

Gender assessment

Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility - Benin

1. GENDER EQUALITY CONTEXT IN BENIN

Benin officially recognizes equality between men and women without any distinction, as stipulated in the new article 26 of the Constitution of December 11, 1990, revised on November 7, 2019. The country has ratified almost all international instruments for the promotion of women and gender. In 2009, it adopted a national policy for the promotion of gender, and several other specific policies have been drawn up in line with these international commitments, particularly in the fields of education and training, employment and agriculture. However, the persistence of traditional, patriarchal socio-cultural values and gender stereotypes hinders the achievement of authentic equality between women and men and their equal enjoyment of development benefits, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas, and in economic sectors such as agriculture. Ongoing patriarchal cultural norms and practices include genital mutilation, early marriage, polygamy, an unequal division of domestic labor between women and men, and unbalanced roles in the production of basic goods. As a result, men continue to be the main decision-makers at household and community levels, men and women have unequal ownership of and access to resources (including education), and women's active participation in leadership positions in decision-making entities within State structures and elective institutions remains limited. It is however noteworthy to acknowledge, in 2021, the election of the first woman Vice-President of the Republic and the creation of the National Institute of Women, affiliated to the Office of the President of the Republic. In the same year, the National Assembly adopted law n°2021-11 on special measures for the repression of gender-based offences and the protection of women in the Republic of Benin.

1.1 Gender Gaps in Benin

Structural social disparities that start early in life are the leading cause of gaps between women and men in Benin. The low rate of girls' completion of secondary school (only one in ten girls aged 21-24 have completed secondary school¹), the still high rate of girls getting married before the age of 18 (one third of those in the 20–24 age group), and of girls becoming mothers between the age of 15 and 19 (15 percent) are significant barriers hindering the full development of girls' potential and their ability to pursue higher education, access income-generating opportunities and improved livelihoods, and actively contribute to civic life. This is particularly detrimental in a country, such as Benin, where about 65 percent of the population is below the age of 25.

As a result of limited schooling, early marriages and pregnancies as well as gender-based violence, girls in Benin currently have fewer opportunities than their male peers to accumulate human capital and become active participants in economic and social life. In this respect, social and cultural norms bear the same negative impact on girls as well as women.

¹ This and following two data are taken from: Empower HER! Supporting Gender Reforms in Benin with Development Policy Financing. World Bank, 2022. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasikiliza/empower-her-supporting-gender-reforms-benin-development-policy-financing>

Because of social and cultural norms that cause and perpetuate gender inequality, girls and women in Benin tend to be poorer, have less education, face more health risks than boys and men and are less equipped to respond to and cope with challenges, including those caused by climate change. As a consequence, labour markets are still significantly gender-segregated, women are employed primarily in low-paying and insecure occupations and bear the biggest brunt of the impact of climate change, as following sections will further detail.

However, gender disparities due to social and economic traditional roles of women undermine not only the full development of girls' and women's individual and social potential. They also threaten the attainment of the country's development agenda and are thus costly to Benin's economic and social development and to the pursuit of its growth and poverty reduction objectives, also considering the predominantly young population in the country.

If social norms remain a major barrier towards gender equality, a conducive regulatory and institutional eco-system in parallel can contribute to advance gender equality, unroot discriminatory practices and foster a more inclusive and equal environment, through a mutually reinforcing mechanism where changes in social norms and in the regulatory space can go hand in hand and support each other.

Promising government's initiatives in that direction include the expansion of services related to sexual and reproductive health, the adoption of measures to increase girls' enrollment in higher education, revisions to the Criminal Code and women-friendlier procedures to fight GBV and female genital mutilation and the creation of the National Institute of Women.

1.2 Women's Economic Empowerment in Benin

In 2020, the population of Benin amounted to 12,220,528 , 50.75% of which is female. It is a predominantly a young population, with people under 35 and 15 accounting respectively for 77.84% and 46% of the population. The country is still mostly rural (55.4%) and cotton is the main export product, contributing 13% of GDP.

Agriculture is the most important economic sector and employment source in Benin. It accounts for almost one third of the country's GDP and employs 48% of the working population². The agriculture workforce is heavily male-dominated in the formal sector and female-dominated in the informal primary sector. At 42,2%, the primary sector is also the main source of occupation for women, followed by the tertiary sector (39.7%) and the secondary sector (18.1%).

In the agricultural sector, women play a key role in production, processing and marketing. Rural Beninese women are responsible for harvesting crops, sowing, spreading fertilizers, husking cereals and raising small livestock (pigs, sheep, poultry) for the household. However, the mentioned socio-cultural patriarchal system limits women's access to assets and to productive resources. Due to a male-dominated land ownership tradition which excludes women from inheriting land and to restrictions in access to and ownership of assets, only 13% of women own land and 6% of them have access to guaranteed land rights. In terms of agricultural technology and advice, only 4.6% of women farmers have access to motorized and/or animal traction, and 11.96% to agricultural advisory services. 71.2% of female-headed households have access to drinking water, compared with 81% of male-headed households, while only 18% of female-headed households have access to latrines, compared with 69.1% of male-headed households. Compared to men, women are also less likely to have a bank account, or to own assets such as a cell phone, which severely restrict women's economic autonomy, and access to diverse and/or improved livelihoods and income-generating activities.

Benin's economy is essentially informal (nearly 90%), and 63.6% of informal jobs are held by women. Even in the formal economy, the Beninese labour market is characterized by strong gender-based segregation that sees women generally holding three times fewer jobs, occupying low-paid jobs and earning far less than their male colleagues. Women are in fact much more likely to work as self-entrepreneurs in the informal sector rather than in salaried employment.

² This and following figures in this section are referenced from: African Development Group – UN Women *Profile Genre Pays – La République du Bénin*, 2021 <https://www.afdb.org/fr/documents/benin-profile-genre-pays-2021>

As a result of the lower level of qualification of female employment, inequalities in remuneration, predominantly informal and/or precarious employment, women in Benin are in many respects more vulnerable than men. Due to an imbalanced distribution of household management tasks between men and women, women spend much more time on domestic activities, resulting in lower employment rates and greater dependence on men's income. Women have fewer opportunities to maintain their productive role within the household and support asset accumulation in the event of shocks. This poses limitations to their economic independence, choice and decision-making power, and their ability to implement coping strategies which would in turn benefit their household and local communities, too.

Guiding questions	Analysis – national level	Data at subnational level if available
What are the national policies covering gender issues? (include policy name, date) Programmes/action plans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Declaration of the Population Policy in Benin (1996); - the National Policy for the Advancement of Women (2001); - the Literacy Promotion Policy in (2001); - the Policy for the Advancement of Women in the Agricultural and Rural Sector (2001); - the Girls' Education and Training Policy (2007); - the National Gender Promotion Policy (PNPG) in 2008. - the passing of laws including: - Law No. 2011-26 of 9 January 2012 on the prevention and repression of violence against women; - Law 2003-03 of March 3, 2003 on the repression of the practice of FGM in the Republic of Benin; - Law No. 2003-04 of March 3, 2003 on sexual health and reproduction in the Republic of Benin; - Law No. 2002-07 of 24 August 2004 on the personal and family code; - Law No. 2005-31 of April 5, 2006 on the prevention, care and control of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Benin; - Law No. 2006-19 of September 5, 2006 on the prevention of sexual harassment and the protection of victims in the Republic of Benin; - Law 2013-01 of August 14, 2013, the Land Law of the Republic of Benin and its implementing decrees which provides that " the State and local authorities, as guarantors of the general interest, must ensure equitable access to all actors, natural or legal persons for example; ensure the gender approach in access to land" (article 6) which guarantees women's access to land. - Law No. 2021-13 of 20 December 2021 modifying et complementing the Law No. 2002-07 of 24 August 2004 on the personal and family code 	
Who is the governmental body (Ministry? Agency? Office?) in charge of gender issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance (MASMF), the main body responsible for monitoring and coordinating gender actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Directorate for the Advancement of Women and Gender 	The Observatory of the Family, Women and Children (OFFE) is present in 85 social advancement centres in the 77

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Observatory of the Family, Women and Children (OFFE): Monitoring and alert body for the implementation of the National Gender Promotion Policy. • The National Council for the Promotion of Equity and Gender Equality, created by decree No. 2013-51 of February 11, 2013 and chaired by the Head of State. It is the guidance and decision-making body for the promotion of gender in Benin. It is a national multisectoral mechanism for guidance, monitoring and evaluation of actions for the advancement of women. 	municipalities.
Are gender disaggregated data / statistics available?	<p>Yes The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis (INSAE) carried out a survey on the main socio-demographic and economic indicators of the country, the results of which were published in 2016 (https://www.insae-bj.org/images/docs/insae-statistiques/demographiques/population/Principaux%20Indicateurs%20avec%20projections%20RGPH4/Principaux%20indices%20socio%20d%C3%A9mographiques%20et%20%C3%A9conomique%20RGPH-4.pdf). This survey contains data on the proportion of women in the population, fertility rates, nuptiality, and the proportion of female heads of households. More thematic surveys, such as household consumption, employment and unemployment, food security or even health, also contain gender disaggregated data (https://www.insae-bj.org/statistics/social-statistics). Other data produced by INSAE, such as attendance at higher education establishments, the adult literacy rate, access to basic infrastructure, are not disaggregated by gender.</p> <p>Other sources, such as UNESCO for adult literacy, do, however, provide gender disaggregated data.</p> <p>In Benin's Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the authors state that the main constraints and shortcomings associated with the implementation of the Convention include the “absence of specific socio-economic data disaggregated according to gender, gaps in the available data, including spatiotemporal coverage of certain types of data” (Republic of Benin, Ministry of the Living Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019).</p> <p>The Women of Benin white paper also collects numerous statistics (Houinsa, 2008).</p>	

What is the legal status of women and children in the country of intervention? (existing gender-responsive policies? CEDAW). Ratification of international laws?)	<p>Article 26 of the Constitution of Benin (1990) establishes equality between men and women: "The State guarantees equality to all before the law without distinction of origin, race, sex, religion, political opinion or social position. Men and women are equal in law. The State protects the family and particularly the mother and the child. It cares for the disabled and the elderly."</p> <p>Benin has ratified the CEDAW and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.</p>	
What are commonly held beliefs, perceptions, and stereotypes related to gender roles and status in the project/ programme footprint area or the country?	<p>The report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Benin (MASM 2019) states: "The protection of women depends on the involvement of the communities in which they live and whose mentality is still at the primary stage, i.e. the persistent prejudices of tradition which see women as the weaker being who is to be ridiculed. It is therefore essential that texts and laws on the protection, advancement and participation of women in decision-making bodies be known and fully understood by most of the actors and even by the women in question." (99)</p> <p>It also underlines the obstacle of "the persistence of socio-cultural constraints and discrimination against women"(89). These hindrances were described more precisely in the previous report, dating from 2010: "These are practices such as the deprivation of liberty, the perpetration of certain forms of physical and psychological violence, marginalisation from decision-making bodies, the obligation to undergo sometimes dehumanising traditional rites... The status of women as forged by traditional societies is still alive in mentalities. Women are always seen as only having those rights given granted by men and as having to assume the reproductive role. This is an obstacle because it keeps women subservient to men and justifies their lack of access to development factors/resources guaranteeing their advancement."</p>	
What are the gendered health issues (What is the maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate, life expectancy (disaggregated by sex) in the country of intervention and/or the project/programme footprint area?)	<p>Infant mortality: 60.5/1000 live births (UN Inter-Agency Panel on Child Mortality 2018)</p> <p>Maternal mortality 2008-2012: 400 deaths per 100,000 births (https://www.unicef.org/french/infobycountry/benin_statistics.html).</p> <p>Male life expectancy: 59.633 years old, women: 62.687 years (World Bank, 2017)</p>	
Do women have equal	Net attendance rate (primary school) 2008-2012,	

access to education, technical knowledge, and/or skill training (what is the educational status of girls and boys? Adult literacy rate, disaggregated by sex?)	<p>boys: 72.1%</p> <p>Net attendance rate (primary school) 2008-2012, girls: 68.1%</p> <p>Net attendance rate (secondary school) 2008-2012, boys: 49.3%</p> <p>Net enrolment ratio (secondary school) 2008-2012, girls: 40%</p> <p>Adult literacy rate: women vs. men (%), 2008-2012: 45.4</p> <p>(UNICEF https://www.unicef.org/french/infobycountry/benin_statistics.html)</p>	
What is the information in-country related to gender-based violence (including intimate-partner violence, early marriage, FGM)?	<p><i>At the level of female genital mutilation:</i> The practice of genital mutilation is dying out; only 9% of women aged 15-49 said they had undergone some form of genital mutilation in 2014. It is estimated that this indicator will reach 3% by 2020. (MASM, 2019)</p> <p><i>Regarding other gender-based violence:</i> The MASM report (2019) reports 50 women victims of harmful health, legal and judicial practices who received care (2015), 2567 cases relating to sexual or moral harassment received in care agencies (2015), 160 cases relating to sexual violence received in care agencies (2014) and 31.7% of people (women) aged 20-49 who were married or in a union before the age of 18 (2015). The forecasts for some of these indicators (including harassment and harmful health, legal and judicial practices) are on the rise, as Benin hopes that more cases will be reported and addressed.</p> <p>The same report notes that, at national level, the most recurrent forms of violence are: suppression of rights (35.53%), moral harassment (24.11%) and assault and battery (13.58%). We can conclude that moral or psychological violence comes first, followed by physical violence and sexual violence.</p>	
What are the main issues for accessing justice and the barriers that women face?	<p>The MASM (2019) report is optimistic, and highlights improvements rather than obstacles: "It is also estimated, with regard to the policies implemented, that women will be more confident and will report more cases of harmful practices on the health, legal and judicial levels, cases of sexual or moral harassment, and sexual violence; which will mean an uptick in the rate of these indicators for 2020, the increase being due to the increased reporting rather than an increase in practices harmful to women. The measures taken and actions carried out on behalf of women and girls in this area include the strengthening of the legal</p>	

	<p>mechanisms relating to the protection of women and the promotion of gender. ”</p> <p>However, a UNDP report, admittedly less recent (2013), qualifies this analysis: “Despite these gains made by the Government with the support of Partners and Civil Society, the failure to uphold women's rights remains a reality. This often translates into (i) the difficulty women face in access to justice in the event of violence (poorly understood, long, costly and complex legal procedures, women's illiteracy) and (ii) the very limited application of texts of laws adopted for the protection of women and the advancement of gender (the application of legal texts sometimes poses a problem from the point of view of procedure. Judges and Police Officers often experience difficulties initiating proceedings against perpetrators of violations of the rights of women and girls. ”</p>	
What are the current indicators and trends related to poverty and development? (HDI? HDI World rank? GDP per capita)	<p>Human Development Index: 0.520 (163rd out of 188 countries) (UNDP 2018)</p> <p>GDP/capita: US\$829.8 (World Bank 2018)</p> <p>Poverty rate: 40.1% (World Bank https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&Id=b450fd57&tbar=y&dd=y&inf=n&zm=n&country=BN)</p>	
What do national statistics / census say about women's economic situation (employment rate? Income average? Gender pay gap? Any data on gender differences in the informal sector? And in the agricultural sector?)	<p>The labour market participation rate for 15-64 year-olds was 67.6% for women and 78.3% for men in 2013 (UN Women 2015-2016).</p> <p>The gender indicator (where 1 represents perfect equality) is 0.723 for employment, 0.809 for income and 0.441 for access to resources (MASM 2018).</p> <p>At the political level:</p> <p>“Over the past 25 years, the proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly has exceeded 10% only once - during the 2007-2011 legislature;</p> <p>The percentage of women in the executive branch peaked at 30% in all three governments from May 2011 to August 2013.</p> <p>The last Government of 2015 was 14.8% women. Following the Presidential election of 2016, the Government (April 2016) has 14.28% women ministers, i.e. 3 out of 21. Also, at the end of the communal and municipal elections of 2015, only 2.6% of mayors are women; 64 women elected out of the 1435 communal and municipal councillors. The situation is no better in the other institutions</p>	<p>The data collected in 31 villages in the agro-ecological zones of Borgou and Alibori, from 309 Peasant Family Farms show that women bear almost all the domestic responsibilities alone. Despite this, they are also present in agricultural activities with a representation rate of 33.97% compared to 66.03% for men (Doubogan & Adégbola, 2017).</p> <p>Labour for agricultural production on farms is controlled by men. It is only once the needs of the collective land (men's assets) have been met, that women can use available family or hired labour. The consequence of this situation is delay for women in completing their activities</p>

	<p>of the Republic. In 2015, the following were also noted: Constitutional Court (28.57%), Economic and Social Council (10%), Audiovisual and Communication Authority (28.57%)” (UNDP 2015).</p> <p>The current National Assembly has 28 women out of 109 deputies, i.e. 25.68% (election of January 8, 2023). Five women ministers out of 23 of the government team, i.e. 21.73%.</p>	<p>with the corollary of low yields and income (Doubogan & Adégbola, 2017).</p>
<p>What is the situation in terms of access to financial resources for men and women in the area (access to banking? Micro credit? Saving account? SHG?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% of men have a bank account compared to 29% of women. • 6% of men have paid bills or purchased something online in the past year, compared to just 3% of women. • 25% of men have saved to start or expand a farm or business compared to 18% of women. 12% of men have saved through a formal financial institution, compared to 7% of women • 24% of men have received a salary during the past year, compared to 8% of women. (World Bank Group, Global Findex Database Data 2017) <p>The share of women benefiting from microfinance initiatives varies, but there are initiatives that specifically or exclusively target women, such as MIselini, Soro Yiriwaso or the First Mali Microfinance Agency (ILO 2011, AKDN 2018 https://www.akdn.org/fr/where-we-work/west-africa/mali/la-microfinance-au-mali)</p> <p>The MASM report “notes positive discrimination towards men in access to resources with the exception of access to microfinance” (21: 2019).</p>	<p>An analysis of access to land (existence of farmed plots), to inputs (use of inputs), to agricultural labour (family, mutual assistance, salaried) and to credit shows that only 21.53% of women have access to at least two resources, compared to 72.52% of men, a difference of 50.99 points. Moreover, 78.48% of women have access to only one type of resource compared to 27.48% for men. (Doubogan & Adégbola, 2017).</p> <p>Women are also disadvantaged in access to livestock: Women rarely acquire livestock except by buying it. (Doubogan & Adégbola, 2017).</p>
<p>What is the situation in terms of access to land? Property rights?</p>	<p>“Women are often victims of the unequal distribution of land and other resources (e.g. agricultural equipment, inputs and plant conservation products in the fields); this is a typical trend in the West African sub-region where the patriarchal system reigns. The identified forms of access to land are inheritance, purchase, donation, rental and loan. Women are excluded from the land inheritance of their husbands and/or their male ancestors, and given their insufficient financial means, Beninese women are clearly disadvantaged in access to land. In 2011, the integrated modular survey on household living conditions revealed that 85.1 percent of plot owners are men (compared to 14.9 percent women) and only 12 percent of women have access to land by inheritance (compared to 88 percent of men) (Balogoun, 2017).</p>	<p>In the Alibori project area, only 3.2% of women have access to non-permanent properties (rental, pledge and loan) while this proportion is 96.8% among men. This marginalisation of women in the acquisition of land is also observed at the level of permanent properties (access to land by inheritance, by gift and as the first occupant). Only 5.2% of women have access to permanent properties, compared to 94.8% among men. Purchasing (18%) remains the main means whereby</p>

	<p>Traditionally, Beninese women do not inherit land from their ancestors, but can cultivate their spouse's land if he has any. (Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development, Republic of Benin 2019)</p> <p>"This propensity to exclude women from land management is explained by the fact that land is perceived as a family asset, which cannot be exported. Not only are women called upon to marry, which means they cannot take family property with them, but also, when a woman marries, she joins another family in which she is considered a "foreigner" and, therefore, cannot gain permanent ownership of land" (Doubogan & Adégbola, 2017).</p>	<p>women can guarantee the right to property. In the absence of this right, the development of certain activities, in particular perennial crops such as cowpea, cashew, teak, mango, etc. is almost impossible and women therefore remain limited in their actions. They have only a few patches of land at their disposal on all the plots of the farm which are generally in the hands of the spouse or the chief of the land chiefs in the community or in the village. (Doubogan & Adégbola, 2017).</p>
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2. GENDER ISSUES IN ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMS IN BENIN

2.1 Institutional Context

Equality between men and women is officially enshrined in the Fundamental Law of the People's Republic of Benin of August 26, 1977, in Article 124 and is further strengthened by Article 26 (1990) reiterating gender equality politically, socially and economically. Several policy documents include commitments to women's rights and gender equality, including the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender, the National Policy for the Promotion of Women in Agriculture, and the National Action Plan on Violence against Women. Benin has also ratified most international instruments promoting the advancement of women and gender equality.

On the other hand, however, the integration of gender considerations into climate-related policies and documents remains limited. In policy documents as recent as Benin's Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2019) gender was not included. Neither is there a mention of the differences between men and women in terms of the impact of climate change and natural disasters in the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) 2017-2021. While the Plan addresses resilience and climate change, including strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations through actions focused on sustainable land management, adaptation to climate change and risk management, it does not include gender considerations.

For the time being, and in practice, there is little cooperation between the various sectors and ministries engaged with equity issues, although a national and international legislative framework lays the foundations and gives a mandate to such cooperation. In addition, the absence of a law on parity does not promote the institutionalisation of gender as a principle of governance and management of public policies. Nonetheless, and despite the absence of gender integration into national climate policies and strategies, several initiatives have been carried out in several localities in the country, in partnership with international organisations (most notably the UNDP) and many local associations, to address gender-related matters in climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

Promising steps have been recently made towards gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation initiatives in Benin's political decision-making environment. The process initiated as part of the NAP bears witness to in-depth reflection on the links between gender and climate change in Benin. In addition to critically analysing the current situation, the 2019 report of the Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development "For a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process that responds to gender issues in Benin", also makes recommendations across the key sectors identified. Gender is expected to be integrated among the dimensions to assess challenges and potential opportunities related to vulnerabilities to climate change. This process has made it possible to mobilise both financial and technical resources, in particular from international partners, to build the capacities of relevant stakeholders to adopt an integrated approach to addressing gender and adaptation to climate change. Similarly, the National Development Plan 2018 – 2025 includes gender considerations in both laying out a pathway towards sustainable development and in its assessment of vulnerable groups and human rights promotion.

2.2 The Gender and Climate Nexus in Benin

Climate variability makes dependence on natural resources for subsistence a challenge, particularly in countries such as Benin that still largely rely on agriculture, which is directly impacted by changing rainfall patterns and soil erosion, and where there are few options for diversifying livelihoods, as it is the case in rural areas where the majority of the country's population still reside.

The lives of women and men are impacted differently by climate change. For their responsibilities and societal expectations about their production and reproduction roles, in Benin women are most exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, all the more as agriculture is the country's main economic sector and the main source of employment, however mostly informal, for women. Stakeholders consultations conducted by in November 2022 further validated this assessment: when asked about the segments of the population most impacted by climate change, women were clearly identified as the most affected, at

24%. Climate change induced events such as drought, flooding, soil infertility, water and firewood scarcity directly impact on food security, agricultural productivity and livelihood options, especially for the majority rural residents and for poorer households.

The concentration of female employment in the primary sector makes women in Benin particularly dependent on access to natural resources for their livelihoods and their productive and reproductive roles. Their community and family roles as women are closely linked to natural resources. Responsible as they traditionally are for the supply of water and wood, women are directly impacted by climate change in that it is making their productive role more complex and burdensome: women are exposed to a growing threat of food insecurity, increasing competition for scarce natural resources, the potential loss of their livelihoods against few other accessible income-generating activities.

While climate change has differentiated gendered impacts, gender norms and power structures play a key role in determining how women and men are affected by and can respond to it. Pre-existing inequalities, gender roles and expectations, and unequal access to resources risk to exacerbate inequalities and make women disproportionately vulnerable.

In fact, because of the feminization of poverty and the persisting dominance of patriarchal values, women in Benin are less equipped and have fewer opportunities than men to cope with the impacts of climate change, and to participate in negotiations and decision-making fora on mitigation issues. As a result, and in the absence of adequate gender-responsive mitigation measures, climate change risks to exacerbate existing inequalities and aggravate women's vulnerabilities.

Guiding questions	Gender equality – national level
How are the national climate policies and strategic plans (NAP, NDCs, other) addressing gender issues? (include policy name, date)	<p><i>National Plan for Agricultural Investments and Food and Nutritional Security (2017-2021)</i> : Component 3.1: Agricultural innovations for the benefit of men and women for climate change resilience and mitigation. Component 3.2: Sustainable management of land and water ecosystems for men and women. Component 3.3: Securing and managing access to land for the benefit of men and women. Component 3.4: Promotion of food and nutritional security of populations, men and women</p> <p><i>Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy 2016 – 2025</i>. Emphasises the particular vulnerability of women, as in the Integration of climate change into the National Health Development Plan (GIZ, 2019) but without more measures associated with differentiated vulnerability.</p> <p><i>National Development Plan 2018-2025</i>: promotes consideration on the one hand, of gender sensitivity, so that the process of inclusive growth and sustainable development will be properly implemented for women as actors and beneficiaries of this growth, and on the other, consideration of respect for and advancement of human rights in general, and those of women in particular.</p> <p><i>The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process</i>) announces that it is based on an analysis of vulnerabilities through the prism of gender, and related opportunities and challenges across all the sectors concerned.</p>
What are the governmental bodies (Ministry? Agency? Office?) in charge of the interface between these issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD) • Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance (MASMF) However, according to the MCVDD (2019), "the MASMF is not yet sufficiently integrated into the NAP process and is not formally part of the CTPNA (Technical Commission managing the NAP process). National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change). However, article 7 of the

	<p>inter-ministerial decree provides that the “CTPNA may call on any resource person whose expertise is necessary for the performance of its duties”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council for the Promotion of Equity and Gender Equality • National Institute for the Advancement of Women
What are the priority sectors targeted by climate change-related NAPs and NDCs?	The priorities identified by the Benin NAP are: agriculture, water resources, health, biodiversity and forestry, energy, coastal zones and tourism (MCVDD, 2019).
Are there national programmes addressing each climate change and gender inequalities independently or in an integrated manner?	<p>The MCVDD (2019) report acknowledges that, to date, gender and climate change have not been addressed in an integrated manner. (“Despite these advances, high-level decision-makers still relegate gender issues, but also adaptation to climate change, to the background. Although the strategic documents mention gender both gender and climate change, institutional constraints and a lack of human, material, technical and financial resources mean that the authorities neglect genuine consideration of these issues and of the link between the two.” “The link between gender issues and climate change is not taken into account in most development strategies and policies in Benin.” “Ownership of the NAP process, by the ministries in charge of the sectors identified as the most vulnerable, is weak: According to the declarations received during the interviews, six years after the launch of the NAP process, few executives from the ministries concerned are truly associated with or feel concerned about this issue.”).</p> <p>However, the report also sees an opportunity, in recent national and international advances, to revitalise consideration of these issues and mobilise adequate resources to build the capacities of the actors involved. It makes recommendations for integrating gender and climate change into the policies of all the key sectors identified (agriculture, water resources, health, forestry, energy, coastal zone and tourism).</p>
How does the government frame both issues?	The government emphasises the vulnerability of women, but also the opportunities presented by the integration of gender in the fight against climate change.
Are there any policies specifically referring to gender equality / social inclusion in climate change initiatives (both adaptation and mitigation)? Any background studies?	<p>See above.</p> <p>A major player in these initiatives is the UNDP, which has set up and supported various initiatives: “UNDP support has contributed to: facilitating the participation of women in economic sectors hitherto reserved for men. This is reflected in 60 new female agricultural entrepreneurs who are technically equipped and set up. Through the Millennium Village Project, 75 women agricultural producers have benefited from credit agreements with Microfinance Institutions to boost food production, thus contributing to increasing their income and food security in the locality. In addition, 2 female rabbit breeders have been trained and equipped. It should be added that 360 women members of agricultural cooperatives in Banikoara have increased their income thanks to the strengthening of their capacities in soil fertility management and the modernisation of rice threshing operations (previously manual) with the 4 high capacity threshers being made available to them.</p>

	<p>In terms of capacity building for women to adapt their production in the areas of livestock and agriculture in response to climate change, more than 139 women producers in the areas of intervention of the PANA1 project (Damè, Bopa, Sèhomi, Lagbavé Ahomey-Oumey,) have benefited from training on new short-cycle production technologies (rice, soybeans, corn, market gardening products). Also, approximately 3,150 oil palm plants selected over 22 ha were made available to 42 producers, including 9 women. In breeding, especially poultry farming, women have benefited from training on the techniques of running a poultry farm and have each obtained support with 100 breeding cocks. In fish farming, for example, 22 women have been supported in Sô-Ava (a lakeside village). This means they can strengthen their economic empowerment. Also, to enable women to contribute to the protection of natural resources, 78 women from women's groups have benefited from training in techniques for manufacturing improved stoves in the municipalities of Sèmè-Kpodji, Akpro-Missérété, Dangbo and Zogbodomey.” (UNDP 2015)</p>
Are there international organisations supporting the government on gender and climate initiatives?	<p>The Ministry of the Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD) (2019) mentions the technical and financial support of GIZ, UNDP and the Green Climate Fund. The report was produced in partnership with the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Environment and Climate Change Canada.</p> <p>The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UNDP also supported the production of the SAP-Benin report (2014) on the integration of gender in modelling the assessment of climate impacts by development sector.</p>
Are there background studies on both adaptation and gender?	<p>At national level, a key document is the SAP-Benin report (2014) on the integration of gender in modelling the assessment of climate impacts by development sector. This report takes stock of gender inequalities in the context of climate change in Benin, the degree to which these issues are taken into account, and establishes a gender vulnerability index to climate change.</p> <p>There are also studies at local level on adaptation and gender, even if this issue is often mentioned without being central to the analysis. For example, the study by Loko et al. (2013) on the northwestern zone of Benin: “Gender (male, female) did not have a significant effect on adaptation to climate change but significantly influences the type of strategy adopted by producers such as the use of varietal diversity and multiple strategies.”</p> <p>Another study on southern Benin (Mahouna, Fadina and Barjolle 2018), on the other hand, arrives at opposite conclusions, finding that female-headed households use more diversification strategies. Although gender has different implications at local level, it is still significant according to these studies.</p>
What do available studies say about the anticipated differences in men's and women's vulnerability and adaptive capacity to climate	<p>“In agriculture, Beninese rural women are responsible for the harvesting and small livestock (pigs, sheep, poultry) for household use. They are also responsible for sowing and spreading fertiliser and husking cereals (e.g. rice) with a pestle. Women therefore play a key role in food security (food crops, food preparation and preservation).</p>

change?	<p>Changes in rainfall and increased drought resulting from climate change lead to scarcity and/or remoteness of water points, with serious implications for household food security. These negative impacts for rural women are compounded by the fact that women are often victims of the unequal distribution of land and other resources (e.g. agricultural equipment, inputs and plant conservation products in the fields) . ”</p> <p>“Drought will lead to an increase in the time spent on non-productive work by women (e.g. firewood and water collection, housework, etc.). We will thus witness an increasingly severe loss of control of the daily calendar among women (uncertain duration of the search for water and wood), which could thwart forecasts for the sowing and fertiliser application calendar as part of climate change adaptation measures. Also, with regard to the social organisation of rural work in force in certain regions of the country, women cultivate their husbands' fields before cultivating their own fields. In the context of climate change, women's fields will be more exposed to the risks of unproductiveness because of the three combined effects (increased time devoted to non-productive work, loss of control of the daily calendar, social organisation prioritising work in the fields of the husband) (SAP project in Benin, 2014).</p> <p>Women and children (usually girls) are responsible for fetching water for productive activities (drinking, preparing meals, washing clothes, washing dishes, showering, watering, etc.). During droughts, they travel long distances to fetch water. Sometimes the water available is not fit for domestic use. Meanwhile, men seek water for productive activities (resale of water, manufacture of bricks, breeding, vehicle washing, etc.) (World Bank, 2018).</p>
What do available studies say about existing gender inequalities that may be exacerbated by climate change impacts?	<p>Climate change could change how women and girls use their time to complete tasks. Since rural women and girls are generally responsible for the provision of firewood and the supply of drinking water, the time required for collecting fuel and fetching water will probably increase with the depletion of forests and the drying up of drinking water sources (dams, wells, boreholes, etc.). Similarly, the increase in diseases extends the time devoted to the care of the most vulnerable people (the sick, the elderly), which will have the effect of reducing the time reserved for the production of goods and services and could affect income and increase poverty. In addition to the reduction in time devoted to the production of goods and services, the working day of women is becoming longer due to the multiplicity of tasks and lack of rest, which increases women's fatigue and reduces their productive capacities (SAP Benin Project, 2014).” (Ministry of the Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD, 2019)</p>

3. PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN BENIN

The present proposal intends to empower 25 local governments in the departments of Atacora, Alibori, Donga and Mono to build the adaptative capacity of their communities and reduce their vulnerability to climate change impacts. Strengthening climate resilience will support local economies, with tangible benefits for vulnerable groups, women especially and can be expected to indirectly generate new job opportunities for both men and women. Women are not only the first observers but also the first victims of climate change by virtue of their roles in looking after the family and responsibilities in food production, collecting fodder, fuelwood, and water. They are the first to observe the decreased agricultural productivity and depletion of water resources. They are the most vulnerable as, when climate change disrupts livelihoods, they are the most affected. Disasters and the social disruptions of climate change often have different impacts on women and men. Women and children are more likely than men to die or be injured in disasters, specifically in countries where women have unequal social, economic, and political status. Nevertheless, women are also effective agents of change as they often cope and adapt differently to men, and they play a preeminent role in the family. In spite of their vulnerability, women should not be seen only as victims of climate change, but they should also be seen as active and effective promoters of adaptation and mitigation. For example, women have historically developed knowledge and skills related to water harvesting and storage, food preservation and rationing, and natural resource management. Thus, gender mainstreaming is essential in climate change projects to both empower women's capacity and knowledge and provide them with the tools and skills for climate adaptation.

While not constituting a specific target group of the programme, other vulnerable groups such as the youth are expected to be positively impacted by the programme for its positive repercussions in strengthening local climate resilience and related public services as well as in supporting a participatory, inclusive local governance model that accounts for the needs of and contributions by different groups.

In a complementary way, the initiative will also enhance the socio-economic empowerment of women at the local level through the establishment of community contracting systems for local green and resilient investments, supporting access to finance and improved infrastructures. For the scope of action of the Programme, no specific differentiated needs have been identified between women and youth; as such, the Programme will not have separate, dedicated activities or targets related to women and the youth. However, throughout its design and implementation, it will mainstream gender and social inclusiveness considerations so as, in particular:

- (a) To ensure that the voice, needs and perspectives of all social groups have the opportunity and a safe space to be conveyed
- (b) To take into account the above perspectives and input in the design and delivery of all Programme activities
- (c) To avoid at all times any unintended negative repercussion of any Programme activity on any specific group (e.g. women, the youth)
- (d) To exploit the Programme as an avenue to foster wider participation and engagement in public governance by multiple stakeholders (incl. women and the youth).

Women have been consulted during the participatory process to develop the current proposal, and will remain a key stakeholder for engagement and consultation throughout the programme implementation. All project activities are going to be designed and implemented with a gender-responsive approach and accounting for local, cultural sensitivities. Zero tolerance against gender-based discrimination and violence is a core principle of the programme, which foresees a grievance mechanism, including for offences about sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment (ref. Annex 12 for more details).

The LoCAL Programme expects to be conducive to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Benin, both directly and indirectly, in several ways, starting from women's participation in the programme roll-out and economic development locally.

- a) The programme is designed based on an inclusive and participatory approach that pays special attention to gender considerations and pursues the inclusion of women as a traditionally marginalised group in decision-making fora. By accounting for the specific needs, challenges and opportunities of women, as a main actor affected by climate change and a key change agent to drive adaptation efforts, the programme will foster local economic development and adaptation initiatives that reflect the vulnerability and coping strategies of women. The project will focus on raising awareness and strengthening the capacities of local players and women by promoting gender-sensitive local adaptation responses, based on the local deployment of information tools on climate change adaptation and on structuring local support for local economic development that takes climate change adaptation and gender into account. Women-specific needs will be taken into consideration when designing programme activities, including adjusting the activity formats, locations and schedules based on women's availability, schedules and cultural sensitivities. Awareness-raising and capacity-building of local actors and women will help to improve the integration of climate change adaptation into local planning processes in a participatory way, and the implementation of gender-sensitive investment measures.
- b) With regard to access to finance, the menu of eligible investments for local authorities is defined and adapted to the needs of population groups (women and men) and local development priorities. The participation of women is one of the criteria influencing the prioritization of suitable investments in an inclusive and participatory way. In this respect, in collaboration with UN Women and UNDP, UNCDF has developed the Women Economic Empowerment Index (WEEI) to assess the viability of an investment from the point of view of the economic empowerment of women. As part of the LoCAL mechanism, WEEI indicators will be used to support local authorities in assessing the extent to which public adaptation investment projects contribute to women's empowerment and gender equality. Applied to public investments, the WEEI comprises two sets of indicators:
 - (i) *Environmental and social safeguards*: The indicators in this section measure whether the investment contributes to one or more safeguards, in terms of increased access to social and economic services (access to water, health, education, markets, etc.), increased access to employment, increased access to vocational training and capacity-building opportunities, community initiatives to support and finance women's rights groups and cooperatives.
 - (ii) *Gender equality conditions*: Indicators in this section examine provisions for equal pay and benefits for men and women, a discrimination-free working environment, and more.
 The WEEI tool ensures that the investments prioritized by local authorities contribute to strengthening the ability of women to adapt to climate change, and in so doing are conducive to their economic empowerment and contribute to turn them into agents of change for climate action within the household and the community.
- c) Furthermore, the implementation of the PBCRG mechanism incorporates cross-cutting indicators such as the participation of vulnerable groups, gender equality, transparency, environmental and social safeguards. Local authorities will be assessed at the end of each PBCRG-financed investment cycle against performance criteria covering key areas including the quality of planning and integration of climate change adaptation and gender considerations, investment execution and management, good governance and participation of women, girls and vulnerable groups, accountability and transparency of local processes. The performance of local authority against these measures will be used to inform the grant amounts made available to local authorities from year to year, providing an incentive system for increased resilience and benefit inclusivity, in favour of women and girls.

Guiding questions	Gender equality
What are the targeted regions or local government to be	Alibori, Atacora, Donga and Mono Departments Capacity issues (see next question), weight of traditions and prejudices

supported by LoCAL? What challenges can we anticipate?	(see first section).
What are their capacities in both sectors (human, technical, financial capacities)?	<p>National Development Plan 2018-2025: Institutionalisation of gender in the development management process: "The capacities of the actors in the different stages of the project management cycle, as well as those of the actors in the decision-making spheres, are essentially weak, in particular regarding mastery of the tools for integrating gender into the country's development management process. The institutionalisation of gender in the development management process makes it possible to improve this situation through: i) building the technical capacities of all the stakeholders involved in the chain of design and implementation of public policies, in terms of mastery of the tools for integrating gender into the development management process (mainstreaming); and ii) building the human and material capacities of the bodies responsible for gender advancement, including the gender focal points of the various sectors. "</p> <p>Ministry of the Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD) (2019): "Gender Focal Points" or "gender units" have been established by Ministerial Order and Service Note (in the case of the Ministry in charge of water, in 2007 for example) to support the integration of gender issues in a few sectors. In the MCVDD, the DGEC houses a Gender Focal Point for the NAP process. While these bodies sometimes have insufficient human and financial resources, and considering the specific needs of the programme concerning gender, LoCAL Benin foresees the recruitment of relevant staff within the PMU, in addition to Gender Mainstreaming expert who will work closely with 4 Field Project Officers (FPO) to support local governments in the implementation of the activities of the PBCRG, considering specific gender mainstreaming needs to be indicated in the ToRs. These will also be supported by gender specialists from FNEC (AE) as well as members of the Committee of Experts for Environmental and Social Monitoring, and the Gender Approach (CESESAG) set up by the FNEC and ensure synergies with the NAP objectives. Hence, the Gender Focal Point is fully expected to acquire sufficient human and financial capacity to fulfil its role. "</p>
What is LGs responsibilities and attitude vis a vis the integration of gender equity issues in development planning?	<p>The PDC planning guidelines include directions for mainstreaming gender considerations into planning. The specific guidelines for gender mainstreaming are indicated to serve the following purposes: (i) facilitate the identification of gender specific issues, (ii) identify entry points for the integration of gender considerations into strategic planning documents, (iii) provide orientations for gender mainstreaming into the identification, planning, execution and monitoring and evaluation of public investments and interventions.</p>
What is the typical participation (or lack) of women in decision making processes at the local government level? How many women are part of the LG decision making committee?	<p>The participation of women in decision-making bodies in nominative and elective roles at national and local levels is very limited: In Benin, "in terms of people in charge of management at national and departmental level or even in structures under the supervision of ministries, there are more men (81.46%) than women (18.54%). This trend is more balanced at the level of service managers, 40.13% against 59.83%" (UNDP, 2013). As a result, the influence of women in decision-making remains limited. At the 2015 municipal assemblies, there was only one woman mayor out of the 77 communes in Benin.</p>

	<p>(Ministry of the Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD), 2019)</p> <p>In the rural areas of the departments of Alibori, Atacora, Donga and Mono, the representation of women in decision-making bodies (socio-professional organisation, political parties, etc.) is low. Latest information available counts for below 2% of female members of communal councils (Attanaso, 2012). The participation of women in associative or political life is subject to the consent of their husbands. In addition, the time constraints related to reproductive activities are a handicap for the active participation of women in the various decision-making bodies at local level. This under-representation is reflected in some localities by a total absence of women in local councils. On the other hand, the participation of women in associative life is relatively more sustained.</p>
Have any projects / activities / decisions been implemented to support women's rights and/or empowerment in the past in the area of intervention? (by the LG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Swisscontact-LARES Consortium through phase 2 of the Rural Development Sector Support Programme (STEP 2), funded by Swiss Cooperation in Benin for the benefit of the Socio-Professional Organisations of Borgou and Alibori, has been implementing the “Gobi Anfani” project since July 2018, an initiative to support women's groups for their financial empowerment in two municipalities pilots Sinendé and Nikki. • Care France project to contribute to the eradication of exploitation and violence against children and women in Benin, between 2017 and 2020. Funded by the European Union and implemented among others in Alibori (Karimama and Malanville) with local partners: Equity for the advancement of girls (Equi Filles); Women actors for community development (FADeC). https://www.carefrance.org/care-actions/programmes-monde/benin-exploitation-violences-femmes-enfants.htm
Are there any feminine organisations, women's groups and/or gender advocates present in the area of intervention? If so, what do they focus on? Who is the main point of contact? Are they involved in local development planning? In the implementation and maintenance of initiatives/infrastructure? What are their capacities like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observatory of the Family, Women and Children: Created by the MFASSNHPTA; with the support of UNFPA, this observatory is working on the construction of qualitative and quantitative data relating to gender. • National Institute for the Women (INF): Created by the Government in 2021, the INF has, among other assignments, the collection, updating and dissemination of data relating to the status of women in Benin, the need for the establishment and production of statistics in the field of gender. • Association of Women Lawyers of Benin: The NGO Association of Women Lawyers of Benin seeks to contribute to the promotion and defence of human rights in general and those of women and children in particular. It seeks to raise awareness and delivers training on the texts of laws and offers legal aid in all departments • Inter-African Committee – Benin section: The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children is a regional organisation whose action focuses on public policies and programmes seeking to stop female genital mutilation. • Sister Frances at work: Their social economy initiatives target

	<p>women farmers. It works on microfinance, community health, food security and consolidation of civil society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DERANA: The mission of this NGO, created in September 1991, is to provide Adult Education through literacy and the teaching of French. The specific problem addressed by the project is the reduction of the illiteracy rate in Benin and of gender inequalities. Participatory approach at the request of the communities with deployment of a work team in collaboration with the town halls. • Action Centre for Integrated Development and Solidarity (CERADIS): NGOs acting in particular on issues relating to sexual and reproductive rights. Partnership with the NGO Plan. • Platform for the Participation of Women in Decision-Making Bodies in Benin (PFID): Created in 2009 and made up of several Beninese women's organisations and associations, this platform aims to create synergy to ensure better participation of women in decision-making bodies. <p>(Source: AFD 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Réseau des Femmes Conseillères du Bénin (REFEC): As part of the initiation of the decentralization process in Benin, to support the female candidates in the municipal elections the REFEC network was created. It is composed of all the women counselors of Benin. They are 43 out of 1199 elected councilors, including two female mayors. • SIN-DO: created more than 20 years ago with the aim of meeting the needs of women in rural communities living in situations of extreme poverty. The association is based on the great capacities of mobilisation of women, to help them better understand and take ownership of their rights. E-mail: info@ongsindo.org +229 95,422 104
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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The information and data collected via the gender assessment allow to identify a set of equity-related issues and trends that are closely related to the intervention areas of the LoCAL Programme and which the Programme can and intends to contribute to address, by mainstreaming equity consideration throughout its design and implementation.

In particular, the following specific measures and actions are recommended to be undertaken to ensure a thorough integration of equity-related considerations as well as a gender-responsive Programme implementation:

- 1) Institutionalise gender assessments at the local level prior to the disbursement of any project funding and to the design of any project activity.
- 2) Ensure that funding allocations also enable women to play a role in the design and maintenance of the initiatives supported via project funding. In so doing, the Programme intends to act as a good practice to enhance gender equality in public governance and decision-making, including in access to finance matters.

- 3) Ensure that gender considerations are embedded across all policy and institutional frameworks that govern the Programme design and its implementation, with adequate capacity and understanding across all stakeholders. In so doing, the Programme intends to serve as a best practice to improve gaps in policies and institutional frameworks to address gender-specific vulnerabilities.
- 4) Ensure that women are represented in all project activities and are provided with a comfortable space and time to participate in and contribute to all activities. Holding women-only project activities will also be taken into consideration when prescribed by local cultural sensitivities and based on women's feedback about preferred engagement modalities.
- 5) By providing women with equal access to information and active and safe engagement opportunities during the design and implementation of project activities, the Programme supports women's capacity to become champions of climate change awareness and adaptation within their communities.
- 6) Ensure that all Programme communications channels and products are tailored to women's unique needs, availability and cultural sensitivities, to ensure that Programme information reaches all the intended target audiences and is adequately understood.
- 7) Pursue gender-disaggregated data whenever conducting analysis and research, to ensure to capture gender-specific nuances, needs and perspectives in relation to any researched and studied topic.

These recommendations will be used to guide the Programme Gender Action Plan with a view to embed them in as many project activities as possible.

While the Programme explicitly targets men and women, in its design and implementation it will integrate the different perspectives, needs and voices of all stakeholders across its design and delivery, so as to optimise opportunities for, in particular, social inclusion and gender equality in economic growth, climate resilience, public governance and also to ensure that, unintentionally, no project activity generates any unintended negative social impact.

Social inclusion will be implemented by (a) ensuring at all times a transparent and open implementation approach based on a wide and user-friendly outreach to and engagement of different stakeholders to be consulted in the roll out of the program; (b) promoting a participatory approach during decision-making, to foster a more inclusive public governance modality. If and as needed, this will also imply conducting stakeholder-specific consultations, to ensure each stakeholder has a safe venue and convenient time window to participate and share their input; (c) collecting stakeholder-specific information and data (including disaggregated by age group).

The continuous monitoring of equity-related matters throughout the Programme implementation is also intended as a vehicle to identify in a timely manner any new or unforeseen equity-related issue that may surface during implementation and that may require adjustments in the design and/or delivery of project activities.

As such, the measures listed above are not intended to be an exhaustive list but rather an initial compilation of recommended measures, to be further strengthened and complemented as needed during the Programme roll-out.

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