



# Building Gender-Responsive NDCs



## SUMMARY

The NDC Partnership, a coalition of over 175 countries, international institutions, and non-state actors, works to drive climate action and sustainable development by accelerating the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement and enhancing their ambition over time. Supporting countries to mainstream gender equality into climate action is central to this work, as embodied in the Partnership's [Gender Strategy](#).

This Insight Brief provides an overview of key insights and learning gained by the NDC Partnership Support Unit as it works to facilitate gender mainstreaming<sup>1</sup> in NDC planning and implementation through the integral support of Partnership members. A review of experiences across the Partnership shows effective practices, barriers, and gaps in developing gender-responsive climate action, trends in gender mainstreaming needs of countries, and how the Partnership is working to meet country needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for implementing equality for women and girls in relation to men and boys. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs 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. (*New York: UN Women Training Center, Gender Equality Glossary, 2017.*)

This brief also highlights key gender-related knowledge tools and resources, as well as technical resources available from across the Partnership based on frequently requested gender mainstreaming support categories.

## 1

## GENDER EQUALITY AND THE NDC PARTNERSHIP

**As one of the NDC Partnership's ten founding guiding principles, gender equality has been at the heart of the NDC Partnership's work since its inception. This<sup>2</sup> approach to designing and implementing climate action not only leads to greater social equity, but also channels efforts and resources towards more impactful and sustainable climate and development outcomes.<sup>3</sup>**

The Partnership's commitment to gender equality is reflected in the [NDC Partnership's Gender Strategy](#), launched in September 2019. The Strategy outlines how the Partnership supports countries to mainstream gender equality aspects into country NDC planning and implementation. One of the NDC Partnership's key roles is to surface country needs and knowledge gaps, and to facilitate country access to the expertise, knowledge resources, technical assistance, and climate finance of implementing and development partners<sup>4</sup> to respond to these needs through a country-owned process. This approach is integral to how the Partnership supports gender-responsive climate action and operationalizes this through the Partnership's country engagement process, knowledge management, learning, and communications work.

Through the [country engagement process](#), the Partnership identifies key entry points for possible gender mainstreaming support to countries, including support for: engaging stakeholders who can flag gender-related concerns, integrating gender analyses and national gender policy frameworks into climate plans and budgets, collecting sex-disaggregated data and developing indicators for tracking progress on gender equality results, and strengthening technical gender mainstreaming capacity. Additionally, the Partnership works to share country learning to inspire and scale up gender-responsive climate action. Through the Partnership's knowledge-exchange and communications channels, it shares effective practices and lessons learned, including empowering stories of women as agents of change.

The Gender Strategy sets the goal of having all member countries integrating elements of gender equality into new or updated NDCs by 2020, and initiating implementation of these NDC components. This also includes the provision of technical or financial support to mainstream gender into NDCs through the NDC Partnership.

2 Gender-responsive means identifying, understanding, and implementing interventions to address gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions by addressing and changing gender norms, roles, and access to resources. Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to gender differences, in application contributing pro-actively and intentionally to the promotion and advancement of gender equality.

3 World Bank, "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development" (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2012).

4 Development partners are governments and donor agencies that support NDC Partnership work on the ground. Implementing partners are country, institutional, or NGO partners that may or may not be members of the Partnership, that provide technical assistance and/or capacity building in response to a member country's requests to the Partnership.

## 2

## LESSONS FROM COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

While many countries recognize the importance of developing gender-responsive NDCs, countries are at different stages of integrating gender equality into climate action. Most countries agree that it is difficult to move from policy to practice and to deliver equal outcomes, but as countries work to incorporate gender equality into NDC plans, programs, and implementation, some insights have emerged on key barriers, in addition to facilitating factors that countries encounter in gender mainstreaming. These are identified below.

## CONSTRAINTS TO GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE ACTION

- The **lack of gender-disaggregated data and gender analysis** to identify country-specific inequalities and barriers
- **Inadequate technical capacity** on gender and climate change; **limited engagement of gender specialists** to provide guidance on how to integrate gender into climate action
- Insufficient **financing for gender-responsive climate action** addressing identified inequalities and gaps
- **Complex and siloed coordination** of national climate change and NDC processes where the mainstreaming of gender equality issues and analysis remains limited
- **Inadequate information** on essential **gender resources and tools** and where and how to access them
- **Limited knowledge sharing** across countries and institutions on gender-responsive approaches, practices, lessons, and successes

## ENABLING FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL GENDER MAINSTREAMING

On the other side of the coin, partners have observed a number of common factors that have facilitated gender-responsive climate action. These factors often work in concert or in parallel, reinforcing one another to support an NDC implementation process that is gender-inclusive and leads to more equal climate outcomes. There are four enabling conditions which respond directly to remaining obstacles above.

- **Gender-disaggregated data and gender analyses** that identify country-specific inequalities and inform climate planning
- **Technical capacity** on gender and climate change at national and subnational levels as well as across ministries and sectors for context-specific gender analysis
- **Targeted financial resources** for gender-related programs and/or gender-responsive budgeting
- Coordinated **institutional arrangements** to support gender mainstreaming

**Several additional success factors are critical for enabling effective gender mainstreaming:**

- **Strong political commitment** to drive action and influential decision-maker(s) advocating for gender mainstreaming as a priority issue
- Meaningful **participatory processes and consultations**, including the active participation of women and groups representing their needs and interests
- Engagement of the **gender machinery within the government**, such as **gender focal points** across ministries, departments, and agencies with adequate technical capacity and authority
- **Initiatives that raise women's awareness of their rights** and support engagement, participation and leadership
- The inclusion of **gender language** in climate and development plans, policies, and budgets

Consideration of these success factors by both countries and implementing or development partners can greatly enhance the inclusion of gender-responsiveness in NDC plans and actions for the future.

## 3

## TRENDS IN GENDER-RELATED COUNTRY SUPPORT REQUESTS

As of June 2020, ten out of a total of 21 Partnership Plans<sup>5</sup> included requests for some form of gender mainstreaming support through the Partnership. In parallel, 26 countries have requested gender support through the Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP), a Partnership offering which fast tracks country support for enhanced NDC quality, ambition, and implementation during the NDC update and revision processes. Under the CAEP application process, countries outlined how gender equality considerations would be included in forthcoming country NDCs and sought support for these activities.

The NDC Partnership has observed several broad categories of gender mainstreaming support requested by countries, in line with the many enabling factors for developing gender-responsive NDCs listed above. These support areas are listed below, with the most frequently requested areas of gender support listed first. (See blog for details on trends in gender support requests.)

- Mainstreaming **gender into plans, policies, and budgets**
- **Gender balance in capacity building opportunities, political decision making, and economic empowerment**
- **Technical gender mainstreaming training/capacity building** and awareness raising
- Establishing **monitoring and accountability mechanisms and collecting sex-disaggregated data** to track progress on gender equality
- Undertaking **gender analyses, risk assessments, and response strategies** that reflect different needs
- Convening **multi-stakeholder consultations** to include the perspectives of gender agencies and stakeholders into NDC planning processes

Importantly, two enabling success factors mentioned earlier—strong political commitment and coordinated institutional arrangements for gender mainstreaming in climate action—are not reflected here as these are discretionary actions in each country. This underscores the critical leading role that member governments play in advancing gender equality as a means towards more impactful, equitable climate action.

5 A Partnership Plan is a plan that outlines common objectives and outputs, set by the government to achieve country NDC goals. The Partnership Plan reflects priorities and may not necessarily encompass the whole of the NDC.

## 4

## RESOURCES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE PLANNING

**The Partnership offers a range of resources to assist in developing gender-responsive climate action. Member countries can request gender-related support from international institutions, organizations, and development partners through the NDC Partnership’s country engagement process. Similarly, the Partnership’s [Climate Action Enhancement Package](#) is another avenue for country support as countries update their NDCs, and can enhance climate action and sustainable development through gender mainstreaming.**

In addition, the [NDC Partnership Knowledge Portal](#) is a curated online platform which offers more than 140 gender-related knowledge resources throughout three main modules (i.e. the Climate Toolbox, Good Practice Database, and Climate Finance Explorer). These resources include specific guidelines, tools, case studies on effective practices, partner platforms, and other resources that can assist countries in strengthening gender-responsive NDCs. Users can identify specific knowledge resources based on informational needs using the multiple search filters available. This [blog](#) on our website provides a short introduction of our gender resources.

In addition, the Partnership maintains [a mapping of member and partner resources](#) available on the Knowledge Portal, organized by the gender support categories mentioned above. Below is a selected sample of these gender tools and platforms.

## MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO PLANS AND POLICY:

- **[Gender Equality in National Climate Action: Planning for Gender-Responsive Nationally Determined Contributions](#)** (UNDP, 2017): This report presents a framework for integrating gender equality into NDC planning and implementation.
- **[A Framework for Gender-Responsive National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Processes](#)** (IISD/ International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2017): This tool introduces a working framework for gender-responsive NAP processes. This is part of an ongoing initiative by the NAP Global Network to promote gender-responsive investments in climate change adaptation.
- **[ENERGIA Knowledge Centre](#)**: ENERGIA, International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, contributes to scaling up the delivery of energy products and services through strengthening women-led energy enterprises and advocating for gender mainstreaming in energy policy and practice. Their knowledge center provides the evidence base for incorporating a gender lens through research as well as training modules and tools to support gender integration within energy sector.

## SUPPORTING GENDER BUDGETING AND INVESTMENTS

- **Climate Investment Funds Knowledge Center** (Climate Investment Funds): This platform includes a collection of reports, tools, case studies, fact sheets, investment plans, learning events, and other policy guidelines to assist policymakers in NDC implementation, including a focus on the topic of gender.
- **Enabling Voices, Demanding Rights: A guide to gender-sensitive community engagement in large-scale land-based investment in agriculture** (IISD, 2018): This document provides guidance on how to ensure that women are directly involved in decision making related to Large Scale Land Based Investments (LSLBI) processes in agriculture and mining, with examples from Kenya, Senegal, Cameroon, Zambia, and Uganda.

## DEVELOPING INDICATORS, MONITORING SYSTEMS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

- **UN-REDD Methodological Brief on Gender** (UN-REDD Programme FAO-UNDP-UNEP, 2017): This brief provides guidance and concrete entry points to UN-REDD Programme partner countries on how the Gender Approach detailed in the 2016-2020 UN-REDD Programme Strategic Framework can be effectively operationalized and monitored, using illustrative case studies and country examples.
- **Gender Poverty and Environmental Indicators on African Countries** (African Development Bank, 2019): This publication provides information on the broad development trends relating to gender, poverty, and environmental issues in the 54 African countries.

## CONDUCTING GENDER ANALYSES

- **Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects** (Green Climate Fund and UN Women, 2017): This manual supports the integration of gender equality in climate change interventions and climate finance to enhance the efficacy of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions.

## CONDUCTING RISK ASSESSMENTS AND RESPONSE STRATEGIES THAT REFLECT DIFFERENT NEEDS

- **A Practical Guide to Gender-Sensitive Approaches for Disaster Management** (Red Cross/Red Crescent, 2010): This document provides guidance on integrating gender into the disaster management cycle and strengthening accountability for gender impact, and includes case studies illustrating the impact of addressing gender-sensitivity and diversity within disaster management actions across the Asia Pacific.

## CONVENING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

- **Gender and Inclusion Toolbox: Participatory Research in Climate Change and Agriculture** (CARE, CGIAR, CCAFS, and World Agroforestry Centre, 2014): This manual is a resource and toolbox for NGO practitioners and program designers interested in diagnostic and action research for designing gender sensitive and socially inclusive climate change programs in the rural development context.

The NDC Partnership stands ready to support countries to progressively mainstream gender equality into NDC planning and implementation. With the Gender Strategy in place, a pathway for more effective, collaborative efforts to advance gender equality in climate action has been outlined across the membership. Support to countries in various forms is available to bolster this work - from the many knowledge tools of members found on the Knowledge Portal, to the direct support from members of the NDC Partnership.

### CREDITS

*This insight brief was written by Lisa Bow and Kasonde Chisaka with the support of Ralien Bekkers, Rob Bradley, Talia Chorover, and Dena Kleemeier of the NDC Partnership Support Unit.*



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