

Frequently Asked Questions

GENDER EQUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Every country on every continent is affected by climate change. It is affecting national economies and people's lives, and costing communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow.

Often, women face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world's poor are women. Women's underrepresentation in decision-making processes and labour markets creates further inequalities and often prevents them from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation.

The international community widely recognizes gender equality and women's empowerment as both ends in themselves and means for promoting development in general. Indeed, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls has been defined as 5th of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.¹

¹ Specific targets for Goal 5 are among others: i) Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws; and ii) Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

WHAT IS GENDER?

The term 'gender' typically refers to socially constructed categories describing women and men, often based on biological 'sex'. Gender is also about relations between women and men. Through socialisation, gender becomes a defining structural factor in the organisation of any society, and in the participation in productive and reproductive work. Social interactions and power relations between women and men both contribute to and reflect different gendered roles and responsibilities, as well as access to resources. Gender analysis provides insights for policy-makers to understand and consequently develop policies that consider all these differences.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), in 1998, defined gender equality as "... the equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards. The aim is not that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances become and remain equal."

While creating your project ideas, it is important not to conflate gender with women, or gender analysis with analysis solely focused on women. Understanding relationships, power dynamics, and differentiated roles between women and men

is key to understanding gender. Appreciating both sets of actors involved in this dichotomy is important, as including only one of the two means, in effect, missing half of the social equation.

Gender analysis typically considers differentiation among the various roles women and men play in society, including:

- Reproductive roles (tasks associated with daily child rearing and domestic chores).
- Productive roles (work done by both women and men for pay in cash or kind).
- Community managing roles (voluntary and unpaid activities at the community level).
- Political roles (participation in decision-making at all political levels on behalf of interest-based constituencies).

WHY DOES GENDER MATTER TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

All around the world, gender defines expectations, attributes, roles, capacities and rights of both women and men. Although climate change is non-discriminatory and affects everyone, women and men, due to their differing social roles, may experience the impacts of climate change differently, with women often being disproportionately negatively affected. In general, women, compared to men,



The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, also known as CEDAW, is an important guide for enhancing equality between men and women, laying out the various areas in which governments are obliged to take action. Importantly, these obligations are not limited to achieving de jure equality between men and women. In fact, by joining CEDAW, 189 governments agreed to take action:

- to eliminate gender prejudices
- to eliminate any (public or private) behaviour that is based on the presumed inferiority of women and superiority of men
- to eliminate practices that are based on stereotyped roles for men and women
- to ensure that both men's and women's roles in bringing up children are recognized

(CEDAW, Article 5)

In short, by joining CEDAW, governments have made a commitment to go to the very heart of the gender-based power structure and to eliminate the root causes that make gender inequalities seem 'normal' in our society.

often have limited access to resources, less access to justice, limited mobility, and limited voice in shaping decisions and influencing policies.

At the same time, gender roles and responsibilities generally ascribed to women create an opportunity for engagement as women bring diverse and critical solutions to climate change challenges from the knowledge and experience they hold. This includes, for example, participation in informal, reproductive and productive work that often relates to caregiving for households and communities, caretaking of seeds and soils, maintaining traditional agricultural knowledge, and managing natural resources such as firewood and water. Women also tend to be key decision-makers in choosing, using, and disposing domestic goods and appliances, with impacts on the energy efficiency and consumption levels of households.

WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

A 2016 technical paper by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat defines gender mainstreaming under the Convention, in line with the definition set out in the 1997 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) report, as: “... *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 perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality*”.

WHY IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING IMPORTANT?

For you to build effective responses to climate change you need to understand how gender inequality affects multiple issues: access to and control of resources; institutional

structures; social, cultural and formal networks; and decision-making processes.

- Climate policy and action is appropriate to local context by addressing the different perspectives, roles, rights, needs, priorities and interests of men and women as stakeholders.
- Climate approaches will be more efficient, effective, responsive and provide broader benefits when women and men are included in compensation and shared benefits.
- Equal access to opportunities, resources, decision-making and benefits of climate action and responses.
- Empowerment of women where gaps exist in distribution of power, resources, services, participation, overcoming institutional and socio-cultural barriers to women’s engagement.
- Both women and men’s knowledge, concerns and experience are taken into consideration.
- Meeting moral and legal obligations under the UN and its conventions, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The launch of the Lima Work Programme on Gender and the integration of gender in the Paris Agreement in 2014, as a preambular principle for all climate action, as well as in relation to adaptation and capacity building, have aimed to enhance gender equality via both policy and practice,



encouraging gender balance in decision-making as well as responsiveness to gender issues in the development, implementation and monitoring of climate change policies and actions.

Thus, when incorporated in analyses of climate change, the gender approach promotes understanding of how the identities of women and men determine different vulnerabilities and capacities to deal with climate change. Such an approach can also help to attenuate the causes of climate change. Integrating the gender approach is also helpful in designing and implementing policies, programmes and projects that lead to greater equity and equality. It may contribute to building more capacity to adapt to and mitigate climate change, insofar as it affords a clearer and more complete view of the relations people have built with ecosystems.

In discussions about development, the gender approach strives to analyse and understand the different roles and responsibilities of men and women, the extent and quality of their participation in decision-making, and their needs and views.

PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Equal access to decision-making is a critical step towards achieving gender equality. Research shows that the equitable participation of women and men in climate change decision making can provide the crosscutting experiences necessary for climate change policies that embody social equity and reflect and serve the needs of society. A 2005 study² indicated that countries with higher proportions of women in their national legislative bodies are more likely to approve environmental agreements.

In 2012, research³ indicated that countries in which women are closer to men in status, rights, and opportunities have lower per capita emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide, when other factors are controlled. Their findings suggest that efforts to improve gender equality around the world may work synergistically with efforts to curtail global climate change and environmental degradation more generally. Taking gender into account has been shown to enhance the effectiveness of policies across both

² Pocket Guide to Gender Equality under the UNFCCC, European Capacity Building Initiative (ecbi), 2017.

³ Ibid.



developed and developing countries. For example, in Ireland and the United Kingdom, municipal waste management policies generally ignore the “different understandings and concerns” of women and are less effective as a result.

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDED ACROSS THEMATIC AREAS

Four areas have been identified as important building blocks in response to climate change: mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing. The first two blocks are

Women as positive agents of change

Women’s activities in food production, community management, natural-resource and biodiversity management, education of children and family care place them at the centre of development. They are the collectors of fuel and water for their families, and users of energy to prepare food and care for the sick. In developing countries, they engage substantially in agricultural production, both paid and unpaid...Thus, recognizing and supporting the activities and needs of women is essential for socio-economic development.

linked to manifestations of climate change; and the latter two are linked to the means for achieving development goals.

Mitigation involves a process of curbing greenhouse gas emissions from human activities, for example emissions from fossil fuels as well as deforestation, with a view to stabilizing greenhouse gas concentration at a safe level. **Adaptation** involves a range of activities to reduce vulnerability and build resilience in key sectors, such as water, agriculture and human settlements. **New and improved technologies and financing initiatives** at all levels also need to receive attention as part of collective efforts to address climate change.

The Cancun Agreements at COP16 marked an important turning point for gender mainstreaming in the negotiations, particularly in the areas of adaptation and capacity building. Decision 1/CP.16 on a ‘Shared Vision’ for climate action recognises that gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for climate action on all aspects of climate change.

At the Climate Change Conference in Bonn (COP23), Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reiterated their commitment to mainstreaming gender in climate action and the UNFCCC process, by adopting **Gender Action Plan** providing specific guidance on integrating gender equality in all aspects of UNFCCC and state parties work and activities. This is a positive development that will further the momentum for tracking progress on gender and climate action.



2014, COP20: Decision 18/ CP.20 Lima Work Programme on Gender

The Lima Work Programme on Gender aimed to enhance the earlier two decisions on gender balance/ women's participation by including a focus on the implementation of gender-responsive climate policy. Decision 18/ CP.20 called for:

- A review of implementation of all gender-related mandates by the UNFCCC secretariat.
- Training and awareness raising for delegates on gender-responsive climate policy.
- Training and capacity building for women delegates.
- Two in-session workshops on gender (in relation to mitigation, technology, adaptation and capacity building) at the 42nd and 44th meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).
- Submissions by Parties on these workshops.
- A technical paper by the secretariat on guidelines for implementing gender considerations in climate change activities.
- The appointment of a senior gender focal point at the UNFCCC secretariat.

ADAPTATION

Adaptation actions reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to current and projected climate risks at the national, regional and community levels. The inequitable distribution of rights, resources and power constrain many people's ability to take action on climate change, with different constraints and impacts on women and men. For example, in Vietnam, female-headed households are disadvantaged in securing sufficient water for agricultural needs.

You should address three key issues when considering adaptation measures

- Gender-balanced participation in decision making;
- Building skills of gender and adaptation specialists;
- Knowledge sharing among countries on gender considerations in the NAP process.

MITIGATION

Mitigation actions reduce the contribution of human activities to climate change (for instance, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions). Gender is a crosscutting issue in all actions to mitigate climate change. Understanding gendered differences, in labour roles, use of energy and infrastructure and access to resources, is key to developing policies and actions to transition away from high emissions energy use as well as to encourage low-carbon shifts in transportation, agriculture, land

use, and forestry. There is considerable evidence of the key role women play in activities that support mitigation, for example, in small-scale agriculture and food production. Through their diverse roles as community leaders, farmers, entrepreneurs, producers, and household managers, women are powerful agents of change in addressing climate change, and important stakeholders in implementing low-carbon pathways in both developed and developing countries.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender considerations are important to ensure women and men have equal access to the value chain of climate responsive technologies and economic opportunities that may arise from enhanced mitigation initiatives. To achieve this, it is necessary to overcome a series of barriers to facilitate women's engagement in the sector. Technology innovation and use is widely viewed as "men's work". However, in many developing countries, it is traditionally women's work to gather wood, provide food, and generate income for their own and their children's needs. It therefore makes sense to enlist women in designing and producing locally appropriate energy technologies, customised to fit their household and income needs.

Further, in the energy sector, for example, women and men have different energy roles, needs and priorities. Men's energy needs tend to involve commercial and large-scale

GENDER IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT

The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 in 2015, was an important moment in the history of gender's inclusion within the UNFCCC. Considered a major stepping stone for international action on climate change, the Paris Agreement integrated gender into the following areas:

Preamble: "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.**"

Adaptation: Parties acknowledge that "adaptation action should follow a country-driven, **gender-responsive**, participatory and fully transparent approach..."

Capacity building: "Capacity-building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building activities under the Convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and **gender-responsive.**"

industrial development whereas women's needs generally prioritise energy access for cooking, family or community needs or home-based small and often informal enterprises.⁴

Low-emission energy investments and technologies that are gender-responsive contribute to increasing men and women's access to modern and clean forms of energy for lighting, cooking, heating and cooling, pumping, transportation, communication and other productive uses. They increase economic efficiency and productivity gains with less time and physical exertion spent on basic subsistence activities, such as wood fuel collection, by focusing not on high-tech, high-cost solutions but instead on appropriate, safe, environmentally and socially sound technologies that respond to women's and communities' needs and build on already existing traditional technologies and capacities. They also create entrepreneurial opportunities and new markets for private investors, particularly micro, small and medium sized enterprises owned by women.⁵

4 Thorsen, K., Cecelski, E., Wiik, C. & Oparaocha, S. (2011). Gender Equality in Financing Energy for All. Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. Oslo.

5 World Bank (2011). Gender and Climate Change: Three Things You Should Know. Washington, DC.

FINANCE

Climate financing approaches should be designed to address rather than reinforce gender inequalities. Women still face unequal access to political power, economic resources, legal rights, and ownership, bank credit and technical training. To address inequalities through climate finance, mechanisms should require a concrete gender analysis, not just of the number of women beneficiaries included in a project, but of how the project is designed, what activities are prioritised, and who has access to and control over resources.

Accessing climate finance is a challenge that has gender implications. It is almost impossible, for example, for local women's groups and grassroots organisations undertaking mitigation and adaptation projects to gain accreditation to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or other major financial mechanisms directly, and typically the projects women's groups are undertaking are deemed too small in scale to meet the requirements of support. This can overlook many sustainable solutions that require finances to scale and replicate. Gender-responsive approaches would include for example, the provision of long-term, patient and deeply concessional credit lines to women entrepreneurs and to address community needs for mitigation-related investments.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Given the overall importance, and broad set of mandates for integrating gender into climate policy, it is critical to strengthen capacities and capabilities of institutions, decision-makers and practitioners, at the international,

national and local levels, on the design and implementation of gender-sensitive climate policies. This includes the development and sharing of key tools, methodologies and approaches to translate this work from the global to national contexts.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING CHECKLIST FOR CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMMING/IDEAS

THREE KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

Women are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and climate change where their rights and socio-economic status are not equal to those of men, and where they have less voice and influence than men in shaping policies and prioritizing how climate finance is used.

Empowerment of women is an important ingredient in building climate resilience.

Low-emissions development pathways can be more effective and more equitable where they are designed using a gender-informed approach. Billions of women around the world make decisions every day that influence the amount of carbon that is released into the atmosphere.



For your idea/project proposal to include the gender perspective, while respecting the complementary roles of women and men to achieve gender equality, make sure you do the following:

- assess the different implications of policy and programme interventions for women and men from the outset.
- Ensure that these assessments are informed by expert gender analysis and consultations with women and men.
- Proactively seek out and engage with appropriate women's rights organizations and female community leaders when selecting partners.
- Based on the analysis, build targeted objectives for including gender equality and women's empowerment into the plans and budgets of policies and programmes.
- Ensure that women participate equally and actively alongside men and are enabled to take up leadership positions throughout the programme management cycle.
- Monitor and evaluate impacts on gender equality and women's empowerment using gender-sensitive indicators.

In addition, while doing gender analysis of your project/idea, you should have answers to the following question:

- Which men and which women hold the power in this country and/or community?
- Who owns and controls resources?
- Who takes the decisions?
- Who sets the agenda?
- Who gains and who loses from processes of development?

At the same time, you should constantly be aware of the following gender-related differences:

- Differences in the lives of poor women and men in the target area;
- Different roles, skills, capacities and aspirations of women and men;
- Division of labour between women and men;
- Different levels of participation and leadership enjoyed by women and men;
- Barriers that unequal gender relations present to women's development in this specific location.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

GENDER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT:

In many urban areas in Southeast Asia, waste management is a considerable challenge. Improper waste management in open landfills or accumulation of waste in waterways causes pollution, can contaminate drinking water and soil, and produces harmful gases that are released into the earth's atmosphere. Efforts to formalize waste collection, recycling, and proper storage rarely consider the informal systems of waste management that may be strongly influenced by gender roles. On the household level, it is mostly women who decide which food products to buy and how to dispose of household waste. The management cycle can be made more efficient if men, women, and their children are informed on how to separate their waste and are provided with separate bins on the household level through appropriate channels (i.e., television, radio, magazines read by both sexes, school, etc.). Community waste banks can provide women and their families with a small additional income while incentivizing waste separation and recycling. By contrast, women's efforts to separate trash on the household level are wasted if they are not considered on the urban level. The waste that may already have been pre-sorted on the household level may be mixed again during transportation to city sorting sites or landfills, making waste management more inefficient. Moreover, waste pickers in Asian cities are often poor

women and children whose waste-sorting efforts go unrecognized and who are exposed to unsafe working conditions.

1 MILLION WOMEN:

An Australian climate change mitigation initiative, 1 Million Women, founded in Sydney, is tapping into women's decision-making power to reduce consumption and waste, contributing to energy savings, and thus reducing carbon emissions. This campaign aims to inform members that it is possible to take small steps in our daily lives to make differences that combat climate change. By mid-2015 the organisation has engaged with over 202,000 members who pledged to reduce their emissions by being climate-conscious in their daily consumption and management of waste. The aim of the initiative is to reach the target of one million women members, which has the potential to reduce over one million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent—commensurate with taking 240,000 cars off the road for a year.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN URBAN TRANSPORT PLANNING IN VIENNA:

Sustainable urban development and planning offers a unique opportunity for cities to work towards low carbon development while enhancing adaptation and resilience. It can shape urban spaces that allow people to socialise but can, in contrast, exacerbate disparities and exclusion, thus is also highly relevant for considering and responding for social and gender equality.

Vienna's gender mainstreaming strategy is based on five principles: gender-sensitive language; gender-specific data collection and analysis; equal access to and utilisation of services; equal involvement of women and men in decision-making; and equal treatment integrated into steering processes. The city adopted guidelines for a "safe city" and carried out community-based participatory gender-sensitive planning for public spaces, public and private buildings, throughout several districts. Several guidebooks and a gender equality monitoring report are available. As part of the strategy, the Department for Gender Mainstreaming assessed who benefits from funds and services and addresses the question of whether the distribution of resources undermines or enhances gender equality, as well as gender-sensitive transport planning, and gender mainstreaming in urban development and urban planning.

SWEDEN - GATEHRING SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA IMPROVES TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND POLICY

In 2001, officials in the Swedish Transportation Department acknowledged disparities between women and men in transportation sector employment (for example, most people in leadership positions were men) and proposed integrating gender analysis into Swedish transportation policy and administration practices. To advance the goal of creating a gender-equal road transport system that is designed to fulfil the transport needs of both women and men, researchers disaggregated transportation data by sex. Researchers found that, among people in paid employment, a greater proportion of women (18%) than men (14%) use public transit. Other differences were also observed.

Subsequently, in planning a new commuter route project in Skane (Sweden's southernmost province), planners prioritized routes that contributed to strengthening and developing local labour market regions for women, as these regions are geographically smaller, ahead of routes that expand the wider geographical labour market regions for men. The Swedish Road Administration has also highlighted the need for a transit system to support gender equality, and its considerations include the reality that women take more responsibility than do men for household work and caring for the young and elderly.



