

How to Use Gender Approaches to Build Climate Resilience

TIPS FOR DESIGNING ADB PROJECTS BASED ON EXPERIENCES IN THE PACIFIC

INTRODUCTION

The 14 Pacific developing member countries (DMCs) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are exposed to a wide range of worsening climate-related hazards, such as tropical cyclones, floods, droughts, storm surges, and sea level rise.¹ Climate change will affect all people living in Pacific DMCs. Extreme events can push governments into debt distress, businesses into insolvency, and individuals into extreme hardship.

However, some will be affected more than others, as people experience different vulnerabilities and capacities to cope with a changing climate. Gender is one important factor affecting vulnerability.² More frequent disasters and worsening slow-onset events, such as sea level rise, can amplify existing disparities between men and women.

This tip sheet is intended for ADB project officers and government counterparts, specifically for Pacific island countries. It outlines steps to design ADB projects that seek to build resilience to current and future climate risks, while promoting gender equality through shared control of resources and decision-making. Such projects uphold two operational priorities under ADB's Strategy 2030—Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality (OP2) and Tackling Climate Change and Building Climate and Disaster Resilience (OP3). Both of these priorities target 75% of committed operations by 2030.

Recommendations focus primarily on projects that will help achieve Pillar 5 of OP2—strengthening women's resilience to external shocks. By their very nature, these projects should have a gender equity theme (GEN) and may also be "Type 2" adaptation projects.³ Box 1 presents the proposed actions under Pillar 5 related to climate change.

Box 1: Proposed Actions to Build Women's Resilience to Climate Change in ADB's OP2

The Asian Development Bank will help developing member countries accelerate the integration of gender equality in national and subnational policies, strategies, and action plans on climate change and disaster risk management in line with global commitments; conduct better analysis and data collection of gender differentiated climate change and disaster impacts; expand green job opportunities for women and access to finance for women-owned and -led green businesses; build women's resilience to climate change and disaster impacts and environmental degradation through greater access to climate-smart technologies, diversified livelihoods, natural asset building, crop insurance, savings, and other financial safety nets; encourage participation in community-led solutions; enhance knowledge, preparedness, and skills; and emphasize women's active participation in related decision-making process at all levels.

Source: ADB. 2019. *Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024*. Manila.

FOCUSING ON GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1 Ensure systematic coordination

For ADB projects, gender action plans (GAPs) and climate risk assessments (CRAs) are usually conducted separately.⁴ However, for "Pillar 5" OP2 projects, these documents should be developed congruently, with gender experts and climate change experts closely collaborating.

In addition, coordination between GAP and CRA preparation is advisable when applying for global climate finance, particularly from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF). Both GCF and GEF emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment.

¹ The Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

² Other important factors include level of education, social status, and wealth, all of which relate to each other and to gender (e.g., women are more likely than men to be vulnerable to poverty).

³ GEN projects directly address gender equality and/or women's empowerment by narrowing gender disparities through various means. This should be reflected in the design and monitoring framework (DMF), including in the outcome statement and indicators. Type 2 adaptation projects are predicated solely on the need to address climate change risks and would not take place in the absence of global climate change. In contrast, Type 1 activities are associated with the need to manage climate risks to ADB-financed development projects (climate proofing) to ensure that the primary development objectives are not compromised.

⁴ ADB. Gender Action Plans in ADB Projects. <https://www.adb.org/themes/gender/project-action-plans>; ADB. 2014. *Climate Risk Management in ADB Projects*. Manila. <https://www.adb.org/publications/climate-risk-management-adb-projects>.

2 Assess gender-differentiated climate change risks

Mainstreaming gender and climate change into project designs involves gaining a systematic understanding of how women and men are (and will be) impacted by climate change and disaster risks. This assessment must take into account the differences and similarities between men and women in terms of their roles, responsibilities, access to resources and opportunities, and decision-making.

Gender dynamics vary across countries and are changing in some places, but in general, Pacific women currently have less say in household decisions, are not equally represented in local and national governments, are not as likely to access or benefit equally from waged labor, and have less access to strategic resources, particularly finance, property and land. Violence against women is also a major and pervasive issue in the Pacific.

Climate change will likely exacerbate these issues. For instance, as the sea inundates coastal communities throughout the Pacific, some residents will need to relocate to new land on higher ground. This will challenge current legal and customary systems of land tenure and increase the need to address women's lack of access and ownership to land and associated resources such as credit and collateral.

Some groups of men are also particularly vulnerable to climate change, such as those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and fishing. In addition, some post-disaster analysis has shown that men suffer higher mortality rates because they take more risks trying to save themselves and their families.⁵

3 Promote women's meaningful participation

In many Pacific island countries, women do not have an equal say in decision-making at many levels (household, community, and local and national government). As a result, women are often denied opportunities to contribute valuable input and provide adequate responses to climate change impacts. This is a critical barrier in developing and implementing sustainable, inclusive, and effective adaptation strategies, as women possess traditional knowledge that can contribute to finding location-specific solutions.

Projects can help address this issue by ensuring women's participation in developing and implementing climate change initiatives. Women's participation can be promoted in a number of ways, including through: community consultations at all levels of project conceptualization, design, preparation, implementation, and evaluation; community climate change committees; disaster early warning systems; disaster management plans; local and national adaptation programs for action; and livelihood training courses.

However, promoting equal participation in decision-making requires much more than meeting attendance. Women's participation needs to be meaningful, given their valuable abilities, knowledge, skills, and expertise in contributing to projects. Maximizing women's input might require holding gender-based discussion groups (Box 2), ensuring the presence of women facilitators, partnering with pre-existing women's groups, ensuring that women hold leadership positions, and/or holding a convenient time for meetings when women are likely to be available.

4 Identify gender-transformative approaches

After gaining an understanding about gender dynamics and ensuring women's participation, the next important step in project design is identifying opportunities where women and men alike can act as agents of change in managing current and future risks.

As much as possible, ADB projects should promote gender-transformative approaches, which directly seek to change conditions and practices that perpetuate gender inequalities and relations of power between men and women. These approaches emphasize women's empowerment and leadership potential, gender positive institutional strengthening (including men's engagement to achieve gender equality), evidence-based policy and action, and strong regional partnership and networking.

Opportunities and gender entry points are perhaps most apparent in projects that focus on or impact livelihoods. Examples include gendered roles in farming, with women often responsible for raising small livestock and planting subsistence crops. Women are also major vendors and buyers of food and consumables, making their role in this sector critical to its success (there are also significant gender differences in fishing [Box 3]).

Thus, projects focused on promoting "climate-smart agriculture"—for example as a response to increased salinity in groundwater due to sea level rise—should look for distinct entry points for women and men based on gender-differentiated impacts.

Transformative approaches focusing on cash crops and agricultural extension can expand women's options, livelihoods, and waged income, while keeping in mind their triple burdens that lead to time poverty.⁶ For example, projects could support women-owned businesses in green value chain development focused on organic food and products.

⁵ United Nations Development Programme. 2010. *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation: A Guidebook for Designing and Implementing Gender-Sensitive Community-Based Adaptation Programmes and Projects*. New York. [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/environment-energy/www-ee-library/climate-change/gender-climate-change-and-community-based-adaptation-guidebook-/Gender%20Climate%20Change%20and%20Community%20Based%20Adaptation%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/environment-energy/www-ee-library/climate-change/gender-climate-change-and-community-based-adaptation-guidebook-/Gender%20Climate%20Change%20and%20Community%20Based%20Adaptation%20(2).pdf).

⁶ The triple role of a woman refers to her reproductive role, productive role, and her role in community management.

Box 2: Women-Only Consultations in Samoa

As part of the preparation for the proposed Alaoa Multipurpose Dam Project, women in nearby communities expressed their reluctance to freely share their views in front of village chiefs.^a In response, women-only consultations were held in nine villages, thereby allowing women to speak comfortably about their specific concerns.

Several women appreciated being part of the consultation. They have asked to be kept informed about the project and to also continue holding gender-focused group discussions.

In addition to the consultations, a survey was designed to elicit additional gender-related information specific to the dam project. The survey provided an additional outlet for stakeholders, both men and women, to share their views if they were not comfortable speaking in a group.



▲ Focus group discussion with women from Maagiagi (photo by Suzette Mitchell).

^a This proposed project is being requested by the Government of Samoa for ADB financing to help increase resilience to climate change by protecting Apia against downstream flooding due to extreme rainfall events.

Source: ADB staff and TA consultant.

For infrastructure projects, entry points might not be as apparent, but could be equally important. For example, constructing a climate-resilient wharf would benefit traders (both men and women), but may disrupt the collection of sea products, which is often women's work. In such a case, the project could help mitigate gender impacts by finding a suitable location for the wharf or finding commensurate alternatives for women's livelihoods.

For renewable energy projects, distributed generation provides entry points for gender equality and social inclusion through mini-grid-based community energy systems and other

applications. As an example, new energy industries, such as solar photovoltaic systems, are driven by small power producers, which offer great potential for the participation of women and marginalized groups.

Projects could also support the integration of gender in national climate change policies and frameworks, such as nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). Where gender equality is already integrated in these documents, projects could help ensure that gender transformative approaches are implemented through specific interventions.

Box 3: Gender Adaptations to Promote Sustainable Fishing Practices

Gender-Related Issues	Gender-Responsive Climate Change Approaches	Possible Indicators ^a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing plays an important role in subsistence and livelihoods in the Pacific. Men are mainly involved in deep sea fishing and cleaning fish reserves, while women are involved in collecting aquatic products, fish processing (cleaning, drying, and smoking), as well as shoreline fishing. Women are under-represented in fisheries organizations and management. Men are increasingly travelling further offshore for fishing and migrating for work due to depleted fish in the oceans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake coastal zone assessments that not only assess changes in fish and seafood life, but also examine gender roles, fishing rights, and incomes for men and women. Increase women's access to appropriate climate change adaptive fishing-related technologies and extension services. Expand women's decision-making in sustainable coastal zone management and fisheries groups. Increase the role of women at higher levels of the value chain in the seafood industry. Create sustainable and eco-friendly coastal tourism that increases women's roles from service industry to management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measured increases in women's roles in sustainable fishing industries and formal fishing rights Number and percentage of women in adaptive fish technology and extension services Number and percentage of women on local and national coastal management and fisheries decision-making bodies Number and percentage of women in sustainable seafood product value chains Number and percentage of women in eco-tourism management

^a For each indicator, baseline data should be established.

Source: ADB staff and TA consultant.

5 Develop gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation plans

Developing gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans, along with gender theory of change and participatory feedback loops, will help ensure that gender-transformative approaches identified during project design are actually implemented.

This plan should include gender-transformative indicators and targets at each level (impact, outcomes, outputs, and inputs) to be monitored during project implementation. In Box 4, standard indicators have been identified for the OP2 operational approach that focuses on building women's resilience to climate change (Pillar 5 under OP2).

MAIN INDICATOR

- Women and girls with increased resilience to climate change, disasters, and other external shocks (number)

SUB-INDICATORS

- Community-based initiatives to build resilience of women and girls to external shocks implemented (number)
- Climate- and disaster-resilient infrastructure assets and/or services for women and girls established or improved (number)
- Savings and insurance schemes for women implemented or established (number)
- Dedicated crisis-responding social assistance schemes for women and girls implemented or established (number)

In addition to indicators and targets, M&E plans should include: baseline data for evaluation purposes; reporting and feedback processes that identify specific information to be collected, responsibility and resources required, and recipient of M&E information; and capacity building and institutional strengthening required to undertake gender-sensitive M&E.

Box 4: Possible Questions to Address in Project Design for a Gender-Transformative Approach to Climate Change (with answers to be incorporated into Gender Action Plans and/or Climate Risk Assessments)

What is the context?

- How is gender addressed in national climate change policies and frameworks—such as national adaptation programmes of action and local adaptation plans of action—and how are climate change issues addressed in gender policies?
- What current local knowledge do different groups of women and men currently have regarding climate change impacts in the communities where the project is located?
- What differential impacts are men and women currently experiencing due to specific climate hazards, and what gender differentiated vulnerabilities can be exacerbated if there are no supporting interventions?
- What are the gender differences in the capacities of women and men to cope with climate change and disasters, and what gender beliefs, values, norms and stereotypes affect these differences?

Who has what?

- What are the main sources of income, wages and livelihoods for women and men, and how might they be impacted by climate change?
- Do women have secure rights to land, property and assets, including finance (with bank accounts and title deeds in their own names or held jointly)?
- What are the gender differences in access to resources for livelihoods, energy, water supply, transport, and agricultural equipment?
- How and to what extent do women and men access extension services, training programs, and development services?

Who does what?

- What is the division of labor between and among men and women along domains of difference (e.g., age, class, marital status) in sector-specific areas related to climate change adaptation and mitigation?

- How and to what extent do men and women participate in and benefit from the formal and informal economy?
- What is the gender division of labor in managing the household, the care of children and/or the elderly, and other forms of unpaid work?
- Where is time poverty concentrated?

Who decides?

- To what extent are women involved in decision-making at the national and subnational levels?
- How are men and women involved in community decision-making, and in the broader policy-making sphere and employment in various sectors?
- At the household level, who controls, manages, and makes decisions about resources, assets, and finances?
- How do men's and women's access to information on climate change facilitate their inputs to project or program activities?
- To what extent do men and women meaningfully belong to and participate in cooperatives or other types of economic, political, or social organizations?

Who benefits?

- How will women's and men's resilience to climate change be improved through the project or program?
- How will the services and/or products of the proposed interventions be accessible to and benefit both men and women?
- Will the proposed interventions increase or decrease the incomes of women and men?
- How will interventions affect workloads at the household and community levels?
- How will women's empowerment be enhanced through the project at the household and community levels?
- Will the proposed intervention challenge the social norms and biased practices against women?

Source: Largely drawn from Green Climate Fund and UN Women. 2017. *Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects: A Practical Manual to Support the Integration of Gender Equality in Climate Change Interventions and Climate Finance*. Incheon.



Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO license (CC BY 3.0 IGO)

© 2020 ADB. The CC license does not apply to non-ADB copyright materials in this publication.

<https://www.adb.org/terms-use#openaccess> <http://www.adb.org/publications/corrigenda>

Publication Stock No. ARM200185-2

pubsmarketing@adb.org