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Updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan 2020–2023

Summary

This document presents an update of the Gender Policy and Gender 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, review of current practices, consultations required to update the policy including undertaking assessment of implementation considerations, particularly direct costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the policy. The major updates are those introducing and establishing a structure, making the gender assessment and gender 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 2020–2023 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. Annex V of this document presents the annual report as well as the survey on the implementation of the Gender Policy.

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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). 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.

4. At B.19 the Board considered the gender policy and action plan however, no decision was taken under the agenda item. At B.20 and B.21 the agenda item on the updated Gender Policy and Action Plan was not opened. At B.22 the Board, in decision B.22/17, decided to continue the consideration of the updated Gender Policy and Action Plan with a view that it would be presented for consideration and approval of the Board at its next meeting. At B.23 the Board, in decision B.23/09, requested the Secretariat to present an assessment of implementation considerations, including direct costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the Gender Policy, as well as an assessment of the capacity within the Secretariat, direct access entities and other accredited entities, and national designated authorities/focal points to implement such Policy. The Board also requested the Secretariat to present for consideration of the Board at its twenty-fourth meeting a revised updated Gender Policy and an updated Gender Action Plan, building on the progress made in the consultations on the draft document so far and the assessment of the Secretariat on the implementation considerations, with a view to circulate it to Board members and alternate members with sufficient time for consultations to occur between Board members and alternate members prior to its finalization and publication.

5. This document summarizes the progress in updating the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan, describes the draft updates to the Gender Policy and Gender 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.24/15 titled “Updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan 2020–2023”, including the draft Gender Policy contained in annex II to this document, and the draft Gender Action Plan 2020–2023 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, B19/04 and B.23/14);
 - (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);

- (r) “Indigenous Peoples Policy” (decision B.19/11); and
- (s) “Policy on the Prevention and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (decision B.23/14).

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 provide their views and inputs on 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 solicit views on 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. 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, Climate Investment Funds and Adaptation Fund, have comprehensive gender policies and action plans, which the GCF can draw on for guidance and lessons.

V. Lessons learned

11. The updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan drew lessons from the implementation of the gender policy to date. The review indicates that 95 per cent (106 out of 111) of the approved projects have provided gender assessments, while 89 per cent (99 out of 111) have been able to provide gender action plans. The review also indicated that 78 per cent (87 out of 111) of the approved projects have provided sex-disaggregated indicators. Assessments and action plans are geared towards addressing climate-induced challenges faced by women who are found vulnerable. Assessments demonstrate women to be at disadvantaged positions and face challenges to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts despite the fact that in many of the countries there is recognition and an enabling environment to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

12. The updated policy also draws from lessons learned from development institutions, donors and civil society in implementing their gender policies.

13. In addition, a survey was conducted in September 2019 by the Secretariat to seek the views from AEs and NDAs and focal points on the costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the gender policy in accordance with decision B.23/09, paragraph (c). A total of 46 respondents – 26 NDAs and focal points and 20 AEs (58 per cent direct access and 42 per cent international access) – submitted their views. Respondents were AEs that have already

submitted funding proposals to the GCF, those that have funding proposals approved and those already at the implementation phase.

14. Overall there are perceptions that the gender policy's requirements are beneficial, as respondents indicated it has made multiple contributions towards fulfilling gender-related commitments that countries have and also towards addressing the needs of communities. Financial resources to undertake the gender assessments and develop and implement the action plan are available. The findings, however, indicate the need to develop the capacities of AEs, NDAs and focal points to enable them to better mainstream gender in projects. Recommendations for providing training and workshops in addition to ensuring financial resources for implementation were provided.

VI. Summary of updates to the Gender Policy and Action Plan

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

- (a) The policy strives to mainstream gender issues in all its interventions. It implies systemic gender mainstreaming throughout the GCF policies, plans and programmes;
- (b) In addition to requiring gender assessments, the policy suggests a mandatory requirement to submit project-level gender action plans;
- (c) The policy outlines clear requirements across the project life cycle and with respect to the roles and responsibilities for GCF and AEs;
- (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 Gender Action Plan (annex IV) provides indicative portfolio-level gender-related indicators to operationalize the updated Gender Policy, together with budget provisions related to knowledge management, capacity development, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

VII. Next steps

16. The Secretariat will implement the updated Gender Policy by carrying out the corresponding Gender Action Plan provided in annex III to this document. At the same time, GCF will 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-related 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 of the Board

The Board, having considered document GCF/B.24/15 titled “Updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan 2020–2023”:

- (a) Takes note of the Secretariat’s report of the survey findings on the direct costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the policy and acknowledges the progress made in the implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan as presented in section III of annex V;
- (b) Also takes note of the gender action plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and related matters regarding gender sensitive and gender responsive climate policy;
- (c) Requests the Secretariat, in its annual reports to the Board, to provide a GCF-focused implementation perspective related to gender-responsive climate policy;
- (d) Confirms that national designated authorities 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 updated Gender Policy of the GCF and the Gender Action Plan of the GCF 2020–2023;
- (e) Adopts the updated Gender Policy of the GCF 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;
- (f) Also adopts the Gender Action Plan of the GCF 2020–2023, as contained in annex III; and
- (g) Requests the Secretariat to implement the Gender Action Plan for the period of 2020 to 2023 and the associated gender indicators, as contained in annexes III and IV, respectively.

Annex II: Gender Policy of the GCF

I. Background

1. The Governing Instrument for the GCF 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”; and
- (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 the members of the Board (para. 11) and the staff of the Secretariat (para. 21).

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

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

II. Rationale

5. In the context of sustainable development, GCF will consistently mainstream gender issues in its implementation arrangements and frameworks for its projects. The Gender 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 Policy also recognizes that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities. The Gender Policy further acknowledges that climate change initiatives are more sustainable, equitable and more likely to achieve their objectives when gender equality and women’s empowerment considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects. Further, this Gender Policy recognizes that women and vulnerable communities are also part of the solution to climate change and should, therefore, be effectively engaged in discussions and decisions that affect them.

6. The Gender Policy is closely aligned 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 (SDG5) and as a theme cutting across all the SDGs. An aim of combating climate change is to promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries and

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

small island developing States, and includes focusing on women, youth, and local and marginalized communities.

7. The Gender Policy is guided by, among others, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in which the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change note that when addressing climate change, principles of gender equality and empowerment of women should be respected, promoted and considered.² The Gender 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”.³ Further, 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. The Gender Policy will be consistent with and linked to the existing relevant frameworks, policies and standards of GCF as well as relevant policies that GCF may develop in the future.

III. Objectives

9. This Gender 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 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 as outlined in the Gender Action Plan.

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

12. The Gender Policy has three main objectives:

- (a) To support climate change interventions and innovations through a comprehensive gender 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) To promote climate investments that:
 - (i) Advance gender equality through climate change mitigation and adaptation actions; and

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

³ Available at <http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf>.

- (ii) Minimize social, gender-related and climate-related risks while also endeavouring to promote respect for and observance of the human rights of all people, including women and men from vulnerable or marginalized communities in all climate change actions; and
- (c) To contribute to reducing the gender gap of climate change-exacerbated social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and exclusions through GCF climate investments that mainstream gender equality issues.

IV. Scope of application

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

- (a) **At the GCF institutional level:** to adopt, implement and document the GCF approach to addressing gender issues in its day-to-day governance, operations and procedures, and its performance measurement frameworks as reflected in the Gender Action Plan 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, deepen stakeholder engagement and deliver better accountability to both men and women to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities, health and well-being, and resilience against climate-induced shocks and risks;
- (c) **At the 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-related 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. Guiding principles underpin the core values and premises of the Gender Policy and are aligned with the objectives and guiding principles of the Governing Instrument.⁴ These principles are presented in the following sections.

⁴ 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 rights⁵

16. GCF recognizes that, in accordance with the preamble to the Paris Agreement acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind,⁶ actions to address climate change should respect, promote and consider the obligations of countries 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.

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, that they must be informed and guided by this Gender Policy and any existing applicable policies and priorities on gender equality.

18. GCF requires that women and men be provided with equal opportunity to take an active part in stakeholder consultations and decision-making during project preparation, implementation and evaluation. In this regard, GCF will encourage the 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 capacities and applicable policies and priorities of the country on gender, this Gender Policy, the guideline for enhanced country ownership and drivenness, and initial best practice options for country coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement approved by the Board.⁷

5.3 Stakeholder engagement and consultation

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

20. The GCF process requires AEs to undertake consultation that is gender sensitive and culturally aware, pursuant to the GCF Environmental and Social Policy¹¹ and Indigenous Peoples Policy, and that will be supported by the disclosure of relevant information pursuant to the Information Disclosure Policy of the GCF.¹²

⁵ 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.

⁶ Available at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf>.

⁷ Decision B.17/21.

⁸ Decision B.08/10.

⁹ Decision B.17/21.

¹⁰ Decision B.19/11.

¹¹ Decision B.19/10.

¹² 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, communities and the public at large, about its policy guidelines, standards, procedures and project operations.

VI. Policy requirements

22. The Gender Policy requirements are categorized as follows:

- (a) GCF responsibilities;
- (b) AE 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 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 framework¹³ and taking into account their commitment and capacity to meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy;
- (b) GCF will ensure that under the accreditation master agreements and funded activity agreements with AEs, the AEs are required to comply with the requirements of the Gender Policy;
- (c) GCF will review the gender assessment and the project-level gender action plan submitted by the AE with each funding proposal and monitor implementation;
- (d) GCF will ensure that the design and implementation of GCF-financed activities are informed by the results of the gender assessments undertaken by the AE during the 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 actions and achievements that address gender issues as deemed necessary;
- (g) 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 management framework and performance measurement frameworks, and require all projects financed by GCF to report progress and impact against these frameworks;
- (h) GCF will generate, document, publish and archive experience gained through its actions and project investments to promote learning from the best practice implementation of

¹³ Decision B.07/02.

its partners. GCF will also commit to capitalize on knowledge and expertise gained from other organizations and comparable climate finance mechanisms;

- (i) 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;
- (j) GCF may complement its own technical capacity within the Secretariat with gender consultants and/or through the establishment of a gender advisory group of experts; and
- (k) Gender-related grievances that may occur in projects and programmes may also be processed through the Independent Redress Mechanism as well as the AE and the project-level grievance redress mechanisms pursuant to the environmental and social safeguards standards, Environmental and Social Policy, and the Indigenous Peoples Policy of GCF.

6.2 Accredited entities and commitments

24. The AEs will dedicate the necessary financial, human and other resources, as appropriate, to comply with the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy.

25. At the project level, the AEs will be responsible for meeting the principles and requirements of the Gender 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. The 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, the GCF will require AEs to:

- (a) Ensure that concept notes and funding proposals submitted for GCF financing meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy;
- (b) 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; and
- (c) 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.

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; and

- (d) 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 Policy of the GCF and Gender Action Plan of the GCF 2020–2023

29. The implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender 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 Policy and Gender 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.¹⁴ This Gender 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 Policy will be reviewed and updated by a decision of the Board, as appropriate.

¹⁴ 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 the GCF 2020–2023

I. Introduction

1. The duration of the Gender Action Plan of the GCF 2020–2023 (hereinafter “Gender Action Plan”) is three years.
2. The operationalization of the Gender Policy of the GCF (hereinafter “Gender 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 Policy. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan will require GCF to ensure that AEs have established competencies, tools and processes to achieve results. It also provides the Board with the information required to exercise its oversight responsibility for the Gender Policy and Gender 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 the Accreditation Panel, the independent Technical Advisory Panel and the Secretariat.
6. The Board will approve and periodically review the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan and oversee the implementation of the Gender Action Plan through the review of periodic monitoring reports from the Secretariat.
7. The Secretariat will undertake due diligence of the implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan by internal gender audits, and through a project approval and monitoring process. Internal audits should include performance against organizational, process-level indicators of the Gender Action Plan, as listed in annex IV to this document. The implementation of this Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan will require gender competencies within the Accreditation Panel, the independent Technical Advisory Panel and the Board. The Secretariat will report to the Board on the implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan on an annual basis.
8. The overall implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan is the responsibility of GCF. The Gender Action Plan contains an indicative budget, which will be allocated from the administrative and the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme. At the project level, GCF will ensure that the AEs meet the project-level requirements of the Gender 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 Policy and Gender 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 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 the development of institutional guidelines to operationalize the Gender Policy and Gender 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 toolkit¹ that provides details on how to programme 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.²

15. GCF will use outreach and capacity development events and activities to raise awareness, build capacity, and share knowledge about the Gender Policy.

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 solutions to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and country-driven readiness and national-level adaptation programs. When it is necessary to correct for climate change-exacerbated gender inequality, which affects women, GCF will target funds to support women's climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

17. 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.

18. GCF will require AEs to submit funding proposals that contain gender assessments and project-level gender action plans, which include implementation budgets.

² 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>.

1.4 Priority area 4: operational procedures

19. The Gender Policy and Gender 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 greater understanding and oversight of gender-related organizational goals. GCF will ensure that AEs have in place gender equality competencies to support the operationalization of this Gender Policy and Gender 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.³ 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; and
 - (vi) Design project implementation and monitoring of institutional arrangements; and
- (b) Gender-equitable and inclusive stakeholder engagement and consultations conducted and documented throughout the design and implementation of the project/programme, as follows:
 - (i) 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;⁴ and
 - (ii) Project screening for the integration of gender issues at various stages of the project preparation, appraisal, approval and monitoring process by the relevant bodies (NDAs/focal points, AEs, and the Secretariat).

20. NDAs/focal points and entities may request support under the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme to enhance their capacity to implement the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan. 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 it may conduct in-house learning to promote gender mainstreaming in climate investments.

21. The GCF proposal approval process will guide AEs to select and apply a range of gender indicators to measure progress, outcomes and impacts.

³ Decision B.07/03.

⁴ 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 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.⁵ Progress on gender results will be reported to the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 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.

23. 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.

24. GCF will undertake gender mainstreaming⁶ 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

25. 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 Policy and Gender Action Plan to activities under the 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 subnational knowledge exchange activities on gender and climate change finance.

26. Communicating the GCF commitment to gender, its Gender 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 Policy and Gender Action Plan but also to seek periodic feedback from stakeholders and partners on the implementation of the Gender Policy and on possible improvements in the Gender Action Plan.

⁵ Decision B.08/07.

⁶ The United Nations Economic and Social Council 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: Gender Action Plan

Priority areas	Results to be achieved: implementation of the Gender 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 2020 annually starting in July 2020; applicable to entities that submit their application for accreditation after the adoption of the updated Gender Policy	No cost implications No additional costs envisaged No cost implications
	2. Periodic monitoring of reports on the implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual progress reports to the Board Reporting on gender issues is covered in the annual Independent Redress Mechanism report and in the annual report to the Conference of the Parties 			
	3. Include performance on gender equality in the accreditation requirements related to the GCF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of AEs with policies and procedures on gender equality at the time of accreditation Percentage of AEs with gender equality competencies and track records in gender equality issues at the stage of accreditation Percentage of direct access applicants and AEs requesting readiness support for the development of gender equality policies and procedures 			
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"> Number of stakeholders, NDAs/focal points and AEs that received gender training 	Secretariat and partners	2020–2023	USD 100,000

	<p>2. Improve the understanding of how to programme for gender equality results among GCF partners by disseminating the GCF gender and climate change toolkit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCF gender toolkit disseminated, and guidance provided to NDAs/focal points and AEs on how to interpret the information contained in the toolkit 			
<p>Priority area 3: resource allocation, accessibility and budgeting</p>	<p>Funding to support gender issues for GCF and AEs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved budget amount for targeted gender support at the project/programme/portfolio level Percentage of the annual administrative budget earmarked by the Secretariat to support gender expertise (staff, consultants), training, communications and monitoring and evaluation 	<p>AEs/Secretariat</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Priority area 4: operational procedures</p>	<p>Include gender equality consideration in the GCF Operational Manual:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for NDAs/focal points, AEs on the mandatory socioeconomic and gender assessment and gender action plan at the start of each project 	<p>Guidelines issued and communicated to NDAs/focal points and AEs through the GCF website and through active outreach</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>	<p>2020-2023</p>	<p>USD 30,000 annually for training sessions</p>

	<p>2. Guidance on project design elements, budgets, results, monitoring, and impact indications, preparation, implementation and the monitoring of institutional arrangements</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>	<p>2020–2023</p>	<p>USD 75,000</p>
<p>3. Develop applied toolkits and sourcebooks for NDAs/focal points and AEs on gender and climate change mitigation and adaptation, including for specific sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training sessions on the guidelines provided to NDAs/focal points and AEs, and the qualitative reporting of these training • Number of toolkits, sourcebooks and references posted on the GCF website 				
<p>4. Application of gender equality guidelines in project preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of projects that apply gender-balanced stakeholder consultations • Number of funding proposals whose principal objective is to promote gender equality in climate action • Number of projects where women and men report improvements in their quality of life 	<p>Office of Portfolio Management,</p>			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects that demonstrate the reduced vulnerability of both women and men • Number of projects that demonstrate increased adaptive capacity of women and men to respond to the impacts of climate change • Number of projects that contain strategies and specific budgets to leverage co-benefits between gender equality and climate action • Projects with resilient infrastructure measures in place to prevent economic losses and mitigate gender-related risks • Number of projects that have undertaken a gender audit and strengthened operational systems and made course corrections to mainstream gender • Increase in the number of funding proposals with principal objectives of promoting gender equality in climate change 	Independent Evaluation Unit, Gender Specialist with support from an external agency	2020-2023	USD 300,000 for third-party evaluation
Priority area 5: knowledge generation and communications	Assess the implementation of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Stock-taking” report posted on the website • Communications and dissemination strategy that address gender issues developed • Communication materials developed and disseminated to internal and external stakeholders 	Board, Gender Specialist, Communications Unit	2020-2023	USD 300,000

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public outreach activities undertaken at the national and grassroots level • Multimedia campaign on gender equality and climate change launched at the country level 			
Total					USD 805,000

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

Annex V: Report on the implementation of the Gender Policy and summary of survey findings on the implementation of the Gender Policy

I. Introduction

1. The report has two sections. The first section of this document presents information on the implementation of the Gender Policy as reported by the Secretariat since its adoption up to 31 October 2019.
2. The second section of the document presents the findings of a survey on implementation considerations, including direct costs and benefits, associated with the implementation of the Gender Policy. The survey was shared with and responses gathered from accredited entities (AEs), national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points.

II. Implementation of the Gender Policy

3. This document presents information on the implementation of the Gender Policy as reported by the Secretariat since the adoption of the Gender Policy up to 31 October 2019.

2.1 Report on the implementation in 2019

2.1.1. Mainstreaming gender in funded activities

4. The Secretariat has continued with the work of advancing gender mainstreaming across its activities. At the portfolio level, the Secretariat is proactively reviewing concept notes, funding proposals, readiness proposals, Project Preparation Facility requests and national adaptation plans to ensure that gender considerations are included in order to meet the objectives of the commitments under the Gender Policy. As part of the project appraisal process, AEs have been undertaking gender assessments and developing gender action plans. To date, 95 per cent of all approved funding proposals contain gender assessments, and 89 per cent of all approved funding proposals contain project-level gender action plans. All funding proposals presented for the Board's consideration at its twenty-second, twenty-third and twenty-fourth meetings (B.22, B.23 and B.24, respectively) have conducted gender assessments and provide project-level gender action plans. The project-level gender action plans include activities that are aimed at addressing the gender-related challenges identified through the gender assessments, and they also include indicators and targets to measure results and resources to ensure the implementation of activities such as appropriate human as well as financial resources.

5. Gender-related activities have continued to be integrated into the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (Readiness Programme) and the Secretariat is in the process of securing resources to develop and deliver training on gender, environmental and social safeguards (ESS) and indigenous peoples. This will focus on assessing capacity needs and developing targeted gaps in the capacities of NDAs and AEs to fulfil the requirements of the gender, ESS and indigenous peoples policies. In addition, the Secretariat is augmenting its capacity by having an additional consultant on its roster of experts to assist in the review of funding proposals and refining guidelines and checklists.

6. As a result, 14 proposals will be presented for the Board's consideration at B.24, and the Secretariat is working to finalize the full funding proposal packages, including Secretariat

assessment findings, gender assessments, independent Technical Advisory Panel assessments, and all annexes prior to Board publication.

2.1.2. Policy updating process

7. The Secretariat, following the adoption of the Gender Policy in 2015, and as per decision B.12/16, has engaged in updating the Gender Policy. The updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan were presented to the Board at B.22. Following the presentation, the Board mandated Board members from Canada and Egypt to continue consultations with the Board and decision B.22/17 was made for the revised Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan to be presented for consideration and approval at B.23. Since B.22, the Secretariat has continued to provide technical support to the advisers to the Canadian and Egyptian Board members.

8. At B.23, the Board, through the decision B.23/09, requested the Secretariat to present an assessment of implementation considerations, including direct costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the Gender Policy as well as an assessment of the capacity within the Secretariat, direct access entities (DAEs) and other AEs, and NDAs/focal points to implement such a policy; the Board also requested the Secretariat to present for the consideration of the Board at B.24 a revised updated Gender Policy and an updated Gender Action Plan, building on the progress made in the consultations on the draft document so far and the assessment of the Secretariat on the implementation considerations, with a view to circulate it to Board and alternate members with sufficient time for consultations to occur between Board and alternate members prior to its finalization and publication in accordance with paragraph 21 of the Rules of Procedure of the Board.

9. Following this decision, the Secretariat conducted a survey of DAEs and other AEs, and NDAs/focal points to determine the implementation considerations, including direct costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the Gender Policy. A draft policy and gender action plan were circulated to the Board in October 2019 together with the implementation considerations in order to gather comments. The Secretariat prepared to present the updated policy at B.24 as per decision B.23/09.

2.1.3. Accreditation support

10. In a bid to mainstream gender and address it throughout the different functions of the Secretariat continuing to support subnational, national and regional public and private sector entities seeking, or in the process of seeking accreditation. This support includes in-kind support, providing institutional gap assessments and action plans, the online accreditation self-assessment tool and engaging a roster of institutions that will provide technical and capacity-building support to both applicants and accredited DAEs in environmental, social and gender aspects of the proposed projects/programmes. During the course of the year accordingly the Secretariat is engaging a roster of institutions that will provide technical and capacity-building support to both applicants and accredited DAEs in environmental, social and gender aspects. As of 31 December 2018, environmental and social safeguards support had been completed for one entity currently in stage II and is under implementation for two entities.

2.1.4. Annual performance reviews

11. The Secretariat has also engaged in the reviews of 37 annual performance reports. Queries from the Secretariat resulting from the reviews have been shared with the relevant AEs for their review. Each review looked at progress on the implementation of funded activities, especially as it relates to co-financing, use of GCF proceeds and leveraged funds, financial information, indigenous peoples, ESS and gender. Most of the projects are still in the early stage

of implementation (about 50 per cent in the first year of implementation), and their impacts have yet to materialize.

2.1.5. Outreach

12. During the reporting period the Secretariat participated in knowledge-sharing activities, namely: (i) sharing examples of approved GCF projects at a workshop organized for staff of an AE to develop and implement gender-responsive projects; and (ii) participating in a workshop for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to provide insight on the GCF gender requirements for funding proposals. In addition, a knowledge-sharing session was delivered by the gender team on mainstreaming gender in GCF projects for GCF staff at the end of 2018.

2.1.6. Building a Secretariat of sufficient size, talent and global reach to meet operational demands

13. The Secretariat maintains its engagement in achieving geographical diversity in its workforce while also ensuring that women and men are equally represented at all levels. The gender balance is maintained at 123:101 (123 male and 101 female) with 64 nationalities, wherein the highest representations are the Republic of Korea (20 international professional staff (IS) and 25 administrative support staff (AS)), United States of America (19 IS and 5 AS), and the Philippines (8 IS and 6 AS).

14. In addition, the Secretariat has augmented its capacity by having an additional consultant on its roster of experts to assist in the review of funding proposals and refining gender-related guidelines and checklists. The Secretariat is also in the process of securing the services of a firm to review and provide support in the review of funding proposals.

2.2 Report on the implementation in 2018

15. As per the requirement of the Gender Policy and related activities, of the 36 projects under review, all except 1 already have their gender assessments and action plans in place. Of the remaining 35 projects, 12 are going through the process of refining their action plans based on the Secretariat's suggestions in the previous annual performance review submission; 15 are still working on finalizing the project-level gender assessment and developing the project-level gender action plan while another is yet to fulfil the FAA condition to submitting a more comprehensive gender assessment and action plan. Two projects are also engaged in further refining their gender assessments to ensure that the specific needs of women are identified and addressed.

16. While 14 of the projects are yet to start the implementation of the gender action plans, 11 reported different levels of implementation progress. A few of the projects have provided training to women staff, while others have provided targeted support to women as well as raising awareness about gender-based violence. Some projects have ensured the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in consultative processes, while a significant number of women have been provided with loans at affordable and suitable rates to run their businesses while making sure a system is put in place to select women-led businesses. Some of the projects have developed training courses and IEC materials that include gender issues and are gender-sensitive while others have ensured that their projects specifically target both women and men in their interventions.

17. The projects' gender action plans continue to demonstrate that the focus of gender-related results will ensure equitable and relevant access to information, resources and services to women and vulnerable groups. Projects continue to commit to enabling women to have access to goods and services such as safe, affordable water, housing, capital and loans as these

services are mostly inaccessible by women and vulnerable groups, including female-headed households. Projects create access to employment opportunities in the formal sector, prioritizing and supporting women-led services and small businesses as well as sensitization and awareness-raising with a focus on gender-based violence as well.

18. However, as earlier indicated, there is a slow start for many of the projects (even for those in the third year of implementation) coupled with those that are still refining their action plans and with some still putting in place gender experts to implement action plans. A key challenge in the review of the reports is that AEs are not as informative as required. Many of the AEs did not comply with the Secretariat's request for projects to report against the gender action plans initially submitted. This has been a challenge, and in the absence of field-level assessments, the learning and information available in the hands of the Secretariat on the issue are limited. To mitigate this, there is a need for continuous consultation with AEs on the depth and quality of reporting in order to extract and document lessons from project implementation.

2.3 Report on the implementation in 2017

19. To understand and respond to the needs and priorities of both women and men, the Gender Policy requires a gender assessment and analysis to be conducted for each project and expects the development of gender action plans based on that analysis. In this regard, 15 projects have undertaken project-level gender analysis, and of these, 14 have put in place gender action plans.

20. The annual performance reviews received indicate that eight projects provided information on the gender-related actions that were undertaken. Overall, most of the gender-related work was focused on project start-up activities such as establishing systems and creating space for women to organize and influence the design and implementation arrangements. Further actions on gender included the provision of business opportunities, where 49 per cent of participants were reported to be women; loans to women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) surpassed 50 per cent, and provision of lower interest rates for loans for women-led MSMEs. An example of relevant gender-related results is highlighted in the excerpt below.

21. The review of the projects' gender action plans demonstrates that the focus of gender-related results will be the following:

- (a) Access to information, resources and services: which are critical for women and vulnerable groups to benefit from project interventions as well as make informed decisions. Projects enable women to access goods and services such as safe, affordable water, housing and capital and loans as these services are mostly inaccessible by women and vulnerable groups, including female heads of households;
- (b) Access to income: projects create access to employment opportunities in the formal sector, prioritizing and supporting women-led services and small businesses, which have the potential to contribute to improved decision-making for women; and
- (c) Sensitization and awareness-raising: creating the space to change unfavourable conditions that create inequalities, increases the gender sensitivity and responsiveness of policies and practices.

2.4 Report on the implementation in 2016

22. The Board requested the Secretariat to implement the Gender Action Plan in a gender-sensitive manner and report at each Board meeting on progress achieved. At the portfolio level, the Secretariat continues to proactively review concept notes and funding proposals from a

gender perspective, which results in gender assessments and project-level gender action plans being developed in line with the Gender Policy and the Gender Action Plan by all AEs as part of their appraisal of projects. In terms of readiness (activity areas 1 and 2) and project development (activity areas 3 and 4), gender-related activities continue to be integrated into the Readiness Programme in order to enhance multi-stakeholder processes at the national level that include women-led organizations, to conduct gender-sensitive stakeholder consultations, gender analysis, and to develop gender-responsive country programmes and projects. Gender mainstreaming features have also been incorporated in the MSMEs pilot initiative and enhancing direct access mechanism.

23. As advised by the Board at its fourteenth meeting, the Secretariat has prepared a stand-alone update on the implementation of the action plan consistent with the workplan of the Board as at 31 October 2016 in document GCF/B.15/Inf.05 titled “Update on the implementation of the strategic plan”.

2.4.1. Staff by gender and geographical distribution

24. The Secretariat continues its effort to achieve the greatest geographical diversity in its workforce, and to ensure that women and men are equally represented at all levels, although this is proving to be a challenge for IS positions.

25. Table 2 below provides information on the geographical and gender distribution of staff as of 12 October 2016.

Table 2. Geographical and gender distribution among appointed staff

Filled positions		Geographical distribution		Gender balance	
Level	Headcount	Developed	Developing	Male	Female
IS-level	45	51% (23)	49% (22)	71% (32)	29% (13)
AS-level	15	7% (1)	93% (14)	27% (4)	73% (11)
Total	60	40% (24)	60% (36)	60% (36)	40% (24)

Abbreviations: AS = [Administrative/Support Staff], IS = [International/Professional Staff].

2.4.2. Pending mandates pertaining to country programming

26. The Secretariat is proactively (i) advancing gender-responsive actions, and (ii) monitoring progress on gender action in the country programmes and work programmes of accredited entities. It reviews concept notes and funding proposals from a gender perspective on a regular basis and ensures that gender assessments are incorporated well by entities, in line with the requirements of Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan. The Secretariat has also advised on the introduction of gender mainstreaming design features, such as project-level gender action plans in order to (i) identify specific gender elements that need to be included in project activities, and (ii) determine how the project/programme can respond to the needs of women and men in view of the specific climate change issue to be addressed. A gender training workshop was organized for 25 NDAs and 13 direct access entities with support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in April 2016. A partnership was also finalized with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; the development of a training manual and toolkit on gender and climate change was proposed.

2.4.3. Readiness and preparatory support

27. As regards activity areas 1 and 2, the Secretariat signed 13 readiness grant agreements with governments and, as relevant, their technical delivery partners (local or regional). For seven countries out of these 13, an inception report was approved by the Secretariat, and funds were disbursed to four countries (the Cook Islands, Ethiopia, Mali and Rwanda). Regarding activity area 3, the Secretariat is currently providing in-kind support to 51 entities (nominated by the NDAs/focal points of 36 countries), and, of these 51 is supporting an in-depth assessment of the institutional, fiduciary, environmental, social and gender capacity of 15. This exercise has resulted in detailed action plans for four entities in three countries (Brazil, Colombia and Honduras).

28. The Secretariat also supports knowledge-sharing and learning. Over the past year, it has organized five regional workshops in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, Central America and the Pacific, and a training event for DAEs on ESS and gender. The team has also organized the visits of the NDAs/focal points of Antigua and Barbuda, Fiji, Pakistan and Viet Nam to GCF Headquarters, which received positive feedback. In addition, it is developing country pages on the GCF website to host information on the NDAs/focal points, their GCF programming priorities as well as relevant documents. It is working on providing all information materials, guidance documents and templates in French and Spanish.

2.4.4. Institutional and administrative support

29. In the area of staffing and outreach, the human resources team continues to focus on broadening the recruitment channels of the GCF, considering gender and geographical balance. Current vacant positions are advertised on numerous websites, academic institutions and alumni sites in order to reach out to candidates from as many parts of the world as possible. A new Performance Management and Development System will be launched in March 2016. This is a key management tool that will help staff to develop and maintain the highest levels of performance. It also supports professional development and learning (through a professional development plan), which keeps skills up-to-date and is critical to retain staff. The Human Resources Team has also identified a staff retirement plan provider that benefits from long-term stability, investment protection and solid administrative and information support. Finally, in December 2015, the Secretariat outsourced an external firm to recruit three key positions: Risk Manager, Internal Auditor and Fiduciary Compliance Specialist.

2.5 Report on the implementation in 2015

2.5.1. Accreditation

30. The Secretariat continues to provide information and guidance relating to the GCF accreditation framework to interested stakeholders. Furthermore, support for direct access entities has been ongoing. In this regard, the Secretariat organized a workshop on the environmental and social safeguards and the gender policy of the GCF to direct access AEs and other AEs that had related conditions to their accreditation from 1 to 4 September 2015 at the GCF Headquarters. In addition, the Secretariat has, since the inception of the accreditation process, provided in-kind support to 36 potential direct access entities in 30 countries in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America and the Caribbean. The institutional gap assessment of the fiduciary standards, environmental and social safeguards, and gender policy of seven direct access entities nominated by the NDAs and focal points are underway, six of which are expected to be completed by the end of October 2015.

2.5.2. Institutional and administrative support

31. So far, 35 staff members have joined the Secretariat, five have accepted offers of employment and are in the process of joining, and 15 are subject to ongoing recruitment. The gender and diversity balance of staff, including those who have accepted offers of employment, is shown in the table below. Of note is that the percentage of staff from developing countries has increased from 25 per cent as reported in October 2014 to the current 58 percent, while the percentage of female staff has increased from 25 per cent as reported in October 2014 to the current 48 per cent.

Table 2: Gender and diversity of Green Climate Fund staff

Staff (Total)*	Gender		Geographical Classification	
	Female	Male	Developing	Developed
IS (30)	11	19	13	17
	37%	63%	43%	57%
AS (10)	8	2	10	0
	80%	20%	100%	0%
All Staff (39)	19	21	23	17
	48%	53%	58%	43%

32. In the area of staffing and outreach efforts, the focus continues to be on broadening recruitment channels factoring in gender and geographical balance. As it stands, vacant positions are advertised across numerous websites, such as academic institutions and alumni sites, in order to reach out to candidates from as many parts of the world as possible.

III. Survey findings of the implementation of the Gender Policy

33. This section of the document presents implementation considerations, including direct costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the Gender Policy gathered from DAEs and other AEs, and NDAs/focal points. This follows decision B.23/09, which requested the Secretariat to present implementation considerations of the Gender Policy.

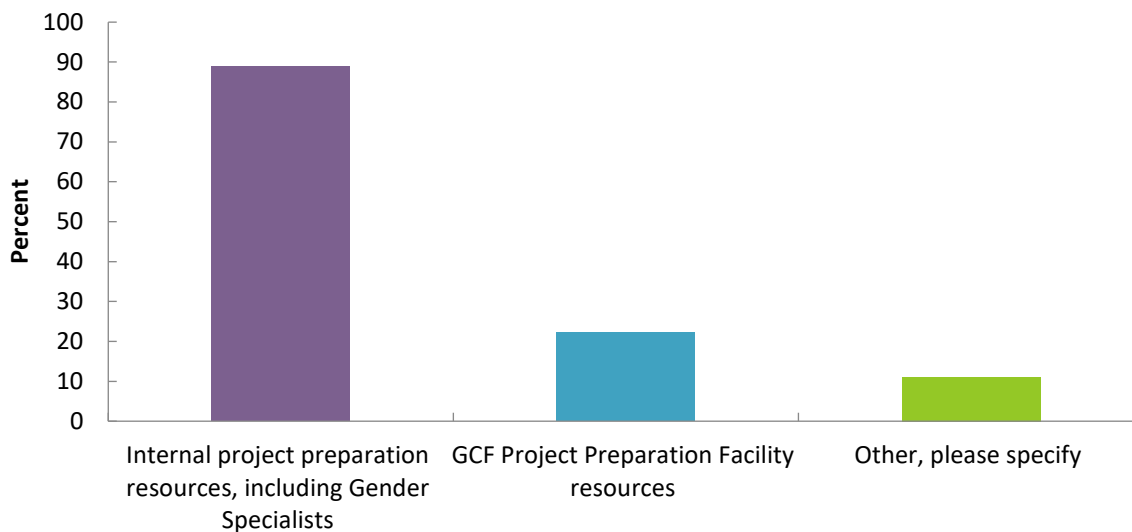
34. An online survey was conducted by the Secretariat between 4 and 16 September 2019. The survey was circulated to NDAs/focal points and AEs. A total of 46 responses were submitted. A summary of responses reflecting implementation considerations is presented below.

35. Of the 46 participants, 56 per cent (26) represent NDAs/focal points, and 44 per cent (20) represent AEs. Of the 20 AEs that responded, 58 per cent are DAEs and 42 per cent are international access entities. Of the 20 AEs, 58 per cent of respondents are public entities, 32 per cent are both private and public entities and 10 per cent are private entities only.

36. Seventy per cent of the respondents have a funding proposal approved while 81 per cent of the respondents have started implementing projects.

37. For questions regarding the AE source of financial and human resources to prepare a gender assessment and project-level gender action plan and to undertake gender-responsive stakeholder consultations for a GCF funding proposal, the majority responded the use of internal project preparatory resources with few indicating the use of the Project Preparation Facility (Figure 1).

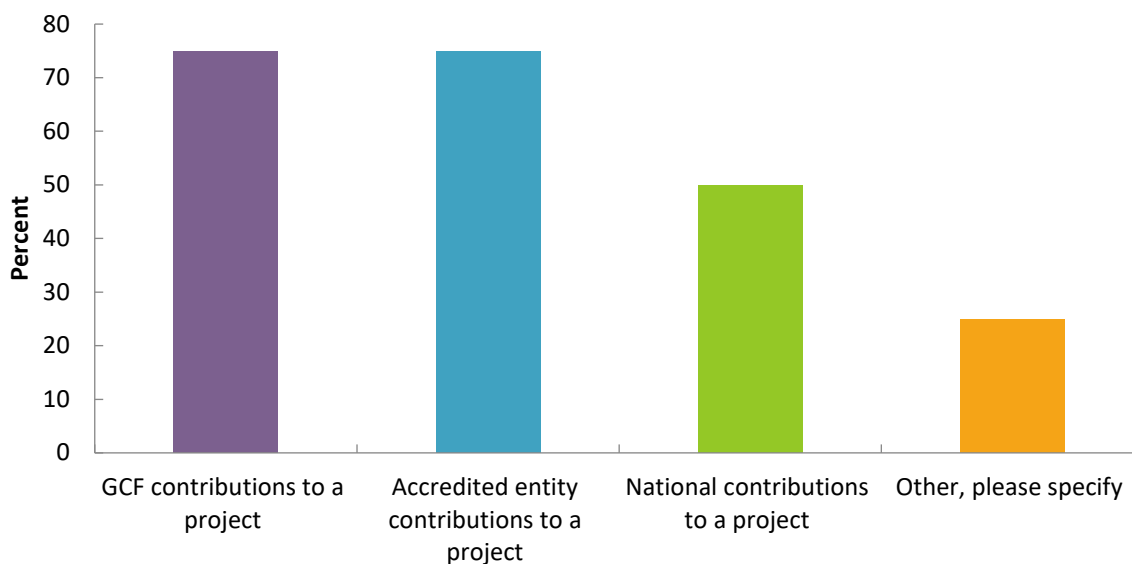
Figure 1



38. The use of the Project Preparation Facility resources is low for the preparation of gender assessment and project-level gender action plan for a GCF funding proposal, with 67 per cent of the respondents not having requested Project Preparation Facility resources. Thirty-three per cent have requested Project Preparation Facility support in preparing a gender assessment and gender action plan.

39. However, survey results indicate typically GCF and AEs own resources are used for the implementation of a project-level gender action plan of a GCF project (Figure 2).

Figure 2



40. Ninety per cent of the respondents consider GCF gender-related requirements as beneficial (Figure 3). Ten per cent consider GCF gender-related requirements as cumbersome and without benefits. This response indicates the importance AEs see in the benefits associated with having considered gender issues (through the preparation of the gender assessments and the project-level gender action plans, including their implementation) in the funding proposal. Further, AEs were asked to indicate if they considered it beneficial to select applicable options. The responses indicate that it helped AEs to better consider gender related concerns in project, address the needs of their target communities as well as strengthen national/local gender expertise (Figure 4).

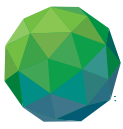


Figure 3

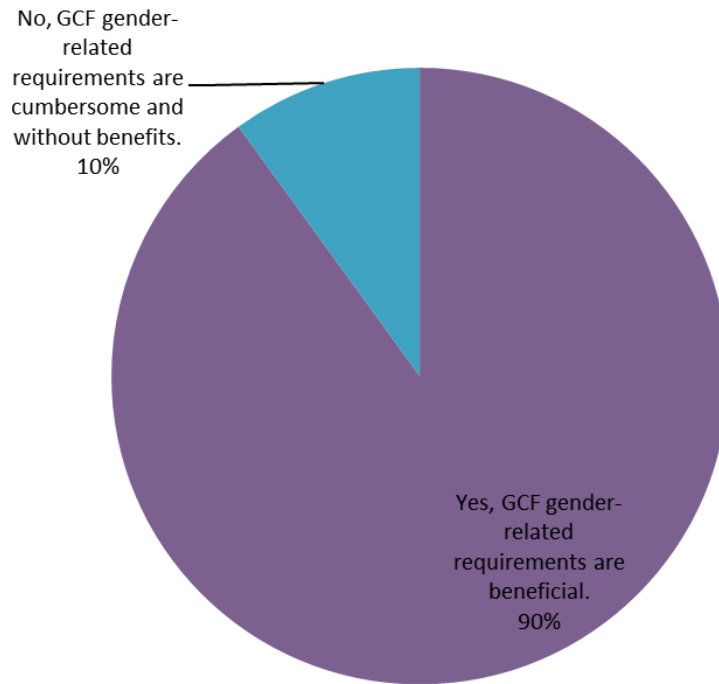
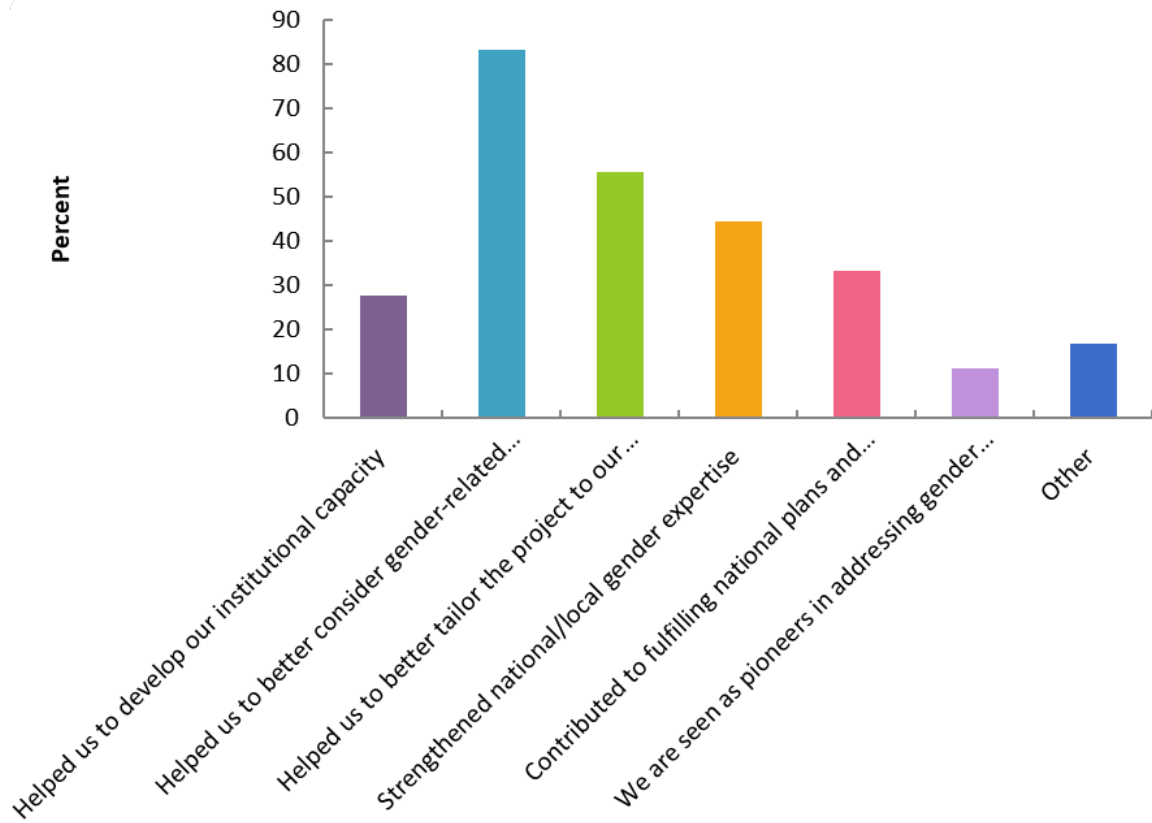


Figure 4



41. A respondent felt that the requirements incur unnecessary workload for limited results (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

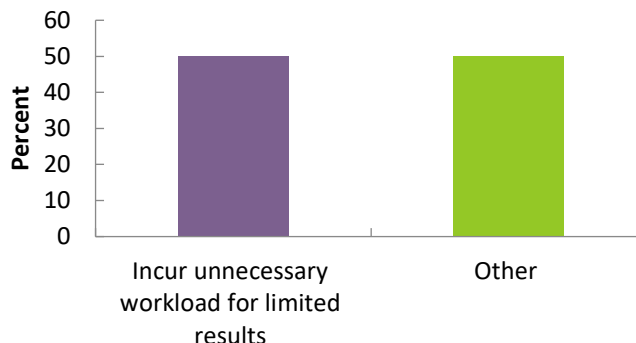


Figure 6

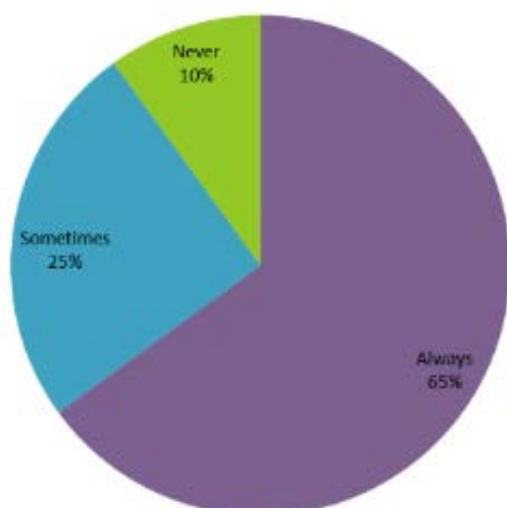
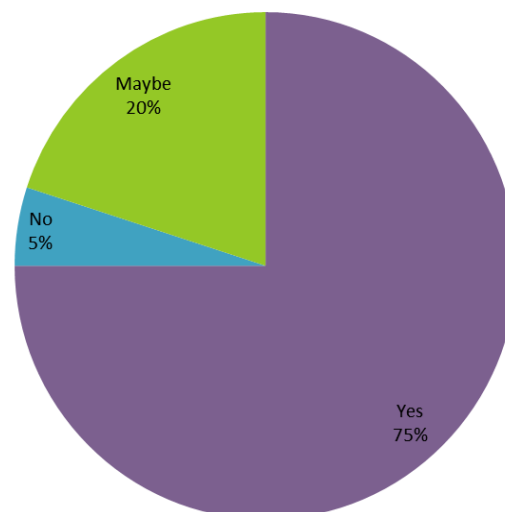


Figure 7



42. Sixty-five per cent of the respondents consider that the benefits always outweigh the cost of pursuing the integration of gender issues in GCF project. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents consider that the benefits sometimes outweigh the costs. While 10 per cent of the respondents consider that the benefits never outweigh the cost (Figure 6).

43. Seventy-five per cent of the respondents consider that the government of the country where the project is being/will be implemented support the integration of gender issues in the funding proposal and recognize its benefits. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents replied “maybe.” And 5 per cent of the respondents consider that the government of the country where the project is being/will be implemented does not support the integration of gender issues in the funding proposal and does not recognize its benefits (Figure 7).

44. As an accredited entity, 56 per cent of the respondents consider that they have the capacity available to fulfil GCF gender-related requirements. 44 per cent of the respondents estimate that they have a limited capacity (Figure 8).

45. As the NDA/focal point, 59 per cent of the respondents consider that they have the technical capacity to ensure that their country applies procedures to ensure equality and non-discrimination with respect to stakeholder consultations (Figure 9).

Figure 8

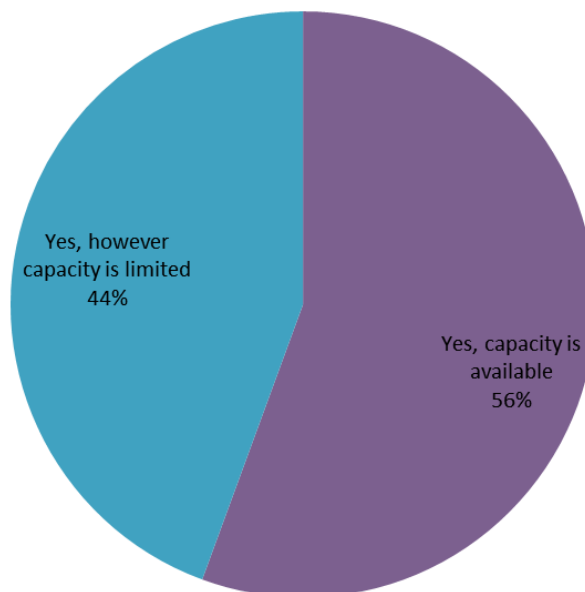
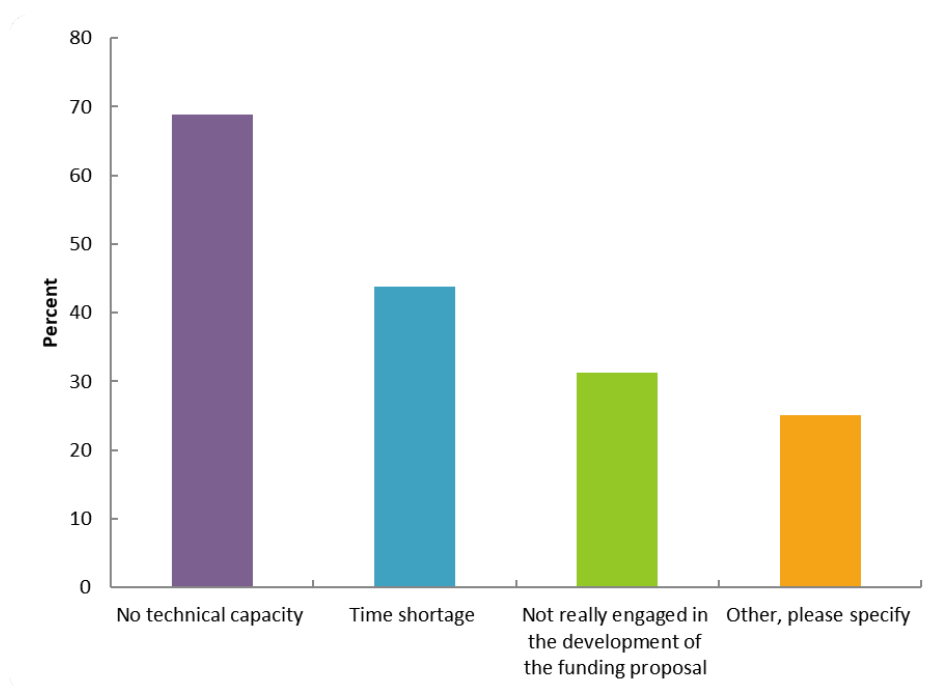


Figure 9



46. The challenges faced by NDA/focal point in ensuring that alignment with national policies and priorities is a capacity limitation, limited time available to engage and the fact that NDA does not engage in the development of funding proposals.

47. The recommendation from respondents is that GCF should support the NDA/focal point to fulfil your role in relation to gender-related matters through the following mechanisms. Assistance in technical support to training to strengthen administrative capacity and greater participation of women girls; technical capacity, by further developing and strengthening the technical capacity of the NDAs, country readiness and technical assistance funding support, capacity-building; projects and awareness programmes, technical and financial support, continue with technical and financial support to engage relevant stakeholders in aligning national policies and priorities of gender to GCF pipeline projects as well as in implementing

activities, to support financial for implementation of gender-inclusive climate change adaptation project, technical capacity, funding proposal alignment with national policies and priorities, Readiness Programme grant in order to develop comprehensive climate change gender action plan for country, a detailed training for the NDA/focal point on the Gender Policy and ESS with specific positive examples and best practices will be welcome. Also, creating a gender related e-tool or platform for sharing experiences and knowledge for the gender in climate change perspective can be very useful.
