



**GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND**

**Meeting of the Board**  
26 – 28 February 2019  
Songdo, Incheon, Republic of Korea  
Provisional agenda item 14

**GCF/B.22/06**

1 February 2019

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# Updated Gender Policy and Action Plan 2019–2021

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## Summary

This document presents an update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan originally adopted in decision B.09/11. This update follows the request made by the Board in decision B.12/16 for the Secretariat to prepare a review and update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan and was made based on the terms of reference approved by the Board in decision B.BM-2016/12. The terms of reference required the review to focus on the implementation and integration of the Gender Policy and Action Plan in the full range of GCF functions and activities in terms of accountability, learning and engendering climate change.

The Secretariat undertook the desk review and consultations required to update the policy. The major updates are those establishing a structure, making the gender assessment and action plan a requirement at the project level, and requiring a more progressive approach to strengthening gender work at GCF.

Annex III of this document presents the proposed Gender Action Plan for GCF, which provides a framework for the period 2018–2020 within which to operationalize the Gender Policy. Recognizing the need for managing results, the policy illustrates proposed result areas in Annex IV of the policy document.

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## I. Introduction

1. The Board, by decision B.09/11, adopted the Gender Policy and Action Plan. In its adoption, the Board also mandated the Secretariat to “conduct a review of the gender policy and action plan, in consultation with the civil society organizations accredited with the Fund, and to submit an updated version of both by the twelfth meeting of the Board”. Board members were also invited to submit comments and proposals related to the policy.
2. At its twelfth meeting, through decision B.12/16, the Board decided to review the Gender Policy and Action Plan at its fifteenth meeting. To guide the review and update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan, the Board, by the same decision, requested the Secretariat to provide the draft terms of reference (TOR) of the review for consideration by the Board. The Secretariat duly provided these TOR with a recommendation to focus on the implementation and integration of the Gender Policy and Action Plan, and they were adopted through decision B.BM-2016/12.
3. In addition, at its eleventh and sixteenth meetings, the Board requested the Secretariat to update the Gender Policy and Action Plan in accordance with the Governing Instrument for the GCF and in consultation with Board members, relevant bodies and observer organizations, for adoption at its nineteenth meeting (B.19).
4. In response to the mandate in decision B.09/11, and pursuant to the following related decisions described above, the Secretariat conducted a review and update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan, incorporating the comments and inputs from the Board and stakeholders gathered through calls for public inputs. A draft Gender Policy and Action Plan was presented to the Board in document GCF/B.18/Inf.10/Add.01 during the informal meeting of the Board ahead of its eighteenth meeting (B.18) in September 2017. Following a request by the Board at the informal meeting for further consultation, a draft update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan was presented to the Board at its eighteenth meeting incorporating inputs from the first call for public inputs. A revised version of the Gender Policy and Action Plan that incorporated comments from the second call for public inputs was presented in document GCF/B.19/25 for consideration by the Board at its nineteenth meeting (B.19). Taking note of the inputs from the Board at B.19, the Secretariat has further developed the draft update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan.
5. This document summarizes the progress in updating the Gender Policy and Action Plan, describes the draft updates to the Gender Policy and Action Plan that take into account the submissions and inputs received from the Board and stakeholders, and proposes next steps for implementing the policy.

## II. Recommended actions by the Board

6. It is recommended that the Board:
  - (a) Take note of the information presented in document GCF/B.22/06 titled “Updated Gender Policy and Action Plan 2019–2021”, including the draft Gender Policy contained in annex II to this document, and the draft Action Plan (2019–2021) contained in annex III to this document; and
  - (b) Approve the draft decision presented in annex I to this document.

## III. Linkages with other GCF decisions and documents

7. This document has linkages with the following decisions and documents:

- (a) “Initial Modalities for the Operation of the Fund’s Mitigation and Adaptation Windows and the Private Sector Facility” (decision B.06/04);
- (b) “Policies and Procedures for the Initial Allocation of Fund Resources” (decision B.06/06);
- (c) “Options for a Fund-wide Gender-sensitive Approach” (decision B.06/07);
- (d) “Guiding Framework and Procedures for Accrediting National, Regional and International Implementing Entities and Intermediaries, Including the Fund’s Fiduciary Principles and Standards and Environmental and Social Safeguards” (decision B.07/02);
- (e) “Initial Proposal Approval Process, Including the Criteria for Programme and Project Funding” (decision B.07/03);
- (f) “Initial Results Management Framework of the Fund” (decision B.07/04) and “Further Development of the Initial Results Management Framework” (decision B.08/07);
- (g) “Application Documents for Submissions of Applications for Accreditation” (decision B.08/06);
- (h) “Investment Framework” (decision B.07/06) and “Further Development of the Initial Investment Framework: Sub-criteria and Methodology” (decision B.09/05);
- (i) “Financial Terms and Conditions of the Fund’s Instruments” (decision B.09/04);
- (j) “Gender Policy and Action Plan” (decision B.09/11);
- (k) “Initial monitoring and accountability framework for accredited entities” (decision B.11/10);
- (l) “Detailed Programme of Work on Readiness and Preparatory Support” (decision B.06/11); “Revised Programme of Work on Readiness and Preparatory Support” (decision B.08/11); and “Progress and Outlook Report of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme” (decision B.13/32);
- (m) “Risk Management Framework” (decision B.17/11);
- (n) “Guidelines for Enhanced Country Ownership and Country Drivenness” (decision B.17/21);
- (o) “Pilot Programme for REDD+ Results-based Payments” (decision B.17/18);
- (p) “Updated terms of reference of the Independent Redress Mechanism (Revised)” (decision B.BM-2017/10);
- (q) “Environmental and Social Policy” (decision B.19/10); and
- (r) “Indigenous Peoples Policy” (decision B.19/11);

#### **IV. Stakeholder inputs to the review and update of the Gender Policy and Action Plan**

8. On 20 April 2017, in accordance with decisions B.09/11 and B.BM-2016/12, GCF published a call for public inputs inviting members and alternate members of the Board, national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points, accredited entities (AEs), accredited observer organizations, civil society representatives, and the public at large to review the existing Gender Policy and Action Plan. The submission deadline of 21 May 2017 was extended in response to requests for more time. Ultimately, the Secretariat received 37 submissions from 80 organizations.

9. On 27 October 2017, GCF published another call for public inputs inviting the Board, NDAs and focal points, AEs, accredited observer organizations, civil society representatives, and the public at large to review the existing Gender Policy and Action Plan. The Secretariat received 25 submissions.

10. The submissions supported the need for an updated gender policy anchored in the reality of a fast-changing landscape related to gender in the context of climate change. Several submissions noted that women and men of all ages, particularly from excluded or minority groups, have an important role to play in GCF objectives, policy and programme development, and in efforts to combat climate change more broadly. Many emphasized the importance of ensuring that women, girls, men, boys, youth, minority communities, the elderly, differently abled, and different faiths all benefit from GCF activities. The submissions encouraged the development of a gender policy and action plan at project levels with indicators and targets to support GCF commitments to and engagement with women, men, girls and boys, including those from marginalized communities. The submissions noted that several multilateral organizations and funds, such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) and Adaptation Fund (AF) have comprehensive gender policies and action plans, which the GCF can draw on for guidance and lessons.

11. Key observations from the submissions reveal the following:

- (a) There is still a heavy linking of the term “gender” with “women’s issues”. This needs to change to ensure that “gender” is better understood and addressed in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; there is also a strong suggestion to further develop the gender capacities of various stakeholders of GCF;
- (b) There is a strong consensus that language needs to shift from vulnerable communities to recognizing the inherent values, importance and potential of populations who might be underprivileged or otherwise marginalized;
- (c) There are requests for consistency and synergies with the existing policies of GCF, including the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Policy. Recommendations suggest that the updated Gender Policy and Action Plan should, where possible, be consistent with GCF policies and frameworks and with the Gender Action Plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- (d) There is a call to recognize the underlying principle of human rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in this policy;
- (e) There are suggestions to form a gender advisory group, similar to the Private Sector Advisory Group. There are benefits and, at the same time, limitations to establishing an additional advisory group on gender. The Secretariat recommends the implementation of the updated Gender Policy throughout the organization to inform the kind of advisory group that would be most effective and useful; and
- (f) All the views presented in the submissions were given careful consideration and the draft update of the policy presented in this document addresses most of the concerns raised.

## **V. Lessons learned from other organizations**

12. The updated Gender Policy and Action Plan draw from lessons learned from development institutions, donors, and civil society in implementing their gender policies, such as the need to have:

- (a) Clear policy guidance and sustained management commitment;

- (b) Operational procedures, guidelines and tools to address gender issues;
- (c) Clear accountability mechanisms to ensure policy implementation;
- (d) Robust monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems with sex disaggregated data collection and gender-responsive performance measurement and portfolio monitoring frameworks;
- (e) Access to complaint mechanisms; and
- (f) The need to invest in gender competencies at all levels and the need to ensure budgeting for gender-related activities.

## **VI. Summary of updates to the policy and action plan**

13. Taking into consideration the inputs and recommendations received from the Board and stakeholders, updates to the Gender Policy and Action Plan focus on the following improvements:

- (a) The policy emphasizes gender responsiveness rather than gender sensitivity. Being gender-responsive means that instead of only identifying gender issues or ensuring a “do no harm” approach, a process will substantially help to overcome historical gender biases. This is in line with the language used in UNFCCC decision CP.20 (Lima Work Programme) and the Paris Agreement;
- (b) In addition to requiring gender assessment, the policy suggests a mandatory requirement to submit project-level gender action plans;
- (c) The policy outlines clear requirements at the project inception, implementation, monitoring and reporting stages as well as in regard to roles and responsibilities among GCF, AEs, and NDAs/focal points;
- (d) The policy aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which make explicit commitments to gender equality both as a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment in SDG5 and as a cross-cutting theme across all the SDGs; and
- (e) The action plan provides portfolio-level gender-responsive indicators to the Action Plan of the updated Gender Policy, together with indicative budgetary provisions related to knowledge management, capacity development, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

## **VII. Next steps**

14. The Secretariat will implement the updated Gender Policy by carrying out the corresponding Action Plan provided in annex III to this document. At the same time, GCF work with AEs, NDAs and focal points, and delivery partners on activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme to build competencies, tools and processes to achieve gender-responsive results. Additionally, the Secretariat will report annually on the results achieved from the implementation of the Gender Policy, based on the indicators highlighted in annex IV of this document.

## Annex I: Draft decision by the Board

The Board, having considered document GCF/B.22/06 titled “Updated Gender Policy and Action Plan 2019–2021”:

- (a) Adopts the updated Gender Equality Policy of the Green Climate Fund as presented in annex II, acknowledging the progress made in advancing gender balance and gender equality within the context of climate change policies and in line with individual country circumstances when applying said policy; and
- (b) Also adopts the Gender Action Plan for the period of 2019 to 2021, as contained in annex III; and
- (c) Requests the Secretariat to implement the Gender Action Plan for the period of 2019 to 2021 and the associated gender indicators contained in annexes III and IV, respectively.

## Annex II: Gender Equality Policy of the Green Climate Fund

### I. Background

1. The Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund vests GCF with a clear mandate to enhance a gender-sensitive approach in its processes and operations. The Governing Instrument recognizes the importance of gender considerations in terms of impact and access to climate funding thus:

- (a) In paragraph 3: “The Fund will strive to maximize the impact of its funding for adaptation and mitigation, and seek a balance between the two, while promoting environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits and taking a gender-sensitive approach.”
- (b) In paragraph 31: “The Fund will provide simplified and improved access to funding, including direct access, basing its activities on a country-driven approach and will encourage the involvement of relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups and addressing gender aspects.”

2. Paragraph 71 of the Governing Instrument explicitly lists women among GCF stakeholders. Finally, the Governing Instrument calls for gender balance among members of the Board (paragraph 11) and staff of the Secretariat (paragraph 21).

3. This policy (hereinafter “Gender Equality Policy”) expresses the commitment of GCF to promote gender equality within the Secretariat, across its investment criteria<sup>1</sup> and as an integrated measure of the social dividends of the overall portfolio.

4. The Gender Equality Policy and Gender Action Plan of the GCF (hereinafter “Gender Action Plan”) were prepared taking into consideration the policies and best practices of other multilateral development banks and international organizations, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Policy on Gender Equality (2017) and the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan.

### II. Rationale

5. In the context of sustainable development, GCF will consistently apply gender-responsive implementation arrangements and frameworks to its projects. The Gender Equality Policy recognizes that gender relations, roles and responsibilities exercise important influences on women’s and men’s access to and control over decisions, assets and resources, information and knowledge. This Gender Equality Policy also recognizes that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities. The Gender Equality Policy further acknowledges that climate change initiatives are more sustainable, equitable and effective when gender equality and women’s empowerment considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects. Further this Gender Equality Policy recognizes that women and vulnerable communities are also part of the solution to climate change and should therefore be effectively engaged in discussion and decisions that affect them.

6. The Gender Equality Policy is closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that make explicit commitments to gender equality, both as a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG5) and as a theme cutting across all the SDGs. The goal on combating climate change aims to promote mechanisms for raising

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<sup>1</sup> GCF commits to six investment criteria, including impact potential, paradigm shift potential, sustainable development potential, country ownership, efficiency and effectiveness, needs of the recipient (referred to collectively as IPSCEN compliance).



capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries and small island developing States, and includes focusing on women, youth, and local and marginalized communities.

7. The Gender Equality Policy is guided by, among others, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in which the Parties to the UNFCCC note that when addressing climate change, principles of gender equality and empowerment of women should be respected, promoted and considered.<sup>2</sup> The Gender Equality Policy is also guided by the Paris Agreement, which, in Article 7.5, reflects the commitment by Parties that adaptation action should be “gender-responsive”.<sup>3</sup> Further, paragraph 7 of the preamble to the Paris Agreement, urges Parties:

“... when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.”

8. This policy will be consistent and linked with the relevant frameworks, policies and standards of GCF. These include, but are not limited to, the Indigenous Peoples Policy, Environmental and Social Policy, and the interim environmental and social safeguards (ESS) standards, the risk management framework, the Information Disclosure Policy, as well as all relevant policies that GCF may develop in the future.

### III. Objectives

9. This Gender Equality Policy reinforces the responsiveness of GCF to the multiple, heterogeneous, culturally diverse context of gender equality to better address and account for the links between gender equality and climate change. The Gender Equality Policy commits GCF to:

- (a) Enhance gender equality within its governing structure and day-to-day operations; and
- (b) Promote the goals of gender equality and women’s empowerment through its decisions on the allocation of funds, operations and overall impact.

10. This Gender Equality Policy spells out the principles for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment, through an action plan and supporting technical guidance, the operational requirements for stakeholder involvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects.

11. This Gender Equality Policy moves beyond a narrow understanding of gender to consider, respect and value the contribution of both women and men.

12. The Gender Equality Policy has three main objectives:

- (a) Support climate change interventions and innovations through a comprehensive gender-responsive approach, applied both within the institution and by its network of partners, including accredited entities (AEs), national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points, and delivery partners for activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme;
- (b) Promote climate investments that:

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf#page=2>>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <[http://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/convention/application/pdf/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf)>.

- (i) Advance gender equality through climate change mitigation and adaptation actions;
  - (ii) Minimize social and gender-related and climate-related risks, while also endeavouring to promote respect for and observance of human rights of all people, including women and men from vulnerable or marginalised communities in all climate change actions; and
- (c) Reduce the gender gap resulting from climate change exacerbated social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and exclusions through strategic climate investments that mainstream gender equality issues.

#### IV. Scope of application

13. The Gender Equality Policy is comprehensive in scope and coverage. GCF will apply its Gender Equality Policy to all its activities, including all funding activities for mitigation and adaptation undertaken by both the public and private sector. The Gender Equality Policy's objectives apply across four interconnected levels:

- (a) **At the GCF institutional level:** to adopt, implement and document the GCF gender-responsive approach in its day-to-day governance, operations and procedures, and its performance measurement frameworks while committing the necessary resources, financial and human, to make this approach robust and effective;
- (b) **At the project/portfolio level:** to address and reduce gender inequality gaps, minimize social risks, deepen stakeholder engagement and deliver better accountability to men and women to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities, health and well-being and resilience against climate-induced shocks and risks;
- (c) **At the regional and national level:** to support and sustain an enabling environment among GCF stakeholders – including NDAs/focal points, AEs, and delivery partners – that builds on existing policy commitments, environmental, and social standards, and redress mechanisms to achieve gender equality; and
- (d) **At the sector level:** to contribute to high-quality, more comprehensive, systematic and participatory sex-disaggregated data collection, qualitative and quantifiable gender analysis and action plans, and a knowledge base that supports gender-responsive learning outcomes.

14. In this way, GCF will support an institutional culture and enabling environment that integrates gender equality, vertically and horizontally, across diverse stakeholders and climate change-relevant policy processes and frameworks through the course of the project life cycle and climate investments.

#### V. Guiding principles

15. The guiding principles underpin the core values and premises of the Gender Equality Policy and are aligned with the objectives and guiding principles of the Governing Instrument.<sup>4</sup> These principles are presented in the following sections.

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<sup>4</sup> The Governing Instrument, in paragraph 3, states: “The Fund will strive to maximize the impact of its funding for adaptation and mitigation, and seek a balance between the two, while promoting environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits and taking a gender-sensitive approach.”

## 5.1 Human rights<sup>5</sup>

16. GCF recognizes the centrality of human rights to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and to ensuring fair distribution of development opportunities and benefits, and supports “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”.<sup>6</sup> All GCF activities will endeavour to promote respect for and observance of principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other relevant international treaties and agreements that may be directly applicable to the activities.

## 5.2 Country ownership

17. GCF hereby informs the countries that proposed activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, including supporting the formulation of national adaptation plans and/or other adaptation planning processes or project proposals submitted to GCF by countries, AEs, and delivery partners, must be aligned with any existing applicable policies and priorities on gender equality, and with this Gender Equality Policy.

18. GCF requires that women and men be provided with an equal opportunity take an active part in stakeholder consultations and decision-making during project preparation, implementation and evaluation. In this regard, GCF will encourage NDAs/focal points, serving as coordinating mechanisms for the engagement of their countries with GCF, to apply the principles of inclusion, equality and non-discrimination with respect to stakeholder consultations and decision-making, aligned with any existing applicable national policies and priorities on gender, this Gender Equality Policy and the guideline for enhanced country ownership and drivenness approved by the Board.<sup>7</sup>

## 5.3 Stakeholder engagement and consultation

19. For the purposes of this Gender Equality Policy, GCF requires that women and men, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, will be provided with an equal and equitable opportunity to be fully and effectively engaged in meaningful consultations and decision-making throughout the project cycle, taking into consideration the initial best-practice options for country coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement,<sup>8</sup> the country ownership guidelines,<sup>9</sup> and the principle of free, prior informed consent in projects involving indigenous peoples in line with the ESS standards of GCF and the Indigenous Peoples Policy.<sup>10</sup>

20. The GCF process requires AEs to undertake meaningful consultation that is gender-responsive and culturally aware, pursuant to the GCF Environmental and Social Policy<sup>11</sup> and Indigenous Peoples Policy, and that will be supported by the disclosure of relevant information pursuant to the Information Disclosure Policy of the GCF.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Decision 3/CP.23 states that parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligation to human rights as well as gender equality.

<sup>6</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Article 55(c). Available at <<http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-ix/index.html>>.

<sup>7</sup> Decision B.17/21.

<sup>8</sup> Decision B.08/10.

<sup>9</sup> Decision B.17/21.

<sup>10</sup> Decision B.19/11.

<sup>11</sup> Decision B.19/10.

<sup>12</sup> Decision B.12/35, paragraph (a).

## 5.4 Disclosure of information

21. GCF recognizes the importance of transparency, non-discriminatory access and accountability in all aspects of its operations. Through its Information Disclosure Policy, GCF endeavours to provide accurate, gender-related and timely information to its stakeholders, including marginalized individuals and communities, and the public at large, about its policy guidelines, standards, procedures, and project operations.

## VI. Policy requirements

22. The Gender Equality Policy requirements are categorized as follows:

- (a) GCF responsibilities;
- (b) AE and NDA/focal point roles and commitments; and
- (c) Project-level requirements.

### 6.1 GCF responsibilities

23. GCF is responsible for dedicating financial, human and other resources as required to implement the Gender Equality Policy, specifically:

- (a) GCF will ensure that entities applying to be accredited by GCF are assessed in and considered for accreditation in accordance with the accreditation framework<sup>13</sup> and based on their commitment and capacity to meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Equality Policy;
- (b) GCF will ensure that under the accreditation master agreements and funded activity agreements with AEs, the AEs are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Gender Equality Policy;
- (c) GCF will review the gender assessment submitted by the AE with each funding proposal and the project-level gender action plan and a checklist of project-level gender-responsive processes, procedures and implementation risks against which the project can be monitored;
- (d) GCF will ensure that the design and implementation of GCF-financed activities are informed by results of the gender assessments undertaken by the AEs during preparation of the activities;
- (e) GCF will require that annual performance reports submitted by AEs on GCF-funded activities include progress made in implementing project-level gender action plans;
- (f) GCF will commit resources as necessary towards independent verification and project reviews and assessments to document and publish the benefits and considerations of gender-responsive actions and achievements as deemed necessary;
- (g) GCF will develop guidelines for gender assessments that go beyond the collection of sex-disaggregated data to also account for qualitative data collection on empowerment and social norm changes;
- (h) GCF will, to the extent feasible, develop specific targets and progress indicators aligned with the SDG framework, particularly SDG5 and gender targets in the other goals; integrate both qualitative and quantitative targets and indicators as per the GCF results

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<sup>13</sup> Decision B.07/02.

management framework and performance measurement frameworks, and require all projects financed by GCF to report progress and impact against these frameworks;

- (i) GCF will generate, document, publish and archive experience gained through its actions and project investments to promote learning from the best practice implementation of its partners. GCF will also commit to capitalize on knowledge and expertise gained from other organizations and comparable climate finance mechanisms;
- (j) GCF will organize gender training or provide technical and material support for gender resources as requested by the Board. Where requested, the Secretariat may organize gender training and capacity-building for AEs and delivery partners, including through the integration of a gender training module in its activities under the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme;
- (k) GCF may complement its own technical capacity within its Secretariat with gender consultants and/or through the establishment of a gender advisory group of experts; and
- (l) GCF requires the establishment of mechanisms for grievance and redress at the level of the AE and at the level of the project, and pursuant to the ESS standards, Environmental and Social Policy, and the Indigenous Peoples Policy of GCF. All GCF-financed activities are required to establish an effective redress mechanism to address concerns related to the activities. The mechanism will facilitate the resolutions of grievances promptly through an accessible, fair and transparent and constructive process that is culturally acceptable and gender-informed.

## 6.2 Accredited entity and national designated authority/focal point roles and commitments

24. The AEs will dedicate the necessary financial, human and other resources, as required, to meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Equality Policy.

25. At the project level, the AEs will be responsible for meeting the principles and requirements of the Gender Equality Policy and supporting the implementation of the project-level gender action plan as it relates to the GCF-approved activity as well as for reporting on results including the generation and use of sex-disaggregated as well as qualitative data.

26. NDAs/focal points and AEs will take the necessary measures to ensure that proposed projects, as well as proposed activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, submitted to GCF for financing are aligned with national policies and priorities on gender.

## 6.3 Project-level requirements

27. At the project preparation stage:

- (a) GCF will require AEs to ensure that concept notes and funding proposals submitted for GCF financing meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Equality Policy;
- (b) GCF will require AEs to submit as a part of the funding proposal (i) a gender assessment, along with appropriate environmental and social assessments (as may be required according to the level of risks and impacts), and (ii) a project-level gender action plan:
  - (i) The gender assessment will integrate analysis of context and sociocultural factors underlying climate change-exacerbated gender inequality and optimize the potential contributions of women and men of all ages to build both

individual and collective resilience to climate change. This assessment will be used to inform project formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation;

- (ii) The project-level gender action plan will be based on the gender analysis and contain gender-related activities; baseline, sex-disaggregated indicators and targets; roles and responsibilities; and financial and human resources;
  - (c) GCF will require AEs to take the necessary measures to ensure gender-responsive approaches in stakeholder consultation. Information sharing equitably with women and men stakeholders is a minimum standard, in which information is both available and presented in a timely manner and accessible formats across all stakeholder groups. The approach also includes opportunities for stakeholders to share information in a two-way exchange, give regular feedback during implementation, and ensure their views and priorities are incorporated into design and practice; and
  - (d) GCF will require AEs to take the necessary measures to ensure that in stakeholder engagement men and women participate in developing measures to mitigate risks and ensure that projects do not increase gender inequality and, in optimizing the project benefits for women and men from vulnerable communities, ensure the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination.
28. At the project implementation, monitoring and reporting stage:
- (a) GCF will ensure that AEs take necessary measures to implement the project-level gender action plan submitted as part of the funding proposal approved by GCF;
  - (b) GCF will require that in implementing the project-level gender action plan, AEs will refine, as may be necessary, the gender-related baseline, indicators and targets;
  - (c) GCF will require that AEs take the necessary measures to ensure periodic updates on the gender assessments and notify GCF when there are major changes in the design and execution of projects, or other circumstances that may affect the implementation of the gender action plan. AEs will also notify GCF of any changes in the project-level gender action plan;
  - (d) GCF will ensure that AEs collect relevant data to demonstrate implementation of the project-level gender action plan;
  - (e) AEs will measure the outcomes of project activities on women's and men's adaptation and mitigation to climate change through sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis (qualitative and quantitative) throughout the project's life cycle; and
  - (f) GCF will require AEs to monitor and report on the progress made in implementing the project-level gender action plan.

## **VII. Key priority areas for operationalizing the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan**

29. The implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan will focus on the following five priority areas, as described in detail in annex III to this document, including:
- (a) Governance;
  - (b) Competencies and capacity development;
  - (c) Resource allocation, accessibility and budgeting;
  - (d) Operational procedures; and

- (e) Knowledge generation and communications.

## VIII. Effectiveness and revision

30. This Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan will come into effect upon adoption by the Board. The policy will apply to ongoing activities to the extent reasonably possible and those that will be approved after the effective date of this policy<sup>14</sup>. This Gender Equality Policy will remain in effect until amended or superseded by the Board.

31. The Secretariat understands that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the institutional and project levels is a long-term undertaking and a sustained commitment, which includes tracking and reporting on progress annually. It also acknowledges that approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment evolve over time. The Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed and updated as determined by the Board.

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<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise provided for in any signed accreditation master agreement, in which case the relevant provisions of the accreditation master agreement will prevail.



## Annex III: Gender Action Plan of GCF for 2019 to 2021

### I. Introduction

1. The duration of the Gender Action Plan of GCF (hereafter “Gender Action Plan”) is three years.
2. The operationalization of the Gender Equality Policy of GCF (hereafter “Gender Equality Policy”) rests among Secretariat roles, commitments and responsibilities and the compliance required by accredited entities (AEs) on project preparation, implementation, monitoring and reporting. GCF will develop sufficient institutional capacity and expertise to promote its gender objectives and ambitions.
3. The purpose of the Gender Action Plan is to provide a time-bound framework within which to operationalize the Gender Equality Policy. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan will require GCF to ensure that AEs have established competencies, tools and processes to achieve gender-responsive results. It also provides the Board with the information required to exercise its oversight responsibility for the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan, as mandated by the Governing Instrument for the GCF.
4. The Gender Action Plan is structured into five priority areas with accompanying details on the implementation actions required for each priority area.

#### 1.1 Priority area 1: governance

5. GCF will strive to reach gender parity in all key advisory and decision-making bodies, including in the appointments of members of the Board, the Accreditation Panel (AP), the independent Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) and the Secretariat.
6. The Board will approve and periodically review the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan and oversee the implementation of the Gender Action Plan through the review of periodic monitoring reports from the Secretariat, particularly the Portfolio Management Unit (PMU), impact evaluation reports from the Independent Evaluation Unit, and any reports from the Independent Redress Mechanism.
7. The Secretariat will undertake due diligence of the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan by internal gender audits, and through a project approval and monitoring process. Internal audits should include performance against organizational, process-level indicators listed in annex IV to this document. The implementation of this Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan will require gender competencies within the AP, the independent TAP and the Board. The Secretariat will report to the Board on the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan on an annual basis.
8. The overall implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan is the responsibility of GCF. At the project level, GCF will ensure that the AEs meet the project-level requirements of the Gender Equality Policy.
9. National designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points may request readiness and preparatory support from GCF to develop and/or strengthen their policies, procedures and competencies to meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.

#### 1.2 Priority area 2: competencies and capacity development

10. GCF will ensure that learning in relation to gender equality and climate change becomes a valuable and required asset available to all staff and that this requirement is integrated into



key qualification criteria across the organization. GCF will ensure that resources are available for internal learning for GCF personnel and the Board to fully subscribe to principles of the Gender Equality Policy, not just as an operational project impact issue but as a fundamental way to include people in all their diversity to engage with, contribute to and benefit from GCF policies and investment decisions.

11. GCF is accountable for results on gender equality and the empowerment of women related to its mandate and interventions. This will be reflected in GCF administrative policies and procedures, human resource management guidelines that adhere to the principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination and respect for individuals regardless of their gender.
12. The Secretariat will undergo training on gender-mainstreaming approaches and be supported to contribute to institutional guidelines to operationalize the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.
13. In addition to the appointment of a gender and social specialist, the Secretariat may consider appointing a senior staff member as the gender focal point or Champion reporting to the Executive Director to lead the implementation of the policy as an intra-Secretariat coordination group.
14. GCF published a gender and climate change toolkit<sup>1</sup> that provides details on how to programme gender-responsive climate change tools to mainstream gender in the overall project life-cycle. This toolkit will be disseminated widely among NDAs/focal points, AEs, delivery partners and other relevant stakeholders. Training will also be provided to NDAs/focal points, AEs, and delivery partners on how to interpret and operationalize the toolkit. The gender and social specialist at GCF will work closely with the Secretariat to conduct training sessions on applying the toolkit.
15. GCF will leverage national and regional outreach and capacity development events and activities to raise awareness, build capacity, and share knowledge on gender equality and the empowerment of women and men in climate change.

### 1.3 Priority area 3: resource allocation, accessibility and budgeting

16. GCF resource allocation for adaptation and mitigation projects contributes to gender and women's empowerment. GCF will ensure that its projects support initiatives addressing the inequity of climate change impacts and provide gender-responsive solutions to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and country-driven readiness and national-level adaptation programmes.
17. When it is necessary to correct gender inequalities exacerbated by climate change, GCF will determine its strategy for targeted gender-responsive climate financing (e.g. through requests for proposals) to support women and men's climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives at the grassroots.
18. At the Secretariat level, appropriate human, financial and material resources will be allocated through the administrative budget to carry out knowledge management, monitoring, evaluation, learning, capacity development, and implementation support.
19. GCF will require AE to submit funding proposals that contain gender assessments and project-level gender action plans, which include implementation budget.

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<sup>1</sup> GCF and United Nations Women, *Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects*. Available at <[https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/194568/Guidelines\\_-\\_GCF\\_Toolkit\\_Mainstreaming\\_Gender.pdf/860d1d03-877d-4c64-9a49-c0160c794ca7](https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/194568/Guidelines_-_GCF_Toolkit_Mainstreaming_Gender.pdf/860d1d03-877d-4c64-9a49-c0160c794ca7)>.

## 1.4 Priority area 4: operational procedures

20. The Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan will be implemented throughout GCF project life cycles and operational processes, and this implementation will consist of a set of agreed-upon or predetermined activities that will lead to a greater understanding and oversight of gender-responsive organizational goals. GCF will ensure that AEs have in place gender equality competencies to support the operationalisation of this Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. Guidelines will be issued for the benefit of NDAs/focal points, AEs and delivery partners. The guidelines will apply to all activities, including private sector activities, and to the GCF project/activity cycle.<sup>2</sup> GCF will ensure that AEs undertake:

- (a) A mandatory initial gender assessment and develop a project-level gender action plan, complementary to the environmental and social safeguards (ESS) requirements. The gender assessment and the project-level gender action plan will:
  - (i) Collect baseline data and determine how the project can respond to the needs and strategic interests of women and men in view of the specific climate change issue to be addressed;
  - (ii) Identify the drivers of change and the gender dynamics to achieve the project adaptation or mitigation goals;
  - (iii) Identify and design the specific gender elements to be included in the project activities;
  - (iv) Estimate the implementation budgets;
  - (v) Select appropriate and measurable output, outcome and impact indicators;
  - (vi) Design project implementation and monitoring institutional arrangements.
- (b) Gender-equitable, inclusive and meaningful stakeholder engagement and consultations conducted and documented throughout the design and implementation of the project, and:
  - (i) Guidance on the application of the free, prior and informed consent principle will be developed and maintained in consultation with communities in their full diversity as part of the operational guidelines of this policy;
  - (ii) Inclusion of gender perspectives in the application of the mandatory project social and environmental safeguards in line with project-specific requirements of the ESS in accordance with decision B.07/02;<sup>3</sup> and
  - (iii) Project screening for gender responsiveness at various stages of the project preparation, appraisal, approval, and monitoring process, by the relevant bodies (NDAs/focal points, AEs, and the Secretariat).

21. NDAs/focal points and entities may request support under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme to enhance their capacity to implement the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. The GCF may develop sector notes on gender that promote the use of knowledge and lessons learned on gender issues as well as methodologies for assessing impacts and may conduct in-house learning to promote gender-responsive climate investments.

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<sup>2</sup> Decision B.07/03.

<sup>3</sup> The initial socioeconomic and gender assessment is recommended for GCF to proactively build in a gender-responsive approach to project planning design and implementation arrangements, in contrast to the GCF ESS, which employs the conventional “do no harm” approach to ensure that all project potential environmental risks are addressed and that measures are identified to offset these risks.

22. The GCF proposal approval process will guide project developers to select and apply a range of gender indicators to measure progress, outcomes and impacts. Areas of measurement could include:
- (a) Measuring added social value to a project's development impact through its contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment; and
  - (b) Measuring activity outcomes that target and address gender gaps. These may include: economic opportunities; concerns regarding decision-making and leadership; and addressing division of labour and time poverty.
23. The Secretariat is accountable to its Board for gender and climate change results and outcomes and reports annually in a transparent manner. Additional qualitative and quantitative gender monitoring, impact and outcome indicators, as well as methodologies for sex-disaggregated data collection, will be developed to complement those included in the results management and performance measurement frameworks.<sup>4</sup> Progress on gender results will be reported to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties as part of the GCF annual report to the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat will provide regular (i.e. quarterly) policy monitoring reports to the Board.
24. AEs will be responsible for reporting on gender-related risks in relation to GCF-financed activities and reporting on how these risks are minimized or mitigated.
25. GCF will undertake gender mainstreaming<sup>5</sup> performance assessments periodically at the project level to assess if there are any programmatic and operational gaps that might have limited AEs from achieving goals related to gender and will recommend corrective measures to be undertaken by AEs. The gender assessments, when necessary, may be outsourced to an external agency with sufficient expertise in conducting such assessments.

## 1.5 Priority area 5: knowledge generation and communications

26. As a learning institution, the GCF will work with NDAs/focal points, AEs, and delivery partners to document experience and knowledge gained from applying the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan to activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, country programme development, concept notes, funding proposals and project activities. It will seek to identify good practices from NDAs/focal points and their countries, AEs, delivery partners, and observers to Board meetings and tap into the contextual knowledge already available on gender and climate mitigation and adaptation programmes and projects implemented by other partners. GCF will support global, regional, national and sub-national knowledge exchange activities on gender and climate change finance.
27. Communicating the GCF commitment to gender, its policy and its implementation guidance will be a strategic communications activity and an integral part of the GCF communications plan. It will be important to communicate to the public not only how GCF is implementing its updated Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan, but also to seek periodic feedback from stakeholders and partners on the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and on possible improvements in the Gender Action Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Decision B.08/07.

<sup>5</sup> The ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 defines gender mainstreaming as: ...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Further information is available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/ECOSOCAC1997.2.PDF>.

## Annex IV: Implementation plan

Priority areas	Results to be achieved: implementation of the Gender Equality Policy				
	Action	Indicators	Responsibility	Timing	Budget estimates
Priority area 1: governance	1. Approval of the updated policy		Board, Secretariat, Portfolio Management Unit, Independent Redress Mechanism, Accreditation Panel	July 2019 annually starting in July 2019; applicable to entities that submit their application for accreditation after adoption of the updated Gender Equality Policy	No cost implications No additional costs envisaged No cost implications
	2. Periodic monitoring of reports on the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual progress reports to the Board</li> <li>• Gender equality is covered in the annual Independent Redress Mechanism report and in the annual report to the Conference of the Parties</li> </ul>			
	3. Include performance on gender equality in the accreditation requirements related to the GCF Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of AEs with policies and procedures on gender equality at the time of accreditation</li> <li>• Percentage of AEs with gender equality competencies and track records in gender equality issues at the stage of accreditation</li> <li>• Percentage of direct access applicants and AEs requiring readiness support for the development of gender equality policies and procedures</li> </ul>			
Priority area 2: competencies and capacity- development	1. Increase the knowledge of GCF partners on gender equality and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of development partners, stakeholders, NDAs/focal points and AEs that received gender training</li> </ul>	Secretariat and partners	2019–2021	USD 100,000

Priority areas	Results to be achieved: implementation of the Gender Equality Policy				
	Action	Indicators	Responsibility	Timing	Budget estimates
	2. Improve the understanding of how to programme for gender equality results among GCF partners by disseminating the GCF gender and climate change toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GCF gender toolkit disseminated, and guidance provided to NDAs/focal points and AEs on how to interpret the information contained in the toolkit</li> </ul>			
Priority area 3: resource allocation, accessibility and budgeting	Funding to support gender issues in GCF and partner operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved budget amount for targeted gender support at the project/programme/portfolio level</li> <li>Percentage of the annual administrative budget earmarked by the Secretariat to support gender expertise (staff, consultants), training, communications and monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>	AE/Secretariat	Annually	Cost estimates to be presented by the AE at the project level and costs to be factored in by the Secretariat in the annual work plan/administrative budget
Priority area 4: operational procedures	<p>Include gender equality consideration in the GCF Operational Manual:</p> <p>1. Guidance for NDAs/focal points, AEs on the mandatory socioeconomic and gender assessment and action plan at</p>	Guidelines issued and communicated to NDAs/focal points and AEs through the GCF website and through active outreach	Secretariat	2019–2021	USD 30,000 annually for training sessions

Priority areas	Results to be achieved: implementation of the Gender Equality Policy				
	Action	Indicators	Responsibility	Timing	Budget estimates
	the start of each project		Secretariat	2019-2020	USD 75,000
	2. Guidance on gender-responsive project design elements, budgets, results, monitoring, and impact indications, preparation, implementation and the monitoring of institutional arrangements	100% of all approved funding proposals contain a gender assessment and a project-level gender action plan, made for public viewing on the GCF website			

Priority areas	Results to be achieved: implementation of the Gender Equality Policy				
	Action	Indicators	Responsibility	Timing	Budget estimates
	3. Develop applied toolkits and sourcebooks for NDAs/focal points and AEs on gender and climate change mitigation and adaptation, including for specific sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of training sessions on the guidelines provided to NDAs/focal points and AEs, and the qualitative reporting of these trainings</li> <li>• Number of toolkits, sourcebooks and references posted on the GCF website</li> </ul>	Portfolio Management Unit, Independent Evaluation Unit, Gender Specialist with support from an external agency	2019-2021	USD 300,000 for third-party evaluation
	4. Application of gender equality guidelines in project preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of projects that apply gender-balanced stakeholder consultations</li> <li>• Number of funding proposals whose principal objective is to promote gender equality in climate action</li> <li>• Number of projects where women and men report improvements in their quality of life</li> <li>• Number of projects that demonstrate reduced vulnerability of both women and men</li> <li>• Number of projects that demonstrate increased adaptive capacity of women and men to respond to the impacts of climate change</li> <li>• Number of projects that contain strategies and specific budgets to leverage co-benefits between gender equality and climate action</li> </ul>			

Priority areas	Results to be achieved: implementation of the Gender Equality Policy				
	Action	Indicators	Responsibility	Timing	Budget estimates
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects with resilient infrastructure measures in place to prevent economic losses and mitigate gender-related risks</li> <li>• Number of projects that have undertaken a gender audit and strengthened operational systems and made course corrections to mainstream gender</li> <li>• Increase in the number of funding proposals with principal objectives of promoting gender equality in climate change</li> </ul>			
Priority area 5: knowledge generation and communications	Assess the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stock-taking” report posted on the website</li> <li>• Gender-responsive communications and dissemination strategy developed</li> <li>• Gender-responsive communication materials developed and disseminated to internal and external stakeholders</li> <li>• Gender-responsive public outreach activities undertaken at the national and grassroots level</li> <li>• Multimedia campaign on gender equality and climate change launched at the country level</li> </ul>	Board, Gender Specialist, Communications Unit	2019–2021	USD 300,000
Total					USD 805,000

Abbreviations: NDA = national designated authority, AE = accredited entity.