Gender Integration in NDCs: A Commonwealth Best Practice Guide

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CLIMATE FINANCE ACCESS HUB
Gender Integration in NDCs: A Commonwealth Best Practice Guide
# Contents

About this Guide v

Acronyms vii

Glossary of Terms viii

Introduction 1

1. Policy Alignment and Clarity of Intent 2

2. Financing Gender Expertise and Gender Budgeting 5

3. Skills for a Gender-Just Transition 8

4. Evidencing a Gender-Just Transition 12

5. Institutional Collaboration and Feedback Mechanisms 16

Annex 1: Signatory, International and Regional Agreements 18

Annex 2: References and Resources 20
About this Guide

This Best Practice Guide has been developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat to support Commonwealth member countries on the journey towards gender equality in climate action; with a focus on enhancing the gender responsiveness of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The intended users of this Best Practice Guide are the stakeholders of the NDC update process: national climate change focal points, national gender-responsible entities, sectoral leads, Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), as well as those who carry out research and assessments on which future NDCs are based.

The guide has been produced from analysis and recommendations for strengthening the gender responsiveness of NDCs in the accompanying report, *Gender Integration for Climate Action: A Review of Commonwealth Member Country Nationally Determined Contributions* (second edition), and is the result of an inclusive collaborative process from across the Commonwealth.

Acknowledgments

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>CCFAH</td>
<td>Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub</td>
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<td>CDKN</td>
<td>Climate and Development Knowledge Network</td>
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<td>ETF</td>
<td>Enhanced Transparency Framework</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GBA+</td>
<td>Gender-Based Analysis Plus</td>
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<td>GCF</td>
<td>Green Climate Fund</td>
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<td>GRB</td>
<td>gender-responsive budgeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for the Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
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<td>NDCs</td>
<td>Nationally Determined Contribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>science, technology, engineering, maths (subjects)</td>
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<td>WEDO</td>
<td>Women’s Environment and Development Organization</td>
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<td>UNCTCN</td>
<td>UN Climate Technology Centre and Network</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>UN Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>UN Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>UN Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>UN Development Fund for Women (part of UN Women)</td>
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Glossary of Terms

**Gender**: refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women, girls and boys, and non-binary persons. Gender tends to be assigned on the basis of biological characteristics, but gender is not biologically constructed. It is a social construct that is contextually bound – it can, and does, change throughout history and across cultural contexts.

**Gender equality**: refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men, girls, boys and individuals with non-binary gender identity. Gender equality is the ultimate goal sought with a gender-responsive approach.

**Gender equity**: refers to fairness or justice in the way people are treated, with consideration of historical and socially determined disadvantages. Gender equity leads to gender equality.

**Gender-just transition**: refers to the human rights approach to maximising the social and economic opportunities for women in the transition to a low-carbon global economy so as not to exacerbate prevalent gender inequality. A gender-just transition can leverage women’s representation and empowerment, and address gender inequality while also strengthening climate action.

**Gender-responsive approaches**: refer to approaches that examine and actively address gender norms, roles and inequalities. Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to gender differences – they actively seek to promote gender equality.

**Enhanced Transparency Framework**: a single, universal transparency process for all signatories to the Paris Agreement, designed to build trust and confidence that all countries are contributing their share to the global effort. The ETF covers all aspects of the Paris Agreement, including tracking progress of implementation and achievement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under Article 4.

**Intersectionality**: refers to the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect. An intersectional approach recognises the differences among people of the same gender that must be understood for gender equality.

**National gender machinery**: refers to the central policy co-ordinating unit inside government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.
Introduction

The 2013 Commonwealth Charter recognises ‘gender equality and women’s empowerment as critical preconditions for effective and sustainable development’. Integrating gender into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is an iterative process of increasing ambition to meet Commonwealth, national and international gender equality goals.

This best practice guide supports Commonwealth member countries to integrate gender into NDCs. These are the documents at the apex of national frameworks for climate mitigation and adaptation actions through which gender equality outcomes can be progressed.

The guide encourages users to reflect on the NDC update processes to date, and provides a sample of best practices from across Commonwealth NDCs. Tips and further references are also included, all aimed at increasing gender equality through climate action.

Best practices have been divided into five sections, covering:

• Policy alignment and clarity of intent
• Financing gender expertise and gender budgeting
• Skills for a gender-just transition
• Evidencing a gender-just transition
• Institutional collaboration and feedback mechanisms.

Each section of this best practice guide includes basic questions for consideration by stakeholders, along with a Commonwealth progress check informed by data from the Commonwealth NDC Tracker which will launch in 2023, and a theoretical timeline of actions to help mainstream gender into NDCs processes.
1. Policy Alignment and Clarity of Intent

1.1 Consistent policy alignment across legally binding and voluntary agreements

The integration of gender into NDCs is a function of global goals, international and regional agreements (see Annex 1 for list), and national and sectoral priorities. Country-specific legal and voluntary agreements are important frameworks for gender and social rights improvement through climate actions. Strengthening policy coherence is encouraged under the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, while consolidating the national legal framework for gender equality and social development will lead to improved gender integration in NDCs.

National gender positions are found in Gender or Equality Acts, policies and strategies, as well as in Human Rights Charters, development frameworks, and the climate change strategies and action plans of national, regional and local implementing entities. Gender equality is increasingly a focus of bi/multilateral funding, including the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, Climate Investment Fund and the Least Developed Country Fund. The funding windows also adhere to gender policies and often require gender analyses to be included in applications.

Commonwealth progress check: Around one-fifth, or 11 per cent, of Commonwealth country NDCs show evidence of being well-aligned with gender policies, strategies and/or frameworks.

Questions: Are national legal and voluntary agreements in place to support gender equality and social development in the wake of climate change? Are international, regional and domestic gender goals or principles adequately reflected in the NDC and across all sectoral and institutional mandates? Are NDC gender goals adequately integrated across all sub-NDC sectoral and institutional strategies and action plans?

Challenges: It can be challenging to achieve consistency across national legally binding and voluntary agreements when national priorities differ from regional and international agreements.

Tip: Including and cross-referencing NDC gender climate priorities in all national and sector policies, plans and strategies in a consistent manner will multiply the efficacy with which NDC and broader gender goals can be met. Addendum can be added where policy update cycles may delay action from being taken and subnational level improvements made (e.g., within entities seeking climate finance) because as institutions consider and adopt terms, processes become more robust. See Part 1 for advice on Gender Mainstreaming in Practice (UNDP 2013).

Examples

The European Union (EU) NDC is prepared in the context of the EU’s commitment to gender equality and cross-cutting priorities, as articulated in commitments such as:

- the European Pact on Gender Equality;
- the EU’s support for adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- integrating the dimensions of human rights and gender equality by member states into their national plans and strategies under the EU Energy Union Governance Regulation.

Zambia’s 2015 Gender Equity and Equality Act promotes the ‘full development and advancement of women on an equal basis with men, especially access to and control of resources by women’. The National Climate Change Learning Strategy and the Climate Change Gender Action Plan of 2018 support
‘gender transformative climate change processes and guarantee that women and men have access to, participate in and benefit equally from climate change initiatives’.

Vanuatu’s NDC links to the 2018 National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement in which

‘planning […] needs to be underpinned by a strong focus on rights, gender and protection, and integrated into other national planning processes’

and to the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030, which includes policy objectives for

‘an inclusive society which upholds human dignity and where the rights of all Ni-Vanuatu including women […] are supported, protected and promoted in our legislation and institutions including indicators to support the objectives and targets [such as] 4.1.1 Proportion of government departments with gender responsive policies, legislation and programs, and 4.4.3 Proportion of laws reviewed on basis of discriminatory and gender biased principles’.

Best practice action timeline to help drive forwards policy alignment

2022–23
Gap assess international, regional and national acts, policies, principles and guidelines relating to gender equality and social inclusion.
Work with the national gender-responsible entities to identify those which require updates to strengthen the gender outcomes of climate action.

2023–24
Widely disseminate international, regional and national acts, policies, principles and guidelines relating to gender; ensure these are easily accessible for all.
Progress amendments through legislature and publicise milestones.

2024–25
Root NDCs in strengthened national legal and voluntary gender and social inclusion frameworks.
1.2 Clear statements of intent

A clear statement of intent enables better integration of gender into NDC processes. Commonwealth member countries firmly committed to gender equality have presented gender goals in executive or introductory statements of NDCs, and have included dedicated sections on gender integration and specific actions. Countries with legally binding gender acts and policies are required to and can more easily integrate gender into high-level action documents such as NDCs.

**Commonwealth progress check:** While the majority, 79 per cent, of Commonwealth countries refer to gender in NDCs, the most ambitious 30 per cent also include a clear statement of intent often within the executive summary or as a key thematic pillar to mainstream gender across all climate actions.

**Questions:** Does the NDC have a clear gender statement of intent, which reflects the desired societal vision, national goals and builds on previous iterations? Do supporting documents (National Adaptation Plans, National Communications, sector plans, national policies) reflect this intention?

**Challenges:** It can be difficult for multiple parties with diverse views to agree wording for gender equality commitments in high-level documents, and to understand how to integrate gender considerations into mitigation and adaptation actions.

**Examples**

In the opening message of the updated NDC, Antigua and Barbuda’s Prime Minister Gaston Browne states, ‘The transition to a new energy sector is a long-term process and will be accompanied with adequate policies to ensure sustainable and socially inclusive growth for all citizens, particularly women.’

Nauru’s dedicated section on gender states that ‘achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is a key outcome of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, as doing so improves the overall quality of life for all Nauruans.’

**Best practice action timeline to develop clear intentions on gender mainstreaming**

- **2022–23**
  - Review NDC; develop gender goal statements in collaboration with gender-responsible entities, key sectors and inclusive representation from across society.

- **2023–24**
  - Use statements of intent as anchors for the development of sub-NDC sectoral, mitigation and adaptation plans.

- **2024–25**
  - Integrate gender-responsive plan summaries into NDCs.

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1 See https://www.yourcommonwealth.org/cygen/
2. Financing Gender Expertise and Gender Budgeting

2.1 Funding gender expertise

Where in post, the national gender, climate change and climate finance focal points, and the gender-responsible entities (government institutions, gender-related civil society organisations, indigenous and local women) must be sufficiently well resourced to help fulfil NDC gender ambition.

Challenges: Sectoral implementing entities may not consider budgeting for gender expertise in climate action as a priority, or be aware of the co-benefits of addressing gender equality through climate action. Civil society organisations are unlikely to have operational budgets to support additional labour or capacity building costs.

Questions: Is the national gender-responsible entity adequately involved in the formulation of NDC budgets? Does the level of seniority and budget for gender focal points (where in post) adequately reflect the ambition of the NDC, acknowledging Decision 1/CP.21 of the Paris Agreement, the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, and international and Commonwealth gender goals? Through which modalities can the different levels of gender expertise required be financed?

Tip: Formally request that all climate implementing entities budget for gender expertise and invite the gender-responsible entities to be intensively involved in sessional budget cycle decision-making. Include financial support for gender focal points in NDC financing plans. See the fourth section of Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit (UNDP 2015: 52).

Examples

Vanuatu: The 2022 updated NDC includes both conditional and unconditional budget allocation for eight mainstreaming commitments under Adaptation Priority Area: Gender and Social Inclusion. For example, Vanuatu commits to enhancing co-ordination between the Gender Protection Cluster and national, provincial, municipal and community disaster and climate change committees for US$150,000, using 50 per cent unconditional finance.

Fiji: The NDC planning process was guided by the principle of gender responsiveness as articulated in the National Climate Change Policy. The policy makes a specific call to improve gender balance in decision-making and implementation; to promote gender-equitable benefits; and to ensure that gender is a key consideration when programming financing.

Best practice action timeline to raise finance for gender expertise

- **2022–23**: Plan for adequate resourcing of a/the gender focal point and gender-responsible entities at key points of NDC planning, development and implementation processes.
- **2023–24**: Work with national, sectoral, institutional and project budget holders to include adequate financial provision for building gender expertise into projects and programmes.
- **2024–25**: Include financial support for gender focal points in NDC financing plans.
2.2 Gender responsive budgeting and dedicated finance

Channelling financial resources to generate equitable gender and social benefits through climate action is essential to capitalise on the socioeconomic resourcefulness of the whole of society. Defined gender-responsive budgeting and tagging of climate projects is useful for tracking and identifying outputs and outcomes, as well as ‘facilitating improved reporting and transparency over time’ under the principles of the Enhanced Transparency Framework, under which countries will need to report finance needed or received, for cross-cutting activities.

National funds being created to support the transition can also help support gender-balanced opportunities for a gender-just transition.

Commonwealth progress check: Although only 11 per cent of NDCs reference the use of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), around 30 per cent Commonwealth member countries use some form of GRB in their national budgeting processes. Others use gender budgeting at the programme and project levels.

Challenges: Engaging with and building collaboration between ministries of finance, climate change and gender respectively (or responsible departments and focal points) is challenging given competing priorities for constrained national budgets and financing.

Questions: Where conditional and unconditional actions of the NDCs aim to improve gender equality and social inclusion, what value of financial provision has been made to support these goals? Is climate action accounted for in gender budgets?

Tip: The gender-responsible entities can be enlisted to build awareness of the financial gender and social inclusion co-benefits of climate actions; assist with assessing gender components of national, NDC and sectoral climate project budgets; and correspondingly, include climate elements in gender budgets. CCFAH and its national and regional climate finance advisers play an active role in sharing knowledge and building skills to integrate gender and youth in climate finance-related work. See Gender Responsive Climate Budgeting Handbook (UNDP 2021).

Examples

Canada: The 2018 Canadian Gender Budgeting Act requires the minister of finance to publicise the gender and diversity impacts of budget measures, and for the president of the Treasury Board to publicise the gender and diversity impacts of existing Government of Canada expenditure programmes. A Gender Based Assessment Plus (GBA+) was conducted for the Government of Canada’s 2021 budget, which found that 48 per cent of the budget’s investments would benefit women and men equally, and 34 per cent would disproportionately benefit women.

Rwanda: The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning is responsible for the Integrated Financial Management Information and System, where all agency plans, budgets and reports are submitted for review. These include narrative gender budget statements, which are legally required to be submitted by all agencies and are reviewed in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion.

Dominica has the intention to establish a Venture Capital Fund for Women in Agriculture; reserve 40 per cent of the Climate Change Trust Fund for women, who comprise more than 40 per cent population; and adjust the budget-setting process and criteria to include the definition and weighting of resilience- and SDG-related indicators, including SDG 5 Gender Equality.

Antigua and Barbuda have a Financial Strategy to Support Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Implementation of the NDC via concessional financing from the Sustainable Island Resource Fund. Climate projects will be implemented alongside the development portfolio of the Ministry of Finance ‘to improve social and gender inclusion into projects and generate measurable results’.

EU: To address social and economic consequences of the transition, a Just Transition Mechanism and Fund will be created in the EU.
Best practice action timeline to help build gender-responsive budgets

**2022–23**
Assess gender responsiveness of public expenditure allocation (by ministry, department, sector, goal, project or line item). Investigate institutions already using gender-responsive budgeting as best practice examples for others.

**2023–24**
Engage the gender-responsible entities to assist in the development of annual and project gender budget statements and in the review process. Influence the ministry of finance to trial gender-responsive budgeting and gender tagging.

**2024–25**
Develop cross-government guidance to help categorise gender outputs in work plans and assign gender-responsive budgets. Include gender-disaggregated budget allocation for cross-cutting themes under NDC and ETF reporting.
3. Skills for a Gender-Just Transition

3.1 Capacity building for gender responsive NDCs

Defining and achieving gender-just benefits from climate mitigation and adaptation actions is critical, whether the benefits are economic, technical and/or social. Each stakeholder, whether sectoral business leaders, vulnerable communities, men’s and women’s organisations, or government institutions overseeing high-emission sectors, brings valuable expertise to NDC planning, but a different perspective and level of ability to steer project and/or financial decisions. An inclusive NDC implementation process means building and valuing expertise, such that all stakeholders are empowered to make influential contributions at all levels. Capacity needs to be built:

- In vulnerable, marginalised and under-represented communities, to improve their capability to articulate their position clearly, discuss needs and negotiate NDC decisions persuasively.
- In gender-responsible entities to better understand climate impacts, actions and finance mechanisms, and support the NDC process across delivery entities.
- In all staff at key climate governance and implementing entities to better respond to gender needs in NDC planning, gender-responsive climate pipeline and proposal development, and gender outcome evaluation for iterative NDC advancement.
- In sectoral businesses and government institutions, including those which oversee high-emission sectors, to appreciate and cater for diverse gender needs more considerately and effectively.

Commonwealth progress check: The majority (81 per cent) of Commonwealth member countries stated that the NDC revision process was inclusive, but only 21 per cent demonstrated that they engaged entities responsible for gender equality mainstreaming.

Challenges: Securing the willingness of all stakeholders and especially the most vulnerable, marginalised and under-represented to invest time in building capacity for meaningful participation at formal NDC update meetings alongside daily commitments will be difficult and will require additional time and budget.

Questions: Are gender-responsible entities, especially those which represent indigenous and tribal women, supported and empowered to participate in the NDC revision process? Are the same protagonists always present, which limits new views and ideas? Do sectoral business leaders and government institutions involved in the NDC planning processes have sufficient gender expertise to plan, design, implement and achieve gender components of climate action?

Tip: Arranging multistakeholder capacity building and dialogue-exchange events helps stakeholders appreciate their respective positions. See Just Transition: An Essential Pathway to Achieving Gender Equality and Social Justice (UNFCCC/ILO 2022), the Gender Climate Action Training Pack (CDKN 2021), and the second section of the Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit (UNDP 2015).
Examples

**Nigeria**: A ‘whole of society’ approach was taken to the NDC revision process, with collaborative and inclusive stakeholder and validation workshops including women’s groups and international support to define the gender impacts of different measures. Capacity building for the development of new policies and NDC measures was delivered to women in the private sector.

**Namibia**’s updated NDC has integrated gender in priority conditional and unconditional adaptation measures, including undertaking climate change risk and vulnerability assessment to ensure gender-responsive and informed disaster preparedness and response.

‘Consequently, informed capacity building and planning for gender/youth-oriented climate actions and just transition training will be carried out in defined focal points.’

**Best practice action timeline to build gender capacity**

- **2022–23**: Conduct swift capacity needs assessments across gender focal points, gender-responsible entities and vulnerable communities to engage with and influence NDC processes.
- **2023–24**: Build capacity across gender focal points, gender-responsible entities, and vulnerable communities to engage and influence the NDC process, and in the private sector to incorporate gender needs.
- **2024–25**: Hold gender-balanced discussion forums and NDC action and budget planning sessions for the next iteration of the NDC.
3.2 Driving attitudinal and behaviour change

Gender-specific vulnerabilities to physical and transitional climate risk are exacerbated by the intersectional circumstances of poverty, disability, ethnicity and status, among others. Addressing habitual social behaviours (e.g., dominance or workplace bias), which perpetuate these risks, as integral components of mitigation and adaptation projects will help to achieve a gender-just transition.

Commonwealth progress check: Just 11 per cent of Commonwealth country NDCs analyse and/or challenge detrimental gender or social norms.

Challenges: Linking social behaviour change to climate mitigation and adaptation actions and outcomes will be challenging if the leadership is not united behind gender equality goals and principles (see Section 1.1).

Questions: Is the NDC perpetuating gender inequality, or helping to challenge negative social constructs to deliver a just transition for all? What proportion (value) of mitigation actions consider intersectional vulnerability, and target and benefit the most marginalised? What are the consequences of the gender imbalance in climate finance flows, given NDC gender aspirations?

Tip: Challenge perceptions and discuss the intersectional vulnerability of gender. Target women as well as men as technology solutions providers and as ‘productive use’ business owners.

Example

Antigua and Barbuda’s NDC targets include a 20 per cent increase in the number of women-led businesses implementing renewable energy and adaptation interventions, and that 100 per cent of female-headed households (around 20,000 homes) will face no barriers to accessing back-up renewable energy generation and storage systems. The country will ‘ensure that NDC implementation: a) recognises and acknowledges gender norms and inequalities and responds to them by creating actions, policies and initiatives to address the different needs, constraints and opportunities of women and men; and b) ensures that women’s and men’s differential needs are addressed; that participation of women and men is equitable; and that distribution of benefits, resources, status and rights are equitably addressed.’

Best practice action timeline to promote women into technical roles

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<td><strong>Convene educational entities and climate-relevant industries to develop plans to fast-track STEM training, work placements and entrepreneurship skills development for women and girls.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Work with the national gender-responsible entities to examine intersectional risks in the context of climate change, and publicly address any negative prevailing attitudes towards, and behaviours of, different genders which shape climate action.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Widely publicise NDC gender goals. Increase the number of actions which target social gender barriers in climate projects and programmes.</strong></td>
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See UN Women’s (2022) article on ‘Why Women Need to be at the Heart of Climate Action’, and use the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment to link STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) education programmes to climate action to better support women into technical roles (see section 2.2).
3.3 Women’s representation as decision-makers in key climate-related sectors

The balance of gender in decision-making should represent the gender balance in society. Too often decisions about the home, in the community, business or government institutions are made by men, which can lead to perspective and investment bias. For inclusive NDC development, a conducive environment needs to be created in which women leaders emerge or are promoted into decision-making positions, especially in high-emission sectors.

**Challenges:** Cultivating an environment in which women can take on decision-making roles, and in which the authority of women leaders is recognised and acknowledged, may not be agreeable where power and position are predominant aspirations.

**Questions:** Are all key stakeholders, and especially business leaders and government institutions that oversee high-emission sectors, able to field women decision-makers to support the NDC update process? Do inter-ministerial climate committees have appropriate gender balance, to monitor and advance NDC gender priorities?

**Tip:** Engage or promote gender and climate focal points or gender advisers into leadership positions, with appropriate authority and budget to support their decisions. See UNFCCC Decision 20/CP.26, which reminds parties of the UNFCCC’s encouragement to appoint and provide support for a national gender and climate change focal point for climate negotiations, implementation and monitoring. Aim for gender balance in the NDC update process and encourage key stakeholders to field women decision-makers to lead negotiations where possible.

**Example**

Fiji notes that the NDC planning process was guided by the principle of gender responsiveness, as articulated in the National Climate Change Policy. The policy makes a specific call to improve gender balance in decision-making and implementation; to promote gender-equitable benefits; and to ensure that gender is a key consideration when programming financing.

**Best practice action timeline to improve women’s representation**

- **2022–23** Carry out assessments on climate leadership capacities in women across all key climate-related businesses and government entities.
- **2023–24** Convene business leaders and government entities to develop ways to fast-track women into leadership and decision-making roles.
- **2024–25** Aim for gender balance in NDC discussions and assign women as lead spokespersons, negotiators and decision-makers across all sectors.

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2 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2021_12__add2_adv.pdf (see page 35)
4. Evidencing a Gender-Just Transition

4.1 Assessment of gender needs and outcomes

Structural gender inequalities are embedded in society and exacerbated by intersectional disadvantages and, unless addressed, climate action will perpetuate and reinforce the negative impact of these. Using gender analysis to improve understanding of gender circumstances where there are gaps or priorities to be addressed, helps to define and refine NDC goals and project design. This is equally important in both adaptation and mitigation projects, to prevent occupational segregation and improve the balance of existing and future labour opportunities. Gender assessments should inform all proposed NDC interventions and help prioritise and budget for the actions that will most effectively contribute to meeting national gender goals.

Commonwealth progress check: Analysis showed that 9 per cent of Commonwealth country NDCs were informed by gender analysis, and a further 9 per cent are planning to use gender analysis to inform the 2025 submission.

Challenges: Defining exact assessment needs, sourcing expertise and securing results to inform the NDC update is time consuming and may be seen as non-essential by some stakeholders.

Question: Are gender analyses planned, budgeted and being carried out to inform the next NDC update?

Tip: Build competence in climate institutions to carry out gender assessments using on/offline tools. Involving public and private sector leaders in the assessment and verification process helps build advocacy. See page 5 of Gender Analysis and NDCs: Short Guidance for Government Stakeholders (UNDP 2019b); Gender-based Analysis Plus resources (Government of Canada, no date); and sections 2 and 3 of Gender Analysis Guide: A Technical Tool to Inform Gender-Responsive Environmental Programming (IUCN 2021).

Examples

Ghana used the findings of a comprehensive gender analysis to inform the latest NDC revision. Each contributing adaptation and mitigation action was also evaluated according to a five-point low, medium and high gender-responsiveness scale.

Canada’s overarching climate plan, A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy, was informed by Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), an inclusive analytical process to maximise the benefits for those most impacted by climate change. GBA+ addresses systemic inequalities by considering the personal experiential value of the effect of policies, programmes and initiatives across the federal government on diverse groups of women, men, and non-binary people. This helps to identify gaps and adds to the quality and integrity of proposed NDC action. In accordance with the 2019 Impact Assessment Act, consideration is given to the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors such as age, disability, education, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status, geography, language, race and religion, and mitigation measures are developed in collaboration with those who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged (for example, indigenous people and women).

Vanuatu is committed to promoting the use of gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators in adhering to best-practice monitoring, evaluation and learning processes in climate change programming. This is endorsed by the National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, which is allocating US$800,000 for that purpose of which 20 per cent is unconditional finance.
Best practice action timeline to increase the evidence base that informs NDCs

2022–23
Define and conduct national-level climate change impact gender analyses and disseminate results across government.

2023–24
Work with government and non-governmental organisations to define and conduct discrete gender analyses.

2024–25
Use results of gender analyses to inform and baseline priority NDC projects.
4.2 Gender differentiated data, targets and indicators

Setting project-specific targets and indicators which link to national and international gender targets which are clearly defined in the NDC, helps to guide, track and evidence progress, especially if gender is considered as a cross-cutting theme to be delivered under the responsibility of more than one entity.

The collection and statistical analysis of gender-differentiated quantitative and qualitative data, is vital to inform gender-responsive development of mitigation and adaptation measures, and to evidence gender-related progress against NDC goals. Improving the exchange of gender-differentiated data and information in standardised formats between key institutions, including but not limited to national statistics offices, universities and NGOs, helps to build the evidence base for the NDC update process. Developing the statistical analysis capabilities of institutions is advised to strengthen understanding of gender impact, and the national gender-responsible entities can assist with data and information sourcing, validation, gender indicator setting and progress evaluation.

Commonwealth progress check: A total of 15 per cent of Commonwealth country NDCs regularly collect and process sex-disaggregated data and 11 per cent of Commonwealth countries include gender-specific mitigation and/or adaptation targets with indicators in their NDCs.

Challenges: Gender information outcomes will be limited by the extent of open data sharing and the rigour with which targets and indicators are set.

Questions: Does adequate collaboration and co-ordination exist between data generators and data users, including national statistics offices? Do all relevant mitigation and adaptation actions include gender targets and indicators? Is the NDC target-setting, monitoring and reporting process informed by data of sufficient quality and granularity with which to prioritise actions and measure progress?

Tip: All key stakeholders can contribute to the production and standardisation of data to evidence progress against gender targets. See Gender Responsive Indicators: Gender and NDC Planning for Implementation (UNDP 2019a) and Quality Assurance Checklist for Revising Nationally Determined Contributions (UNDP 2020).

Examples

Antigua and Barbuda has designed targets to

‘support an inclusive, gender-responsive approach to the just energy transition, with special focus on women fully participating in the new economy; provide support to men working within the energy and transportation sectors; and take a gender-responsive approach for girls and boys of all income levels to meet the new challenges and opportunities that [the global low-carbon transformation] process can provide.’

A selection of gender responsive targets:

- 100 per cent of female-headed households have all barriers removed to access back-up renewable energy generation and storage systems (i.e., 20,000 homes).
- 100 per cent of community businesses and organisations that support women in their post-extreme weather event recovery are identified and provided with support for their efforts, to facilitate women’s ability to resume work/livelihoods within seven (7) days after such an event.
- Development of a gender-responsive approach to the just transition of men in the energy and construction sectors (baseline: currently approximately 95 per cent men in these sectors).
- Farmers and their families are [...] provided with disaster support, taking into account the differential needs of male and female farmers.

Vanuatu has developed NDC targets and both process- and outcome-based indicators, which are directly linked to National Sustainable Development Plan indicators and tracked via an integrated monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) tool. The tool supports government agencies, development partners and NGOs towards evidence-based decisions and data insights reporting. A selection of agriculture (Ag), water (Wat) and social (Soc) adaptation indicators:

- Ag 1.10: Turnover generated by agriculture SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises] and private sector operators, by gender and province in normal and (climate, disaster and environmentally) stressed times.
• Ag 2.9: Proportion of men and women engaged in subsistence agriculture in each of the six provinces in normal and (climate, disaster and environmentally) stressed times.

• Wat 1.1: Water-climate vulnerable rural communities for all six provinces mapped, using GIS as well as human-rights based, gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches and methods of assessment.

• Wat 1.8: Proportion of men and women with adequate access to water in each of the six provinces in normal and (climate, disaster and environmentally) stressed times.

• Soc 4.1.2 Number of decisions in which women participate.

• Soc 4.1.3 Indicators of women’s empowerment.

Best practice action timeline to track and achieve gender outcomes through NDC actions

2022–23
Convene key stakeholders across government and society to share and standardise gender data with which to inform NDC development. Map and develop data-sharing agreements and with central data and statistics repositories.

2023–24
Build capacity in climate institutions to conduct rapid gender situational analysis to produce baseline data and statistical information.

2024–25
Assign gender targets, process- and outcome-based indicators to all relevant NDC mitigation and adaptation actions.
5. Institutional Collaboration and Feedback Mechanisms

5.1 Co-ordinating gender work across government and beyond

As part of the NDC update process, clear roles and responsibilities for gender integration, lines of accountability and required collaborations and co-ordination procedures should be determined and documented across and between national and subnational entities. This must include gender-responsible entities as well as non-governmental organisations that represent gender interests, and those implementing and monitoring NDC gender-mainstreaming objectives.

Commonwealth progress check: Twenty-one per cent of Commonwealth member countries meaningfully included gender-responsible entities and non-governmental gender representatives in the NDC update process, but none identified them as key partners for NDC delivery of gender goals.

Challenges: Gender-responsible government entities and non-governmental gender representatives may not have sufficient capacity to advise and support across all climate-implementing entities, nor to help monitor the progress of gender mainstreaming.

Questions: Are the communication and co-ordination mechanisms between national and subnational gender-responsible entities and the private sector sufficiently well developed? Do forums exist in which knowledge-transfer can occur?

Tip: Strengthen the requirement and budget for cross-government collaboration with gender-responsible national and sub-national entities, and with the private sector. See Chapter 2 of Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality (OECD 2015).

Example

Kingdom of Eswatini:

‘The participatory and inclusive revision process meaningfully engaged and consulted a wide group of government as well as non-government stakeholders, involving ministries and government departments, academia, youth, gender specialists, traditional leaders, civil society organisations and private entities. This process also had active participation from various social groups, including women and youth.’

Climate change was included in the National Gender Policy 2021 during the revision of the NDC.

Best practice action timeline to improve co-ordination on gender elements of NDCs

2022–23
Identify critical entry points for national gender-responsible entity collaboration in the NDC update process. Support gender focal points to disseminate gender climate information across relevant entities.

2023–24
Gap assess and address co-ordination mechanisms for gender work across climate stakeholders at national and sub-national levels and improve co-ordination tools.

2024–25
Include the national gender-responsible entity in NDC governance structures and implementation mechanisms with an appropriate budget.
5.2 Transparency review mechanisms

As part of regulatory processes with which public entities are held to account, progress on NDC gender outcomes should be independently reviewed to gauge whether interventions are achieving the desired gender outcomes. In addition to assigning responsibilities, and judicial and institutional accountability mechanisms being strengthened, citizen forums with adequate representation by indigenous, vulnerable and marginalised communities can be convened as permanent observatory and feedback mechanisms, both to inform the NDC update process and appraise gender impact over time.

**Challenges:** Governmental and non-state entities may reject independent review mechanism unless clear benefits can be illustrated and the reporting requirements under the Enhanced Transparency Framework explained.

**Question:** What are the ways in which gender impact is being accounted for in and between each of the key sectors and institutions (for example, are service-level agreements in place between implementing entities, progress dashboards used, or independent NDC gender progress reviews conducted)?

**Tip:** Map accountability and recourse mechanisms across implementing entities.

**Example**

The Gambia:

‘The mitigation measures were validated through consultation with stakeholders, including the National Women Farmers Association and the TRY Oyster Women’s Association, among others, to ensure that consultations were gender responsive. The National Climate Change Stakeholder Forum, comprising representatives from farmers’ groups, women’s associations, professional associations, faith groups, children’s and youth groups, workers and trade unions, media outlets, business and industry, and charitable organisations, will maintain exchanges with the Secretariat, particularly on matters relating to policy and scientific research agenda setting and social auditing.’

**Best practice action timeline to review and improve gender outcomes through NDC actions**

- **2022–23**
  Identify and map accountability mechanisms for gender goals across key climate entities.

- **2023–24**
  Work with climate delivery entities and the judiciary to introduce appropriate accountability mechanisms and establish feedback forums.

- **2024–25**
  Conduct independent NDC gender impact progress assessments to inform NDC update and reporting processes.
Annex 1: Signatory, International and Regional Agreements

For all signatories to the Paris Climate Agreement

- Decision 1/CP.21 acknowledges that climate change is a common concern of humankind, and that Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations to human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- The Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment\(^3\) agreed in 2022 encouraged Parties to:
  - make greater efforts in integrating gender into nationally determined contributions and national climate change policies, plans, strategies and action;
  - take stock of and map progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in line with the priority areas of the Gender Action Plan;
  - appoint and provide support for national gender and climate focal points in undertaking their activities; and
  - be more explicit about the gender-responsiveness of climate finance with a view to strengthening the capacity of women and furthering work under the Gender Action Plan.

For all Commonwealth member countries

- Commonwealth Charter core value and principle #12: "We recognise that gender equality and women’s empowerment are essential components of human development and basic human rights. The advancement of women’s rights and the education of girls are critical preconditions for effective and sustainable development."\(^4\)
- Gender and Climate Change is one of the four Commonwealth Priorities for Gender Equality, endorsed by the Commonwealth women’s affairs ministers.
- The Commonwealth Living Lands Charter made a commitment to Safeguard Global Land Resources ‘in the light of different national circumstances taking into account mutual respect, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy and gender responsiveness’.
- The Board of Governors, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in June 2022, endorsed the Draft Declaration on Gender Equality 2021–2030 by committing to ‘drive forwards inclusive and gender-responsive solutions within national action plans, across mitigation, adaptation and resilience across the Commonwealth’.

International agreements on gender

- UN Declaration on Human Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Regional pacts also highlight the importance of taking a gender and human rights approach:

- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States’ Gender Policy.\(^5\)
- CARICOM Regional Gender Equality Strategy (in draft).

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\(^3\) FCCC/CP/2021/12/Add.2
\(^4\) https://thecommonwealth.org/charter
• Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration 2012 (under review).  

• Association of South Asian Nations recognises the fundamental link between gender equality and human rights-based approaches, and thus a focus on gender and inclusion, and ensuring that the voices and needs of the poorest is a central tenet of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021–2025.  

• East African Community Gender Policy.  

• Southern African Development Community Gender Policy.  

• Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): the overall vision of the Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access is a world where men and women shall enjoy equal access to modern energy services that is easily available, affordable and contributes to high levels of standards of living and economic development.  

• ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2030.  

• ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy.  

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6 https://www.forumsec.org/2012/08/30/plged/
9 https://www.sadc.int/fr/file/3728/download?token=kqCSpXid
10 https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/default/files/publication/ECOWAS%20GSAP_EN_Final.pdf
# Annex 2: References and Resources

The following list is arranged according to the approximate order in which a developer of gender climate policy or gender-responsive climate projects would progress work. All resources cited in the text of this guide are included in this or the following list, but not all resources are cited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Summary of resource/section of resource</th>
<th>Link</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender mainstreaming</td>
<td>UN Women (2022)</td>
<td>Why Women Need to be at the Heart of Climate Action</td>
<td>Short blog on the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions Race to Zero website</td>
<td><a href="https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/explainer-why-women-need-to-be-at-the-heart-of-climate-action">https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/explainer-why-women-need-to-be-at-the-heart-of-climate-action</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender mainstreaming for government stakeholders</td>
<td>UNFCCC (2022)</td>
<td>Implementation of the activities contained in the gender action plan, areas for improvement and further work to be undertaken. (UNFCCC/SBI/2022/8)</td>
<td>Succinct list of examples of capacity-building initiatives undertaken by government departments. See page 6 (a) Activity A.1, 2 and 3. Reviews capacity-building efforts for governments and other stakeholders in mainstreaming gender in formulating, monitoring, implementing and reviewing, as appropriate, national climate change policies, plans, strategies and action, including NDCs, NAPs and national communications.</td>
<td><a href="https://unfccc.int/documents/499279">https://unfccc.int/documents/499279</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender analysis</td>
<td>IUCN (2021)</td>
<td>Gender Analysis Guide: A technical tool to inform gender-responsive environmental programming for IUCN, its members, partners and peers</td>
<td>A guide for project developers, managers and implementation staff covering gender analysis, gender-based violence (GBV) considerations and including templates for common actions, such as recruiting a gender expert, developing a Gender Action Plan etc.</td>
<td><a href="https://Genderandenvironment.org/iucn-Gender-Analysis-Guide/">https://Genderandenvironment.org/iucn-Gender-Analysis-Guide/</a></td>
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<td>Gender-responsive budgeting</td>
<td>UNDP (2021)</td>
<td>Gender Responsive Climate Budgeting in Indonesia</td>
<td>Practical PowerPoint example of the rationale for, and key steps of, gender-responsive climate budgeting, based on Indonesia’s adaptation budget and covering climate, thematic and gender tagging, with further references.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.undp.org/indonesia/publications/gender-responsive-climate-budgeting-handbook">https://www.undp.org/indonesia/publications/gender-responsive-climate-budgeting-handbook</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidance for applicants</td>
<td>Green Climate Fund (GCF)</td>
<td>Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in GCF Projects</td>
<td>A manual for nationally designated authorities, focal points and direct access entities on the methodological approaches that can be employed in designing projects, including gender analysis, gender assessment and action plans, and gender-responsive results or logical frameworks.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/guidelines-gcf-toolkit-mainstreaming-gender_0.pdf">https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/guidelines-gcf-toolkit-mainstreaming-gender_0.pdf</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidance for applicants</td>
<td>Adaptation Fund (2022)</td>
<td>Updated Gender Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy</td>
<td>Useful guidance for applicants to the Adaptation Fund (AF) covering: project identification and readiness support; gender-responsive stakeholder consultation; addressing gender inequality; gender assessments; results frameworks; and target and indicator setting, sex disaggregated data, measuring, reporting and verification (MRV), and evaluations.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.adaptationfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Doc.AFB38_39_Inf.1._updated-gender-guidance-doc_1.pdf">https://www.adaptationfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Doc.AFB38_39_Inf.1._updated-gender-guidance-doc_1.pdf</a></td>
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<td>Gender and the environment</td>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>Gender and Resource Centre</td>
<td>Library of documents, blogs, infographics, webinars etc., related to gender and the environment under five headings: Addressing Gender-Based Violence; Advancing Women's Participation and Leadership; Climate Change; Environment and Gender Data; and Fisheries. Includes a useful filter on left side to select resource type, including: Unlocking Women's Economic Empowerment; Integrating Gender in the Project Cycle; Filling Knowledge and Data Gaps; and Building Gender Knowledge and Capacities.</td>
<td><a href="https://genderandenvironment.org/libraries">https://genderandenvironment.org/libraries</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender mainstreaming for government stakeholders</td>
<td>ADB (2015)</td>
<td>Training Manual to Support Country-Driven Gender and Climate Change Policies, Strategies, and Program Development</td>
<td>From theory to practice, with exercises to build capacity in key policy and project staff; a step-by-step knowledge-building resource for policy-makers and practitioners with training exercises under four topics: Gender and climate change; Climate policy landscape; Making climate finance work for inclusive mitigation; and Mainstreaming gender – from policies to projects.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.adb.org/publications/training-manual-country-driven-gender-and-climate-change">https://www.adb.org/publications/training-manual-country-driven-gender-and-climate-change</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>UNCTCN</td>
<td>Multi-resource Database</td>
<td>Some 634 technical assistance and publication sources relating to climate change and gender. Extensive database of resources which can be filtered by region, country, sector, mitigation or adaptation, or approach.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.ctc-n.org/technology-sectors/gender">https://www.ctc-n.org/technology-sectors/gender</a></td>
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