an appreciation of gender beyond the target of 50% loan recipients is even more imperative, ensuring an appreciation of gender beyond the target of 50% loan recipients is imperative. Reflections on marketing policies and practices can contribute to building understanding of gender-responsive processes, for example.



ENHANCING ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY WOMEN, TO COPE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED SALINITY IN BANGLADESH

Link: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp069> and <https://www.gcfprojects-undp.org/tp/project/5724>

Objective: This adaptation project builds the resilience of coastal communities through promoting climate-resilient livelihoods for women, implementing climate-resilient drinking water solutions with gender-responsive management structures, and enhancing institutional capacity and knowledge capture on these activities and practices.

Key information

- Fund: GCF
- Accredited Entity: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Country: Bangladesh
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$24,980,000 (USD \$32,980,000)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender

Focus on improving women’s experience in this vulnerable coastal region. Notably, unapproved by the GCF Board when first submitted and subsequently retooled for perceived lack of justification on its climate change relevance compared to its development focus

Recognition of women as “change-agents” overseeing livelihoods interventions and drinking water solutions

Reactivation of previous “Women Livelihood Groups” as a key organising structure. Deploying climate technologies and business and financial training to them in a train-the-trainer model, alongside the creation of women and girl volunteer groups to disseminate early warnings

- Participatory mapping for siting drinking water access points and supporting water user groups, connecting them to Women Livelihood Groups
- Knowledge-capture in a train-the-trainer toolkit for broader coastal adoption and providing training on gender and climate change to gender focal points, with the expectation of other sectoral policy development to include gender and climate change

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

An interviewee described a more inclusive process of consultation with women's organisations and civil society during the project reformulation process (after initial Board rejection) than initial project development, and the integration of context-specific local knowledge seems clear in the references to reconstituting the women's livelihood groups, for example. The interviewee also indicated that the acknowledgement of the importance of participatory, action-oriented women's groups was a hallmark of the reformulation. This approach embeds local gender expertise into the operational model of the project.

Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

This project has a direct connection to the national gender machinery: the Ministry of Women's and Children Affairs is the executing entity as designated by UNDP to oversee implementation.

Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

One of the Gender Action Plan indicators speaks to the time women spend collecting and carrying water for household use. Though concerns about women's drudgery and reducing time and labour allocation are also evident in other projects, in this one, this indicator provides a baseline of daily time and a target to reduce that under one hour. While considering qualitative experiences and perceptions of collecting water is key, setting out to measure actual time saved is a complementary and important approach to robust data. Not doing so could lead to the Gender Action Plan indicators failing to move beyond quantitative measures of women's participation to capture the dynamics of agency, engagement and leadership that should be embedded in these management structures.

Recommendation: Ensure continuity between design and implementation

The first annual performance report states that none of the Gender Action Plan activities have updates because the project launched without a gender specialist and women empowerment officer on board, and both are still being recruited. If the project continues to move forward without a gender team on board or any other way of ensuring alignment with the Gender Action Plan, the design of this aspirational project is in danger of becoming irrelevant to actual implementation.

GREEN BRT KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Link: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp085>

Objective: By creating a bus rapid transit (BRT) system to serve 10% of this 15-million-person city and replace its informal, inaccessible and inefficient patchwork system as well as shift to operating the buses with biomethane, this project seeks to create a comprehensive approach to mitigating emissions from transportation. It also includes creating additional connectivity through bicycling options and e-pedicabs as well as improving or constructing bus station infrastructure and roads.

Key information

- Fund: GCF
- Accredited Entity: ADB

- Country: Pakistan
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$49,000,000 (USD \$583,500,000)
- Funding instrument(s): Mix of loan (USD \$37,200,000) and grant (USD \$11,800,000)
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender

- Noting gender equity and mainstreaming as a project “driver of change”
- Qualification for the ADB’s category of “effective gender mainstreaming” under the various ADB projects associated with this BRT initiative
- Composition of sector-specific gender assessment from two reports: one considering the connections between women’s more limited mobility, education, and labour and workforce participation; and the other, an analysis of sexual harassment data in Karachi’s current public transport. Both inform the Gender Action Plan
- Consultation with women stakeholders cited as influencing the change in bus timing intervals
- Commitment to a comprehensive Gender Action Plan and embedded goals: setting an overall target to increase the proportion of female riders to 20% (from 10%); establishing qualitative and quantitative indicators associated with riders’ accessibility, safety and comfort; outlining multiple interventions, including design features, to reduce and report sexual harassment; and aiming for 10% of employees to be women
- Creation of gender specialist and social and gender staff positions across two operating partners and assignment of responsibility for implementation
- Training of staff on gender-inclusive practices and, for frontline staff, gender-inclusive passenger management

Commentary

Recommendation: Lead with local gender expertise

The Gender Action Plan assigns responsibility to consultants as well as gender specialist staff, but there is no information on their recruitment process and key qualifications beyond consultants’ having to comply with ADB’s Guidelines on the Use of Consultants. Ensuring that implementation of this plan, rooted in a Karachi-specific assessment, is not led by outside actors would be a key step in placing local gender dynamics and concerns at the forefront of action.

Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

The approach of this project illustrates attention to qualitative data and information that considers local gendered experiences and outcomes. The gender assessment first considers the context of female labour force participation in Pakistan, including outlining gaps in opportunity, to support the ability of women to enter and thrive in the labour force. Then, it includes a [*Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*](#). The Gender Action Plan specifies ridership surveys to capture perceptions on topics such as safety, reliability, connectivity, and affordability, among others, noting 2015 data as a baseline.

Enabling factor: Existing gender experience and expertise

The gender assessment report on sexual harassment appears to pre-date the project in its GCF conception, as it is part of a larger initiative under the ADB. Yet, its existence and inclusion here, including informing the Gender Action Plan, strengthens the gender-responsiveness of the overall project. Thus, this project appears to benefit from the ADB’s existing gender infrastructure.



PROMOTION OF CLIMATE-FRIENDLY COOKING: KENYA AND SENEGAL

Link: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp103>

Objective: This project aims to accelerate production and sales of improved cookstoves (ICS) across the two target countries, galvanising “an irreversible market transformation” from informal artisanal producers to a well-managed production base with higher quality, volumes and greater geographic coverage via technical assistance and training support to producers. It also seeks to increase consumers’ awareness and put in place enabling policies and regulatory frameworks for long-term, sustainable market growth of ICS.

Key information

- Fund: GCF
- Accredited Entity: GIZ
- Country: Kenya, Senegal
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$19,986,682 (USD \$27,900,000)
- Funding instrument(s): Grant
- Status: Under implementation

Approach to gender

- Recognition of health impacts disproportionately affecting women and assumption that improved cookstoves will reduce drudgery for women who otherwise would have to collect laborious cook fuel
- Assertion of the importance of women and women’s groups in the current (baseline) supply chain, and commitment to incorporating these groups into the expanded distribution plan to ensure reach to rural households
- Acknowledgment of some of the participation of women’s cooperatives and groups in production (particularly with clay inserts) within the context of a dearth of women-led production enterprises
- Assumption that female entrepreneurs have fewer business skills

Commentary



Recommendation: Leverage local women’s groups and national gender institutions

This project plans to use village women’s groups as vital links in the supply chain to ensure distribution to rural households, particularly in Senegal, in recognition of the role these groups already play in financing and supplying improved cookstove technology. However, it is unclear what support (training and resources) they may receive, in comparison to other last mile entrepreneurs, that is, specific to their role as local women’s groups.



Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

To address disparities in men and women’s labour force participation as producers of ICS, the project approach intends to ensure more women than men benefit from the training while monitoring employment levels. Gendered differences exist in production among types of stoves, and by country. Understanding and tracking these dynamics will be crucial to ensure that the benefits of the programme, through technical assistance directly to producers, do not flow primarily to men and reinforce gendered disparities among the most well-capitalised producers.



PROGRAMME ON AFFIRMATIVE FINANCE ACTION FOR WOMEN IN AFRICA (AFAWA): FINANCING CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN GHANA

Link: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp114>

Objective: This project will facilitate access to loans by women-led MSMEs and farmer-based associations led by women for the purposes of agricultural adaptation. As an on-lending programme, the funds will be directed to local financial institutions to which these enterprises and groups will apply for loans. The project also includes a component on technical assistance for climate-resilient agricultural practices, accessible to loan recipients, as well as support for an enabling environment to facilitate greater access to climate finance for women.

Key information

- Fund: GCF
- Accredited Entity: African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Country: Ghana
- Funding amount (Total with co-financing): USD \$20,000 (USD \$25,600,000)
- Funding instrument(s): Mix: loan (USD \$18,500,000) and grant (USD \$1,500,000)
- Status: Approved. Not yet under implementation

Approach to gender

- Focus on supporting women-led MSMEs in recognition that the majority of agricultural work is carried out by women and men have greater access to finance, designed as a complement to the accredited entity's existing agricultural lending project that lacks a gender focus
- Recognition of gendered disparities in relation to agricultural and household work and access to resources, including women's lack of land rights, access to bank accounts, and access to credit, along with increased time spent on fuel and water collection
- Orientation toward women entrepreneurs
- Support for local financial institutions' capacity-building on gender and climate finance (through the project grant component)
- Application of a gender-mainstreaming approach for assistance to government bodies to better channel funds toward women-led business

Commentary



Recommendation: Leverage local women's groups and national gender institutions

The responsibility for the Gender Action Plan's associated activities is designated to a "selected CSO partner in close coordination with Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection". While the partner is yet to be selected, this notation indicates work will be done with a local group known to the national gender machinery, a novel approach to a Gender Action Plan.



Recommendation: Collect the right data from the start

Project background and justification focuses on women in agriculture, with little information beyond the household level or on women-led MSMEs that are the targeted actors. No baseline data is provided for any indicators in the Gender Action Plan, and all timelines are set for the project end, after five years. While many of the Gender Action Plan indicators suggest a more robust set of activities than the project proposal, the lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress over time, against real baseline data, could hinder the identification of risks and opportunities and any adaptive measures during project implementation.



Participants from Liberia and Malawi at the end of their six-month solar engineering course © UN Women

About the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

WEDO is a global women's advocacy organization that envisions a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment.

Please visit www.wedo.org

www.cdkn.org

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