



**OUTPUT 5.2: SITE-BASED GENDER ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN
(FINAL – V1.2)**

**Provision of Project Preparation Services
to the South African National Biodiversity
Institute (SANBI) through the GCF Project
Preparation Facility (PPF)**

1 April 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The impacts of climate change have been felt across South Africa with the frequency and severity of floods, droughts and wildfires increasing. Climate projections show that this trend, including changes in intensity and unpredictability, will continue. These hazards are leading to escalating risks of significant impacts on South Africa's wider economy and both the urban and rural livelihoods and its most vulnerable populations.

In response, South Africa's National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) is preparing a full application, with the associated supporting documents, to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to fund a programme to scale up ecosystem-based approaches to managing climate intensified disaster risks in vulnerable regions of South Africa (the Eco-DRR project). Ecosystem-based approaches are broadly accepted as a cost-effective and sustainable means to promoting resilience in communities vulnerable to climate change intensified drought, flood and wildfire and this project will utilise ecosystem-based approaches to reduce the impacts of climate change to the benefit of 5 481 886 people. This will be achieved through the rehabilitation of vulnerable catchments, the integration of ecosystem-based approaches into settlement planning and disaster risk reduction (DRR), and the creation of an enabling environment that unlocks private sector finance and scales best practices across South Africa.

Gender Legislation and Institutional Frameworks

The legal framework in South Africa for women's empowerment and gender equality is anchored in the Constitution, particularly in Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, which guarantees the rights of all citizens and specifically addresses equality. The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity, along with various Acts such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Employment Equity Act, and others, further solidify the commitment to non-discrimination and the empowerment of women. Notably, the Domestic Violence Act and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act are crucial instruments in addressing gender-based violence, providing legal remedies and protection for victims. The legal landscape also encompasses legislation on abortion rights, children's rights, Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), plus others' rights, and gender-responsive budgeting.

The institutional framework includes the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities as the key institution for promoting gender rights, supported by the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and the Environment (with regards to gender-climate mainstreaming), the Commission for Gender Equality (the watchdog for gender rights), and NGOs like Gender Links, Sonke Gender Justice, and Women's Legal Centre – all of which play vital roles in advancing gender equality through advocacy, education, and support services. South Africa has also ratified international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Beijing Declaration, aligning itself with global efforts to promote gender equality.

Despite legislative progress, challenges persist including gender-based violence, disparities in education and employment, and discriminatory social norms, particularly affecting women in rural areas and poor communities. In response to the

country's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, South Africa's 2025 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) have been updated to be more gender-sensitive, and the finalisation of a National Climate Change Gender Action Plan is imminent. Ongoing efforts also include the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, tracking gender equality allocations through frameworks like the Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Auditing Framework, and aligning with the "Strategy Towards Gender Mainstreaming in the Environment Sector (2016-2021)," which, was extended to 2025 and plays a key role in ongoing gender reporting and updating processes in the environment sector.

Overview of Gender Status in South Africa

In terms of demographics, the population stands at 62.03 million, with females comprising 51.5%, based on the 2022 census. Female-headed households increased to 41.9%, with notable variations among ethnic groups. The census also highlights challenges like high rates of disability among females, increasing widowed individuals with age, and notable shifts in marital status between 2011 and 2022- with an increase in single parents.

Regarding gender indices and ratings, South Africa ranks 20th globally in the Global Gender Gap Index, indicating progress towards gender parity. The country excels in political empowerment but faces challenges in economic participation and opportunity.

Gender issues manifest in access to financial resources, with women overrepresented in the poverty, and unemployment groups. Additionally, women experience lower participation in the labour market, lower pay compared to their male counterparts, and the burden of traditional gender roles. Inequalities in disadvantaging women also exist in access to water, land, energy, information, and technology. High rates of gender-based violence, particularly physical and sexual violence against women, continue. The gender challenges are more pronounced among women in the rural areas who, due to their dependence on natural resource, face more challenges compared to urban dwellers.

These findings concur with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities' 2019 assessment of gender status in South Africa from 1994 to 2019. The assessment found several achievements, including advancements in policies promoting gender equality, increased representation of women in decision-making and leadership positions particularly in the public sector, good to moderate improvements in access to education and healthcare for women, and efforts to address gender-based violence. However, challenges persisted in accessing equal economic opportunities, high rates of gender-based violence, and limited leadership in private sectors. The report highlighted the need for continued efforts to address these challenges and achieve true gender equality and empowerment for women in South Africa.

Women's Status in the Four DMs where the Project will be Implemented

The Alfred Nzo, Ngaka Modiri, Ehlanzeni, and Sekhukhune District Municipalities (DMs) present similar type of challenges for women, shaped by both climate change impacts and broader societal dynamics. Each DM grapples with adversities stemming from climate extremes, which often exacerbate existing gender disparities. These challenges emphasise the pressing need for inclusive, gender-sensitive interventions to address vulnerabilities across these regions.

In the four DMs, flooding emerges as a significant climate-induced hazard, threatening livelihoods and infrastructure due to factors such as deforestation, overgrazing, and soil erosion. The consequences of flooding are severe, affecting dwellings,

agricultural activities, poor rangeland management and access to essential services, particularly in poorly planned settlements. The presence of invasive alien plants exacerbates these challenges, as they consume more water than indigenous plant species, reducing the availability of water in the ecosystem. In addition, invasive plants can alter soil composition and reduce water quality, exacerbating drought conditions thus highlighting the need for enhanced strategies to combat invasive species. Erosion further compounds vulnerabilities, emphasising the importance of improved infrastructure and environmental management practices. In Ehlanzeni DM, particularly additional factors, like overgrazing and sand mining, intensify flood risks. Drought and wildfires were also reported as challenges in the DMs.

In all of the DMs, women and other vulnerable genders face restricted access to essential services and economic opportunities as bridges and roads are washed away cutting off access to the essential services. Furthermore, inadequate early warning systems and actionable guidance intensify vulnerabilities, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address gender disparities in disaster response. Women bear the brunt of caregiving responsibilities during disasters, exacerbating their physical and mental health burdens. Additionally, gender discrimination and limited decision-making power hinder women's participation in disaster management efforts, perpetuating gender disparities.

Overall, gender issues across the DMs include limited access to essential services, economic empowerment barriers, and entrenched gender norms that perpetuate disparities.

DMs' Institutional Structures and Capacities

Within the DMs' institutions, there was a notable absence of gender mainstreaming. It was evident that there were insufficient support systems and mechanisms in place to understand and embrace gender mainstreaming. This was reflected in the absence of gender plans or budgets in the Integrated Development Plans of DMs. The individuals designated as gender focal points, were also primarily responsible for social services, and lacked the authority to influence decisions, and were without action plans to guide their activities. In a few cases, these gender focal points struggled to define their roles and responsibilities. Across all DMs, gender focal positions were not effectively used to guide and influence implementation of the National Gender Policy within their institutions.

Gender Analysis and Recommendations for the Gender Action Plan

The assessments conducted in Alfred Nzo, Ngaka Modiri, Ehlanzeni, and Sekhukhune DMs reveal the intricate challenges confronted by women amidst climate change. The Eco-DRR project aims to address these gaps by adopting and implementing a gender sensitive approach that ensures gender responsiveness to climate change, DRR and ecosystem-based approaches. The project seeks to bridge the gap between the high-level conceptualisation of gender mainstreaming and its practical implementation at the grassroots level. It's crucial to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into every stage of the Eco-DRR project, from planning to execution, reporting, monitoring and evaluation to create more effective and inclusive strategies that benefit all members of the community.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Definition
AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
BIPA	the Biodiversity Information and Policy Advice Division
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DM	District Municipality
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DWYPD	Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Eco-DRR	Ecosystem-Based Disaster Risk Reduction
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FG	Focus Group
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEC	Gender Empowerment commission
GESF	Gender Equality Strategic Framework
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAP	Invasive Alien Plant
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), and others.
LM	Local Municipality
MMFR	Maternal Mortality in Facility Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
PMG	Project Management Group
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANBI	South Africa's National Biodiversity Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDIF	National Sanitary Dignity Implementation Framework
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
WBL	Women, Business and the Law

LIST OF DEFINITIONS / CONCEPTS

For ease of reference, the following definitions and concepts are relevant for the programme and understanding this document:

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women, and other gender identities. Unlike "sex," which is biologically determined, gender is shaped by social and cultural contexts, leading to varying expectations and norms across different societies (WHO, 2021).

Gender in relation to climate change impacts—When discussing gender in relation to climate, the focus often centres on women due to their increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, stemming from socio-cultural factors such as caregiving roles, limited access to resources like water, food, and energy, and unequal power dynamics (UNDP 2013, IPCC 2014). It is acknowledged that the LGBTQ+ community also faces specific challenges and vulnerabilities concerning climate change, including discrimination, marginalisation, and lack of legal recognition of their rights (OHCHR 2018). Efforts to address gender inequalities in the context of climate change aim for inclusivity and intersectionality, considering the diverse experiences and needs of different groups within society. However, there is a noticeable gap in research highlighting the specific adverse effects on other genders within the LGBTQ+ community. For this project, there were no concerns raised, or information provided regarding the impacts on LGBTQ+ individuals in the project sites.

Gender intersectionality is used to explain the idea that various forms of discrimination, such as those centered on race, gender, class, disability, sexuality, and other forms of identity, do not work independently but interact to produce particularized forms of social oppression

Sex refers to a set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy (CIHR 2020).

Gender Assessment: is a systematic approach to understanding differences between the development needs and priorities of men and women and the variable impact of development programmes on them. It uses data to understand men's and women's different roles, responsibilities, decision-making power, incentives, and access to productive resources and basic services. Gender assessment includes contextual analysis of the socioeconomic, legal, and political environment as they affect gender-based roles and constraints in society (Asian Development Bank, 2021).

Gender Action Plan (GAP): is a tool to strategically plan and implement specific activities to enhance gender equity among a project's target groups. A GAP includes a summary of gender activities, action steps, timeframe, indicators and measures to be carried out by project implementing agencies (Asian Development Bank, 2021).

Gender Equity: refers to the fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men according to their respective needs. This may involve equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal may introduce special measures to compensate disadvantaged women and men, to end inequality and foster autonomy (Asian Development Bank, 2021)

Gender Sensitivity: refers to the awareness, understanding, and consideration of the roles, expectations, and experiences of both men and women, as well as the recognition of the social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to gender-based disparities. It involves being mindful of the ways in which gender influences and shapes individuals' opportunities, interactions, and perspectives (UNESCO, 2019).

Gender Sensitive Approach: aims to promote equality and address issues related to gender bias, discrimination, and stereotypes. This perspective recognises that men and women may have different needs, experiences, and challenges in various aspects of life, including education, employment, healthcare, and social relationships (UNDP 2018).

GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion): GESI recognises not only women but the vulnerability of other groups — such as the youth, elderly and persons with disabilities — who are excluded from development opportunities- and refers to the integration of gender equality and social inclusion considerations into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs, policies, and projects (Asian Development Bank 2013).

Gender Lens: A gender lens is a tool or perspective used to analyse and understand how gender dynamics influence and shape various aspects of society, including social, economic, and political systems. It involves examining policies, practices, and interventions to identify and address gender disparities, inequalities, and biases (ILO 2018).

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is a strategy aimed at integrating gender considerations and promoting gender equality as a fundamental principle across all areas of policymaking, programming, and institutional practices. It involves assessing the implications of policies, programs, and projects on gender relations and ensuring that gender perspectives are systematically incorporated into decision-making processes (UN Women, 2016).

Other terms used in conjunction with gender mainstreaming include:-

- **Gender bias:** When socio-cultural beliefs favour specifically men, women, boys or girls only (WHO 2021).
- **Gender blindness:** Inability to perceive that there are different gender roles, need, responsibilities of men, women, boys and girls, and as a result failure to realise that policies, programmes and projects can have different impact on men, women, boys or girls (UNFPA 2019).
- **Gender negative:** Negative outcomes that aggravate or reinforce existing norms and inequalities (WB 2020).
- **Gender responsive:** Addresses different needs, aims for equity in benefit-sharing, does not address root causes of inequality (UNICEF 2020).
- **Gender targeted:** Focus on number of women or marginalised populations (UN Women 2020)
- **Gender transformative:** Addresses root causes of inequality (ICRW 2016)

1 Introduction

1.1 PROJECT CONTEXT

The impacts of climate change have been felt across South Africa with the frequency and severity of floods, droughts and wildfires increasing. Climate projections show that this trend, including changes in intensity and unpredictability, will continue. These hazards are leading to escalating risks of significant impacts on South Africa's wider economy and both the urban and rural livelihoods and its most vulnerable populations.

In response, South Africa's National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) is preparing a full application, with the associated supporting documents, to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to fund a programme to scale up ecosystem-based approaches to managing climate intensified disaster risks in vulnerable regions of South Africa (the Eco-DRR project). Ecosystem-based approaches are broadly accepted as a cost-effective and sustainable means to promoting resilience in communities vulnerable to climate change intensified drought, flood and wildfire and this project will utilise ecosystem-based approaches to reduce the impacts of climate change to the benefit of 5 481 886 people. This will be achieved through the rehabilitation of vulnerable catchments, the integration of ecosystem-based approaches into settlement planning and disaster risk reduction (DRR), and the creation of an enabling environment that unlocks private sector finance and scales best practices across South Africa.

For implementation purposes the proposed project is divided into the following outcomes:

1. Outcome 1: The incorporation of Eco-DRR strategies into integrated landscape management enhances the resilience of ecological infrastructure and climate-vulnerable communities.
2. Outcome 2: The incorporation of Eco-DRR into transformative disaster preparedness and response reduces the adverse impacts of climate-induced hazards on built infrastructure and climate-vulnerable communities.
3. Outcome 3: An enabling environment is created for investment in Eco-DRR through a strengthened evidence base and improved learning and knowledge management.

Table 1-1 below provides the three project outcomes alongside the activities/interventions that are being proposed for each of the programme components.

Table 1-1: Overview of Project Activities that will be Implemented under each outcome of the Eco-DRR project

Outcome 1: The incorporation of Eco-DRR strategies into integrated landscape management enhances the resilience of ecological infrastructure and climate-vulnerable communities.
Output 1.1: Ecosystems are rehabilitated, maintained and sustainably managed for Eco-DRR.
Activity 1.1.1: Establish local-level project delivery hubs, governance arrangements and capacity for implementation.
Activity 1.1.2: Undertake community-level engagements towards the co-development of a vision, strategy and implementation plan for improved Eco-DRR
Activity 1.1.3: Implement collaborative rehabilitation and management programmes for ecological infrastructure to improve ecosystem condition.
Activity 1.1.4: Develop innovative Eco-DRR tools to support adaptive management of the site-based programme of work.
Activity 1.1.5: Protect critical assets with investments in ecological infrastructure.

Output 1.2: Local gender-inclusive and sustainable ecosystem-based livelihoods support locally led adaptation.
Activity 1.2.1: Identify and assess opportunities to develop sustainable ecosystem-based livelihoods in support of locally led adaptation.
Activity 1.2.2: Support the further development and/or establishment of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) for sustainable ecosystem-based livelihoods.
Outcome 2: The incorporation of Eco-DRR into transformative disaster preparedness and response reduces the adverse impacts of climate-induced hazards on built infrastructure and climate-vulnerable communities.
Output 2.1: Local governments and communities implement improved Eco-DRR preparedness and response measures.
Activity 2.1.1: Establish a foundation for the incorporation of Eco-DRR into transformative disaster preparedness and response in the target DMs.
Activity 2.1.2: Develop and implement a municipal capacity and support programme towards the mainstreaming of Eco-DRR into disaster risk management strategies and plans in the four DMs.
Activity 2.1.3: Develop and activate innovative technologies and approaches that improve the dissemination of early warning products and messages about droughts, floods and wildfires in the four DMs.
Activity 2.1.4: Update the Green Book
Output 2.2: Eco-DRR is mainstreamed into national and sub-national asset risk management, environmental policy and spatial planning.
Activity 2.2.1: Identify the risk of critical built infrastructure and settlements to droughts, floods and wildfires.
Activity 2.2.2: Mainstream Eco-DRR and ecological infrastructure principles and priorities into national and local environmental policies, spatial plans and supporting instruments.
Outcome 3: An enabling environment is created for investment in Eco-DRR through a strengthened evidence base and improved learning and knowledge management.
Output 3.1: Financial mechanisms developed and strengthened to enhance private and public sector investments in Eco-DRR.
Activity 3.1.1: Assess and strengthen the policy and investment environment to support private sector engagement in Eco-DRR.
Activity 3.1.2: Build capacity and facilitate the exchange of knowledge for public - private sector investment in Eco-DRR.
Activity 3.1.3: Develop a portfolio of financial mechanisms and investment packages and unlock new revenue streams for Eco-DRR from private and public sector.
Activity 3.1.4: Develop a sustainable public sector employment funding model to support the rehabilitation and maintenance of ecological infrastructure.
Output 3.2: Informed decision making for Eco-DRR is supported and promoted
Activity 3.2.1: Strengthen and improve data management platforms towards supporting adaptive management and informed decision-making by policymakers and market participants.
Activity 3.2.2: Compile spatially explicit ecosystem asset and biocarbon accounts.
Activity 3.2.3: Develop and implement a project level social learning programme in support of adaptive management and decision making.
Activity 3.2.4: Develop and implement a structured suite of approaches to enable access to Eco-DRR information.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

Climate induced-disaster risks in South Africa are predicted to increase, and recent events have disproportionately impacted the poor and vulnerable members of society. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) and SANBI do recognise that women make up the majority of the most vulnerable in society and are disproportionately negatively impacted by the hazards of climate change. In this report, it is acknowledged that other minority genders and groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), and others (LGBTQ+); the elderly and sick and people living with disabilities also experience far more impacts than the male and physically able people. As such, it is a requirement that a gender assessment

and gender action plan be done for all project applications that will be supported by GCF. The purpose of this analysis is to identify key gender issues and constraints to be addressed through the Eco-DRR project as a way of ensuring that women and other vulnerable genders are fully included as beneficiaries and decision-makers and that their capacities are enhanced in building community resilience against climate change risks.

This gender assessment further outlines the institutional and policy framework in South Africa and the gender situational analysis in the four project DMs, namely Alfred Nzo DM in the Eastern Cape province, Ngaka Modiri Molema DM in North West Province, Ehlanzeni DM in Mpumalanga province and Sekhukhune DM in Limpopo province. The gender inequality landscape is described in this report, highlighting the implications for ecosystem-based responses to climate change. The issues highlighted include poverty, economic productivity, race and other apartheid historical systems that have amongst other things, placed women in rural areas with limited infrastructure while exacerbating existing issues such as gender-based violence.

This report is informed by a review of existing literature, secondary databases, inputs and perspectives of stakeholder engagements at each DM, expert inputs, review of legal instruments and any other relevant documents. Most of the statistics were obtained from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), United Nations (UN) reports made by South Africa and a few other independent assessments. This report should be updated and remain relevant for the Eco-DRR project's lifespan.

In carrying out a gender assessment, the Eco-DRR project intends to fully adhere with GCF's gender principles and to align with South Africa's gender policies as well as the internationally ratified legal frameworks. This gender assessment and associated action plan will ensure that the Eco-DRR project is designed and implemented in support of and in alignment with other national development strategies that promote equal opportunities, poverty reduction and sustainable use of natural resources.

This gender assessment aims to:

- Identify how the **impacts of climate-induced disasters effect gender roles, norms, and power dynamics** within the project's local context.
- Pinpoint the **specific vulnerabilities and capacities of different genders** concerning ecosystems and climate change induced hazards such as wildfires, droughts and floods. This information is crucial for tailoring disaster reduction strategies to address the unique needs and strengths of both men and women.
- Ensure that the project promotes **gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)**. This is important to prevent the exacerbation of existing gender inequalities and to create opportunities for all genders to actively participate in and benefit from ecosystem-based approaches and disaster reduction initiatives.
- Promoting the inclusion of women and other vulnerable genders in **decision-making processes** of the project.
- Addressing gender-based violence within the scope of the project by **developing strategies to prevent and respond to gender-based violence**, which may escalate during and after climate change induced disasters.
- **Incorporating local knowledge and perspectives** related to gender issues in the design and implementation of the Eco-DRR project. This will ensure that all interventions align with the cultural context and meet the needs of the affected communities.
- Identifying opportunities for **building the capacity of individuals** and organisations involved in the project to be able to mainstream gender and climate change during the projects' implementation.

In summary, a gender assessment aims to compile gender information that will aid the development of an inclusive and effective strategy and gender action plan that considers the unique needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of different genders in the project sites.

The findings from the gender assessment were used to develop a gender action plan which is also included in this report. The purpose of this plan is to provide gender specific and time-bound framework within which to operationalise the relevant gender policies and the findings from the gender assessment. Implementation of the plan will require ensuring that SANBI and the associated governance structures including the Project Management Unit (PMU) has the established competencies, tools, and processes to achieve the outlined results. This gender action plan focuses upon the project level while also providing actions for the interventions. However, separate gender action plans will need be prepared for individual interventions that speak to the current action plan presented in this report.

2 Relevant Legal Framework

2.1 LEGAL, POLICY AND PLANNING INSTRUMENTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)** promotes non-sexism, non-discrimination, equality and human dignity to all citizens of the country. Chapter 2 of The Bill of Rights, enshrines the rights of all people in the country. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights lay the foundation for non-discrimination and gives the government and its institutions the mandate for empowerment of women. Section 9 of the Constitution specifically addresses equality, and it has been interpreted to include protection against gender-based discrimination.

In line with the Constitution, South Africa's **National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity** was formulated by the Office on the Status of Women and adopted by Cabinet in 2000. The framework recognises women's rights and generally aims to promote gender equality, address discrimination and violence against women, and enhance women's participation in various aspects of society. The **South African National Gender Programme** was founded on the values outlined in this framework.

Other legal instruments that form the legal framework for women's empowerment and gender equality are:

- **Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act 4 of 2000) (PEPUDA):** PEPUDA aims to promote equality and prevent unfair discrimination. It covers various grounds, including gender, and provides a framework for addressing discrimination through the establishment of equality courts. It gives the Commission on Gender Empowerment (CGE) powers to get involved in the equality court matters.
- **Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998):** This Act seeks to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment, including addressing issues of discrimination based on gender and other grounds. It requires employers to implement affirmative action measures to promote diversity and eliminate unfair discrimination.
- **Recognition of Customary Marriage Act (Act 120 of 1998):** This Act recognises and regulates marriages that take place under African customary law. It includes provisions aimed at protecting the rights of spouses, particularly women, in customary marriages.
- **Civil Union Act (Act 17 of 2006):** The Act is a landmark piece of legislation in South Africa, signifying the country's progressive stance on LGBTQ+ rights. Enacted in 2006, it made South Africa the first country in Africa and the fifth in the world, outside of Europe, to legalise same-sex marriages. The Act provides a legal framework for the solemnisation and registration of civil unions between persons of the same sex, granting them the same legal status and benefits as traditional marriages.
- **Domestic Violence Act (Act 116 of 1998):** The Act addresses the pervasive issue of domestic violence in South Africa. This legislation aims to protect victims of domestic abuse by providing legal remedies and recourse. The Act defines various forms of domestic violence, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. It empowers the courts to issue protection orders to safeguard victims and ensures that law enforcement agencies take swift action in response to reported incidents of domestic violence.

- **Criminal Law (sexual offences and related matters) Amendment Act (Act 32 of 2007):** The Act is a crucial legal instrument in combating sexual offenses in South Africa. Enacted in 2007, it addresses sexual offenses, including rape, sexual assault, and the grooming of minors. The Act enhances legal mechanisms for the prosecution of sexual offenses, strengthens the protection of victims, and imposes severe penalties on perpetrators, reflecting a commitment to combating gender-based violence.
- **The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (Act 92 of 1996 as amended):** The Act is a significant piece of legislation that legalises abortion in South Africa. This Act allows women to make choices regarding their reproductive health and provides a legal framework for safe and accessible abortion services. It ensures that women have the right to terminate a pregnancy under specified conditions, contributing to women's reproductive rights and health.
- **The Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005):** This piece of legislation aimed at promoting and protecting the rights and well-being of children in South Africa. The Act covers various aspects of child welfare, including custody, guardianship, adoption, and protection from abuse and exploitation. It emphasises the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all matters concerning children, reflecting a commitment to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for the country's youth.
- **Gender Equality Strategic Framework (GESF) for Public Service (2009):** GESF is aimed at promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of women, especially those with disabilities. It mandates government departments to incorporate eight key principles in their action plans, including transformation for non-sexism, achieving equity targets, gender mainstreaming, capacity development for women's advancement, resource allocation for gender equality, and accountability.
- **Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (2013):** This law seeks to establish a legislative framework for women's empowerment by ensuring a minimum of 50% representation of women in senior and top management positions within government departments and private companies. It emphasises access to opportunities, education, and training for women.
- **Strategy Toward Gender Mainstreaming in the Environment Sector 2016 – 2021 (Extended to 2025):** The strategy aims to comply with national and international gender priorities by ensuring that initiatives in the sector are aimed to support the creation of policies that support gender mainstreaming. It also seeks to ensure gender analyses and mainstreaming during the development of new projects and including gender perspective into the whole project cycle management (DFPE, 2016).
- **Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Auditing Framework (2019):** In 2019, Cabinet approved the framework that intends to systematically integrate a gender lens into public finance management and advance gender responsive budgeting. It requires gender-specific analysis and instruments at all stages of the budget cycle, including planning, preparation, execution, review, and external control.

To address the high cases of gender violence in the country, South Africa passed three bills in 2020 to amend two existing laws i.e. the Domestic Violence Act (Act 116 of 1998), and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act, (Act 32 of 2007). The three amendments are: -

- The Domestic Violence Amendment Bill.
- The Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill; and

- Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses and Related matters) Amendment Bill.

The amendments to the **Domestic Violence Act (Act 116 of 1998)** were introduced through the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill. This bill aimed to strengthen the legal framework addressing domestic violence by refining definitions, enhancing protective measures, and expanding the scope of offenses covered under the original Act. The amendments sought to improve the effectiveness of the Act in providing support and recourse for victims of domestic violence.

Similarly, the **Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses and Related Matters) Act (Act 32 of 2007)** underwent changes through the Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses and Related Matters) Amendment Bill. This bill aimed to update and enhance the legislation related to sexual offenses, taking into account evolving societal norms and legal considerations. The amendments focused on refining definitions of sexual offenses, strengthening penalties for perpetrators, and incorporating advancements in forensic and investigative techniques to better address sexual crimes.

The **Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill (2020)** introduces changes in the criminal justice system, evidence procedures, and penalties for certain offenses. With regards to victims of sexual offenses, the bill streamlines and improves the efficiency of the criminal justice process while ensuring fairness and protection of rights for both victims and accused individuals.

In summary, the amendments allow victims of sexual offenses to make online protection order applications without being present in court; and regulate how information on offenders, victims and witnesses is handled and how offenses of sexual intimidation, incest etc are dealt with.

2.1.1 GCF'S Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Standards

The GCF operates under a framework of ESS that guide its financing of climate-related projects. These safeguards ensure that activities funded by GCF do not cause harm to people or the environment and contribute to long-term sustainable development. In the interim, the ESS Standards align with the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standards and are critical for mainstreaming environmental and social considerations into GCF-funded projects. In addition, the GCF's Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy promotes the integration of gender considerations into climate projects to ensure that women, men, and marginalised groups equally benefit from GCF-funded activities. The GESI policy emphasises gender mainstreaming, participatory approaches, and equitable access to resources and decision-making processes. The GCF Governing Instrument states that: *"The Fund will strive to maximise the impact of its funding for adaptation and mitigation... promoting environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits and taking a gender-sensitive approach."*

In this regard the Revised Environmental and Social Policy (B.BM-2021/18) notes that all supported GCF activities will commit to:

- Avoid, and where avoidance is impossible, mitigate adverse impacts to people and the environment;
- Avoid, and where avoidance is impossible, mitigate the risks of Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) to people impacted by GCF-financed activities;
- Enhance equitable access to development benefits; and

- Give due consideration to persons in vulnerable positions and situations and marginalised populations, groups, and individuals, including women and girls, local communities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalised groups of people and individuals that are affected or potentially affected by GCF-financed activities and are especially vulnerable to exploitation or other potentially harmful unintended intervention impacts.

The Eco-DRR project will therefore be aligned with the GCF's ESS which are listed below:

1. Performance Standard 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts;
2. Performance Standard 2: Labour and Working Conditions;
3. Performance Standard 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention;
4. Performance Standard 4: Community Health, Safety, and Security;
5. Performance Standard 5: Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement;
6. Performance Standard 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources;
7. Performance Standard 7: Indigenous Peoples; and
8. Performance Standard 8: Cultural Heritage.

More details regarding GCF's safeguards can be found in the Environmental and Social Management Plan (Annex 6).

2.1.2 SANBI Environmental and Social Standards

SANBI Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (2023)

The SANBI Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (2023) is designed to affirm SANBI's policy position and commitment to contribute towards the realisation of social and economic gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men on any planned action, and incorporating measures to address identified past and current gender inequalities through the planned action. This will include clear project/programme performance targets to achieve an equitable allocation of socio-economic benefits such as training, employment opportunities and business development opportunities, etc. to all beneficiaries of SANBI programmes. It outlines the following key principles for gender mainstreaming: -

- **Gender representivity in recruitment and appointment** – Focuses on equal opportunities in the workplace with the proportion of women in positions across SANBI being aligned to the Employment Equity Plan. Recognises that quantitative targets are not sufficient for gender mainstreaming and that existing perceptions about traditional roles and responsibilities of women and men needs to shift to being more mindful of historical gender biases and imbalances.
- **Empowerment of women** – Highlights the need to empower all members of staff, especially women, noting that empowerment initiatives need to be conducted in a meaningful way, and where appropriate should align with the Human Capital Development strategy for the biodiversity sector. Gives special attention to areas of work where women are under-represented and/or underprivileged.
- **Gender-sensitive and family-friendly policies** – Looks at adopting language that is sensitive to gender, including policies should avoid being gender-neutral (where appropriate), by assuming that men and women are the same. Recognises and equally values the similarities and differences between women and men. Further recognises the

importance of balancing family-work life, thereby making provision for family responsibility leave and flexitime in its policies.

- **High-level leadership for gender mainstreaming** – Emphasises the need for gender mainstreaming to be championed at the highest level in the organisation, with women being in leadership positions to support this.
- **Raise awareness of gender issues** – Notes the need to practice the organisation's U-GREAT values (Ubuntu; Growth; Respect and tolerance; Excellence; Accountability and Transformation) as well as celebrating key commemorations that focused on women, children and youth, in an inclusive way to create awareness of gender relationships in the workplace and at home.
- **Recognition of the different needs of men and women** – Recognises that the needs of men and women differ, necessitating distinct responses and interventions, such as when providing accommodation, providing facilities for moms who are breastfeeding, etc. **Zero tolerance for sexual harassment and discrimination** – Focuses on providing a working environment that is free from sexual harassment, intimidation and discrimination, and will not tolerate any such behaviour in the workplace. **Gender mainstreaming in SANBI projects** – Showcases SANBI's commitment to implement gender mainstreaming best practices in its externally funded projects.
- **Gender mainstreaming in services** – Highlights the need to consider gender mainstreaming matters when procuring service providers, and ensure that procurement processes service providers in a manner that is gender sensitive.
- **Youth, women and staff members living with disabilities** – Endeavours to acknowledge, support, and encourage the role of youth, women, and persons with disabilities in all sectors of society with a focus on inclusion of youth, women, and persons with disabilities in its programmes.

SANBI Gender Mainstreaming Framework

The framework seeks to ensure compliance with the GCF's Gender Policy and related policies and standards, as well as the relevant SANBI policies and procedures, including SANBI's Gender Mainstreaming Policy, and South Africa's National legislation. The framework references a table summarising GCF requirements for gender mainstreaming at various project cycle stages, acknowledging that it isn't an exhaustive list of relevant GCF policies, guidance, and templates. It directs users to GCF's official documents for updated information and emphasises the need for compliance - not only with GCF policies - but also with SANBI's and national policies related to environmental and social risk management. The framework notes the gender mainstreaming considerations that are required at each step in the GCF project cycle, such as:

- **GCF Concept Note 1. Simplified Approval Process:** The GCF Gender Policy requires that accredited entities ensure that concept notes and funding proposals submitted for GCF financing meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy.
- **GCF Concept Note 2. Standard Process:** Concept notes submitted for GCF financing must meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Equality Policy. The project concept note should reflect gender-related aspects and lay out objectives, activities, results, performance/impact indicators and operational costs that take into account gendered needs and interests related to climate change risks and impacts, as well as resilience.
- **Project Preparation Facility Application:** Funds from the Project Preparation Facility can support environmental, social and gender studies. Gender studies may include undertaking a gender assessment, developing a programme

or project level Gender Action Plan and/or incorporation of gender-responsive indicators and targets with baseline, in the logic framework of the funding proposal.

- **Simplified Approval Process Project Preparation Facility Application:** This includes completion of a Gender Assessment and Action Plan.
- **Funding Proposal (Standard Process):** Project and programme funding proposals are required to provide a gender assessment and a gender action plan.
- **Project Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation:** Accredited entities must implement the project-level gender action plan developed in funding proposal and refine the gender-related baseline, indicators and targets (as needed). Periodic updates on gender assessments must be ensured and accredited entities must monitor and report on the progress made in implementing the gender action plan.

Overall, this framework ensures a structured approach to integrate gender considerations into SANBI's GCF projects, aligning with GCF's Gender Policy and related standards, aiming for gender equality and sustainable climate change outcomes.

2.2 RELEVANT GENDER INSTITUTIONS

The key government institution responsible for gender in South Africa is the **Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD)**. This Department falls under the Presidency and its mandate is to facilitate socio-economic empowerment and rights of women, youth and people with disability. It is also mandated to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all sectors of South African society. The key policy that guides gender mainstreaming is the National Gender Policy Framework (2010). The framework sets standards and norms for the national gender programme. It also details a strategy for gender mainstreaming and provides guiding principles for its implementation. Most importantly, the policy details the long- and short-term mechanisms for determining the extent of gender justice and equality.

When discussing the integration of gender perspectives into climate-related initiatives, key institutions involved are the DWYPD and the **Department of Fisheries, Forestry, and Environment (DFFE)**. The DFFE, tasked with coordinating the nation's responses to climate change for both adaptation and mitigation, holds a pivotal role in providing guidance and leadership regarding the intersection of gender considerations and climate change impacts. It is well-equipped to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender perspectives throughout the country. While these two institutions spearhead the process of integrating gender into climate initiatives, it's crucial to recognise that climate change affects all sectors and systems. Consequently, both public and private sectors must actively engage in addressing climate challenges and integrating gender perspectives into their actions.

One other equally important institution is the Commission of Gender Equality (**CGE**), an independent statutory body established under Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It functions as a watchdog, playing a crucial role in monitoring and evaluating policies and practices related to gender equality. The CGE's mandate is to uphold the provisions regarding gender equality outlined in the Constitution. Its primary role is to promote gender equality, protect the rights of individuals against gender discrimination, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of laws related to gender equality. Specifically, it aims to promote respect for, protect, develop, and achieve gender equality. Furthermore, it makes

recommendations on any legislation affecting the status of women. The CGE has the authority to investigate complaints of gender discrimination, conduct public education campaigns, and advocate for policy changes. It operates independently of government structures and is accountable to Parliament, providing reports on its activities and findings.

In contrast, the **Gender Empowerment Commission (GEC)** operates as an advisory body within the DWYPD. It focuses on advocating for the empowerment of women and ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into government policies and programmes. Its primary mandate is to advocate for policies that eliminate gender discrimination, enhance the participation of women in decision-making processes, and address gender-based violence. The GEC plays a significant role in capacity building, public awareness, and collaboration with various stakeholders to advance gender equality. The GEC is structured to include representatives from various sectors, including government, civil society, and academia, ensuring a diverse perspective in its operations. This inclusive approach facilitates collaboration and strengthens the commission's effectiveness in addressing gender-related issues. The GEC reports directly to the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, providing updates on its activities, findings, and recommendations. Funding for the GEC is primarily sourced from the government budget, which allocates resources to support its programmes and initiatives. Additionally, the GEC may receive financial support from international organisations and partnerships aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in South Africa.

Lastly, the **Human Rights Commission** is also key in protecting and upholding the rights of women and other marginalised groups. The Commission is mandated to investigate human rights violations against marginalised and vulnerable sectors of the society, involving civil and political rights.

2.2.1 Relevant Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs play a crucial role in South Africa in advancing gender equality and addressing issues related to women's rights. These organisations often work on multiple fronts, including advocacy, education, and empowerment initiatives. They strive to challenge discriminatory practices and policies, promote women's participation in decision-making processes, and provide support to those affected by gender-based violence. NGOs in South Africa work collaboratively with government bodies, communities, and international partners to amplify their impact. By engaging in research, awareness campaigns, and community outreach, these NGOs contribute significantly to shaping a more equitable and inclusive society, fostering a transformative agenda for gender justice in South Africa. The most well-known NGOs working at the national level and tackling gender issues are listed below.

- **Gender Links** is an NGO that promotes gender equality and justice across South Africa. It works towards creating an environment where women and men can participate equally in all aspects of public and private life. It was established in 2001. Statis SA collaborates with Gender Links in producing the publication -Women Empowerment Gender Series. Gender Links has also participated in training certain DMs and local municipalities (LMs), to create a plan of action for addressing gender-based violence.
- **Sonke Gender Justice**, established in 2006, is a human rights organisation that works across Africa to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence. The organisation focuses on engaging men and boys in challenging harmful gender norms.

- **South African Women in Dialogue** is a network of women's organisations that collaboratively works towards gender equality and the empowerment of women in South Africa. It aims to amplify women's voices and advocate for women's rights.
- **Women's Legal Centre**, established in 1999, focuses on advancing women's rights through litigation, legal advice, and advocacy. It addresses issues such as gender-based violence, reproductive rights, and discrimination against women.
- **People Opposing Women Abuse** was established in 2007 as a feminist organisation that provides support services to survivors of gender-based violence and works to challenge the root causes of violence against women in South Africa.
- **Feminist South Africa** is an online platform and community that promotes feminist discourse and activism in South Africa. It serves as a space for sharing information, resources, and perspectives on feminist issues.

NGOs are operating in selected DMs, with some focusing on national efforts as well. Among these, the following NGOs were identified within the project sites:

- **Resoketswe Lebjeane Foundation** provides legal aid services and advice to individuals in Bushbuckridge LM who may have their rights violated and cannot afford regular legal assistance.
- **DREAMS** supports adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in the Ehlanzeni and Alfred Nzo DMs, empowering communities to maintain good health and remain human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-free.
- **Right to Care** supports AGYW in Ehlanzeni DM by deploying healthcare workers to certain Department of Health clinics, aiding the AGYW in understanding their needs and preventing HIV and unplanned pregnancies.
- **Humana People to People** operates in five provinces, including Mpumalanga, addressing the needs of the underprivileged through local empowerment and support structures, in alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Nelson Mandela Aventis Project for Combating Tuberculosis** operates in the Mahikeng LM in collaboration with the Society for Family Health South Africa.
- **Shout-It-Now** offers youth-focused health services, including sexual and reproductive health support and assistance for survivors of gender-based violence, through mobile clinics and virtual engagement platforms.
- **Beyond Zero** provides health services, including HIV, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted infections prevention and treatment programmes, across seven of the nine provinces in South Africa, with presence in all project DMs.
- **Health Systems Trust** focuses on health systems strengthening and providing support to the South African government.

Many of these NGOs primarily operate within the health sector and were highly active before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some have scaled down or ceased operations in certain areas due to budgetary constraints. Up-to-date information on their current status could not be confirmed during consultations and will need to be confirmed during the inception stage of the project.

2.3 RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Over and above national legal instruments, South Africa is a signatory to several international conventions and protocols. The country has also ratified a total of 27 out of 189 UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions. Of these 27 conventions ratified by South Africa, 24 are in force. Signing a treaty expresses the intention to abide by the treaty but a country is not legally bound to do so. However, when a state ratifies a treaty, it agrees to be legally bound to the treaty.

The key gender equality and women's empowerment instruments adopted and or ratified by South Africa include:

- a. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1972 (Adopted in 1995): CEDAW is an international treaty aimed at eliminating discrimination against women. South Africa ratified CEDAW in 1995, committing to address issues related to women's rights and gender equality.
- b. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a foundational document affirming fundamental rights and freedoms for all individuals. It sets the principles that should apply universally, including gender equality.
- c. Vienna Declaration for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 1993: This declaration emerged from the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. It emphasises the importance of promoting and protecting all human rights, including those of women, as an integral part of the international human rights system. It was adopted by South Africa in 1993.
- d. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995: Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, this document outlines a broad agenda for advancing women's rights and gender equality. It covers areas such as women's economic empowerment, education, health, and political participation.
- e. The UN SDGs, 2015: Goal 5 of the SDGs is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It addresses various aspects of gender inequality, including violence, education, and economic participation.
- f. Optional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2004: This protocol, also known as the Maputo Protocol, focuses on promoting and protecting women's rights in Africa. It addresses issues such as violence against women, child marriage, and discrimination.
- g. The African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2004: The African Union's declaration indicates the commitment to promoting gender equality on the continent. It calls for actions to eliminate discrimination and enhance the status of women in various spheres of life.
- h. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008: The SADC protocol aims to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the Southern African region. It covers areas such as education, health, and economic participation.
- i. ILO Conventions C 100, C 111, C 182, C 004, C 041, C 045, C 189: These ILO conventions address various aspects of labour and employment, including discrimination and the rights of workers. They contribute to promoting gender equality in the workplace. South Africa has ratified several ILO conventions, including C 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention), C 111 (Discrimination in Employment and Occupation Convention), C 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention), C 004 (Forced Labour Convention), C 041 (Labour Inspection Convention), C 045 (Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention), and C 189 (Domestic Workers Convention).

2.3.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2014, South Africa committed to achieving SDG number 5. The 2023 Voluntary Review revealed significant positive progress. Accomplishments include a reduction in teenage marriages, the elimination of human trafficking, an increase in gender awareness campaigns, and the implementation of gender training and policies.

South Africa has enacted progressive policies and legislation to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, resulting in improvements in women's quality of life. The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide exemplifies these efforts. However, women¹ in the country still encounter challenges such as adverse health outcomes, including sexually transmitted illnesses and gender-based violence, leading to health complications and unfavourable socio-demographic outcomes.

A new report from Stats SA (2022) indicates progress in maternal health, specifically a decrease in the Maternal Mortality in Facility Ratio (MMFR) nationally. The MMFR decreased from 105.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 to 88.0 in 2020, reflecting a positive trend. The MMFR, encompassing deaths during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, serves as a key measure of women's overall status, access to healthcare, and the responsiveness of the healthcare system. While the Western Cape recorded the lowest MMFR in 2020, some provinces experienced an increase, highlighting the need for targeted interventions. The report also discusses the accessibility of reproductive health services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistence of HIV, particularly among women. Efforts are underway to address associated gender disparities and improve antenatal care for HIV-positive women.

Human trafficking incidences decreased until 2019/20, sharply increasing in 2020/21. Regarding unpaid domestic and care work, women spent less time on unpaid work in 2010 compared to 2000. In decision-making, there is a positive trend in women's political participation. In 2022, South Africa ranked 9th globally. The percentage of women in senior and middle management positions increased from 29.8% in 2008 to 32.0% in 2021.

South Africa has established systems (Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework, the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence Framework and the Integrated Indicator Framework) to track and publicly disclose allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Despite the above, there are discriminatory practices, social norms and persistent stereotypes that lead to inequitable access to opportunities, resources and power by females (StatsSA, 2023). Race also exacerbates this, due to the legacy of apartheid. The areas of concern in South Africa regarding gender equality relate to high cases of teenage pregnancies, lack of women representation in top management jobs, high rates of gender-based violence, disproportionately high HIV prevalence among women, and low participation of women (particularly black women) in engineering, science and technology professions. Women employment percentages - especially in the private sector - is very low averaging 18%.

Wide gender disparities are more pronounced in rural areas and poor communities. Women far more than men engage in unpaid work within the care economy and the informal sector. Women are the ones who earn less money from equal jobs particularly in the private sector. Women in the country attain lower levels of education. The UN's Development

¹ This section primarily focuses on women and inadvertently is silent on other genders affected by discrimination, due to insufficient publication or statistics regarding their experiences in South Africa.

Programme's (UNDP's) Human Development Report for 2021 shows a very high gross national income gap based on the 2017 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)² with females earning 9,935 and males earning 16,129 (UNDP 2022). In the agriculture sector, women lack access to credit, inputs and training (Edmond et. al., 2017) and outside the agricultural sector women's businesses tend to be smaller and less profitable. Yet approximately 50% of households in South Africa are headed by females.

² Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is a method used to compare the relative value of currencies in different countries by taking into account the exchange rates and the cost of living differences between them.

3 Demographic and Women Empowerment Indicators

3.1 NATIONAL GENDER INEQUALITY

3.1.1 Situation of Women in the Country

Demographics

South Africa's population stands at 62.03 million, according to the 2022 Census by Stats SA. Out of this, approximately 51.5% (31.9 million) are female. Notably, the 10-14 age group exhibited the highest proportion of both males and females, with nearly 66,000 more boys than girls among a total of 5.7 million individuals in that cohort. Across all age brackets from 0 to 39 years, the male population surpasses the female count. However, in the 40 years and above age group, females outnumber males (Women Empowerment 2017-2022).

A significant trend emerges among females aged 35-59 where many tend to live without partners, and this trend intensifies with age (StatsSA, 2016). The findings reveal notable shifts in marital status between 2011 and 2022 (Census 2022). There was an 8.2 percentage point rise in unmarried individuals who have never married, while the proportion of legally married individuals decreased from 29.9% in 2011 to 24% in 2022. Additionally, there was a slight decline in the percentage of couples living together as husband and wife /partners, dropping from 9.2% in 2011 to 7.8% in 2022. This holds considerable implications for societal participation in economic and social development, particularly in a culture where marriage and married women enjoy more favourable perceptions, while men often have greater agency and influence than women.

Nearly 41.9% of households are led by females, marking a rise of 0.4% from 2017 (StatsSA, Women Empowerment 2017-22). In 2021, female-headed households were particularly prominent in provinces characterised by extensive rural areas. Among ethnic groups, the highest incidence of female-headed households was among the coloured community (44%), followed closely by black Africans (43.4%).

Statistics show that over 12.3% of children have lost one or both parents. Disability is more prevalent among females (8.9%) than males (6.5%) within the overall population of South Africa, with this disparity increasing with age (StatsSA, 2016, 2022 Census). The percentage of widowed individuals increased from 0.3% among 25-29-year-olds to 46.3% among those aged 85 and above. Conversely, the proportions of widowed, separated, or legally separated individuals remained relatively stable.

3.1.2 Gender Indices and Ratings

South Africa is considered progressive globally in regard to gender equality based on the country's Constitution as well as its legal and policy environment. The country excels on international barometers and these achievements are detailed in table below.

Table 3-1: Gender related development indicators

Source: Source: Stats SA Women Empowerment 2017-22

	Female	Male
Gender development index (GDI) (2021)³		0.944
Human development index (2021)	0.686	0.727
Life expectancy at birth (2021) years	65.0	59.46
Mean years of schooling (2021)	9.66	12.15
Expected years of Schooling (2021)	13.98	13.31
Gross national income per capita (2017 PPP\$) 2021	9934.61	16129.33

Table 3-1 shows the gender disaggregated indicators (health, education and economic resources measured as earnings) that contribute to the GDI. The GDI helps in determining the gender gap and how far women need to catch up with the male counterparts.

The Global Gender Gap Index provides a measure that shows progress towards gender parity- illustrating gender gaps across economic, political, health and education spheres. It is designed to indicate areas that need attention. In 2022, South Africa ranked 20th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) globally, with the 0.79 score showing that females were 21% less likely to have the same opportunities as men. In sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa ranked 3rd out of 35 countries. The 2021 score was a 2% improvement from that of 2016. The GGGI comprises metrics across four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. South Africa's gender gap was largest in economic participation and opportunity, and educational attainment, ranking 81 and 43 respectively, out of 146 countries (WEF, 20213). The best ranked category was in political empowerment (13th out of the 146 countries) (WEF 2023).

On the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (GII), South Africa ranked 97 out of 191 countries in 2021, with a score of 0.405 (UNDP 2022). The GII quantifies inequalities based on reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. The South African gender inequality indicators were as follows (UNDP 2022):

- 46,1% of parliamentary seats are held by females, ranking 2nd in Africa and 10th in the world;
- 68,9% of adult females have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 87.7% of men;
- For every 100,000 live births, 119 females died from pregnancy related causes; and
- Female participation in the labour market was 46,2% compared to 59,9% for men.

The 2022 World Bank's Women, Business and the Law (WBL) index rated South Africa 88.1 out of a possible 100 points. Most of South Africa's WBL indicators, i.e. mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, entrepreneurship and assets were positive. However, the assessment raised two areas of concern:

- A lack of or inadequate provisions for paid parental leave; and

³ GDI is a measure in gender equity in access to education, healthcare and living standards. Its value ranges between 0 and 1. A value of 1 means there is no disparity. A high value does not imply complete equality as the measure overlooks other crucial indicators such as employment opportunities and salary levels.

- Inadequate provisions for pension contributions during periods of absence from work due to child care.

From 2012–2022 South Africa has 31.6 % share of managerial positions held by females. On the other hand, 13% of females between the age of 15–49 had been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a former or current intimate partner (CGE, 2024).

3.1.3 Financial Resources, Poverty and Employment

This section looks at key indicators to track women's market participation progress in the realm of development and economic empowerment. It links economic participation with resource equity, including social grants, communication access, and asset ownership. Economic empowerment stands as a potent weapon against poverty. Employment or entrepreneurship bestows individuals with economic autonomy, enabling them to contribute significantly to their households' wellbeing. Studies highlight that gender disparities in accessing economic opportunities can distort labour supply quality and quantity, hampering productivity and economic growth. Therefore, women's participation in the economy holds paramount importance, granting them resource access, control, and the means to support their families financially. South Africa has established policies aiming for gender equality, yet gender gaps in employment persist despite these efforts.

Participation in Labour Market

In 2022, the participation in labour percentages was lowest for males and females who lived with 5 or more children at 39,6% and 38,2% respectively (Stats SA women Empowerment, 2017–2022). The impacts are further compounded by having limited access to childcare facilities which was more prominent in lower income households. In these situations, childcare, which is unpaid work, is likely to fall on these women because of cultural norms, thereby reducing the time they have for other activities. However, women often face barriers hindering their labour market participation, particularly traditional gender roles that subordinate women to men. Expectations of engaging in unpaid caretaking and household responsibilities limit their professional engagement.

A higher percentage of households living with children were found among female-headed households, ranging from 55% for those living with a child or two to 62,7% for those with five or more children. On the other hand, males commonly resided in households with no children at 60,4% in 2017 and 60,7% in 2022. Notably, the number of children in the household affected participation in labour of females, and the higher the number of children the less likely for females to participate in the labour market. Additionally, females within the reproductive age bracket (15–34 years) face more significant impacts from childbirth and marriages compared to older females.

Unequal Pay and Unpaid Work

The 2022 Census and household surveys once more confirmed that females spend a significant amount of their time on unpaid reproductive and other care work including collecting fuel and water across all the racial groupings, with black females spending the most time.

The disparities are mirrored in the contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) despite females spending more time working with a total of 408 minutes in paid and unpaid work per day compared to males (356 minutes). The GDP includes paid work in informal and formal sectors, and the value of goods from subsistence agriculture. The contribution of females

to paid work (155 minutes per day) is much smaller than that of males (254 minutes per day). By contrast, the contribution of males (102 minutes per day) to unpaid work is much smaller than that of females (253 minutes per day) (StatsSA, 2012).

The monthly median earnings by sex indicated that males were continually earning higher incomes than females in 2022. In 2020, females' median earnings were 77,8% of males' median earnings. Further details show differences by education. The lower the education attained, the higher the difference in earnings between males and females with this favouring males. Median female earnings as a percentage of median male earnings by province in 2020 found that Northern Cape has the highest gender pay gap, with females earning 52,0% of median earnings within the province, followed by North West (72,7%), KwaZulu-Natal (73,0%), and Western Cape the least at 90,0%.

Unemployment and Poverty

Female's official unemployment rates are 36,4% compared to 33,0% amongst males (StatsSA Women empowerment 2017-2022). The younger age groups of 15-24 and 25-34 years are the most affected at 63,9% and 42,1 % respectively. The majority of female-headed households in South Africa do not have an employed household member (StatsSA, Women Empowerment 2017-2022). They also have higher rates of poverty. Females have, over the years, consistently recorded higher headcount gap and severity poverty measures than males (ibid). The socio-economic status of nearly a third of households headed by males residing in urban areas was considered high, compared to a fifth of households headed by females. The living standards of females living in the rural areas was far worse than those in the urban centres (StatsSA 2018).

Unemployment is generally linked to educational attainment with higher rates amongst those with no schooling for both females and males. While this has been true for years, the 2022 surveys showed a drop in unemployment for people without matric. People with higher educational attainment (matric and above) experienced soaring unemployment rates in 2017-2022 and this was observed among both males and females. Despite a strong increase in the number of graduates over the years, unemployment remains a challenge, especially among certain segments of graduates. For this report, 'graduates' are considered to be those with at least a university degree. The unemployment rates varied significantly across fields of study, displaying notable differences. The field of agriculture saw the most substantial increase at 10.5 percentage points, while graduates in economic and management sciences experienced the lowest uptick at 3.6 percentage points.

A noteworthy observation emerges when examining gender discrepancies. Female unemployment rates in physical / mathematical sciences and engineering were half as much as their male counterparts, standing at 6.3% versus 12.1%, even amidst an unfavourable economic period. The widest gender gap was evident in the field of agriculture, with females experiencing unemployment at a rate 1.87 times higher than males. These persistent disparities in unemployment rates across various fields of study hint at entrenched gender stereotypes or suggest that prospective students might not fully consider prevailing labour market demands when choosing their academic paths.

Sources of Income

The 2020 general household survey indicated that salaries remain the main sources of income for 50,8% of households, followed by grants (28,8%), remittances (8,8%) and other sources of income (9,3%). The report reveals that in rural areas, 9,5% of males depend on income from a business compared to 2,9% of their female counterparts, whereas the disparity is less pronounced in urban areas where 11,9% of males were likely to be in business than 6,0% of females. On the contrary,

females were more likely to receive grants than their male counterparts irrespective of where they reside. However, compared to 26,9% of females in urban areas, 51,8% of rural females received grants. This can be attributed to the unemployment rate in rural areas and the fact that females are more to be unemployed likely than males (StatsSA 2022 - Women Empowerment). In the less affluent and more rural provinces, there is a large dependence on social grants with Eastern Cape (47,8%) being the highest, followed by Limpopo (46,4%) and Mpumalanga (43,8%) (ibid). Remittances were the main source of income for 12,9% of households in Mpumalanga and 12,1% in Limpopo (StatsSA, 2021).

Education Attainment and Occupation Choices

There are inequalities in education access and attainment between women, men and race groups. In 2020, although a very small proportion of the population (2,9%) had no schooling, enrolment in higher education institutions was most common among Indians / Asians (23,1%) and Whites (21,8%) compared to Coloured (6,1%) and black Africans (5,7%). Adult literacy rates are arguably based on an individual's functional literacy, a measure closely related to educational attainment. In 2020, 10% of individuals were functionally illiterate. Females were more likely to be functionally illiterate across all age groups, although the gap is smaller in the younger age groups (StatsSA, 2021).

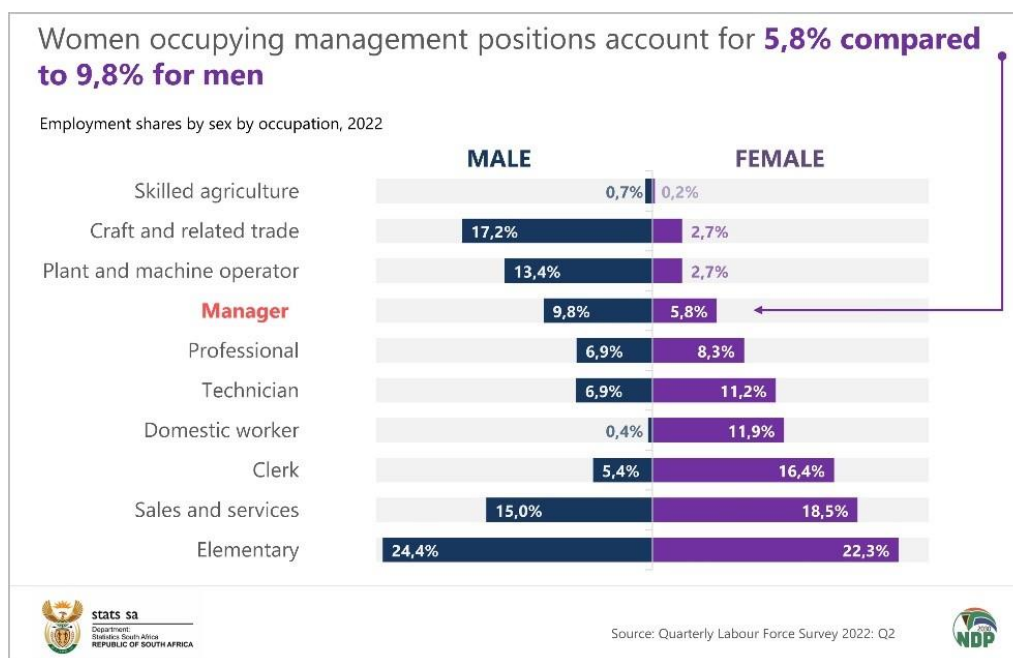


Figure 3-1: Representation of females in formal employment (StatsSA, 2022)

In formal employment (Figure 3-1), representation of females in the 2022 labour force survey was skewed towards low earning sectors, namely sales and services (18.5%), elementary (22.3%), domestic work (11.9%) and clerk (16.4%) while males occupied mostly the elementary (24.4%), skilled crafts (17.2%), and plant and machine operator (17.4%) sectors (StatsSA, 2022).

3.1.4 Access to Water, Land and Energy

Gender inequality has implications for access to water for both productive and household use and sanitation. Productive water use has impacts on food production, food security and income generation. In 2022, 8,9% of South African households did not have piped water on site. In 2022, 82,4% of households had access to piped water in their dwelling, or inside their

yard. However, although households' access to water improved, 8,7% of households still had to fetch water from boreholes, rivers, streams, stagnant water pools, dams, wells and springs (Census, 2022).

In 2022, 82,8% of households had access to improved sanitation (includes pit toilet with ventilated improved pit). Sevenths (72,9%) of households had access to hand washing facilities. Household refuse was removed at least once per week for 67,6% of all households, with 27,2% of households relying on communal or household refuse dumps, and 4,5% of households with no facilities (ibid). Urban households are much more likely to receive regular refuse removal services, while rural ones use alternative methods of household refuse disposal (Census, 2022).

Menstrual hygiene is often overlooked. It has been hypothesised that period poverty can lead to girls missing school. Adolescent girls in South Africa can miss up to five days of school per month due to menstruation (Khumalo, 2015). The topic of menstruation can be taboo in many cultures, including those in South Africa (Steinig, 2017; Kirk & Sommer, 2006). Other studies have indicated that adolescent girls, even when they do not miss school, may face shame and embarrassment while menstruating at school, and do not have the resources to manage at school (Steinig, 2017). The disposal of menstrual hygiene products poses an environmental and waste management challenge. In all the DMs targeted in the Eco-DRR project, disposal of diapers caused challenges and contributed to drain blockages thus also contributing to flooding conditions.

The DWYPD champions the Sanitary Dignity Programme to provide free sanitary products to indigent women and girls in low income (quintiles 1-3) schools. This programme is guided by the National Sanitary Dignity Implementation Framework (SDIF). The aim of the SDIF is to promote sanitary dignity and to provide norms and standards in respect of the provision of sanitary products to indigent persons. Starting in 2019/2020, government made available R157 million to provide free sanitary pads to quintile 1-3 schools. In January 2019, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme's began allocating R275 per month to female and male students for personal care.

Regarding energy, 94,7% of households used electricity as their main source of energy, and the greatest proportion of households (64,9%) used electricity for cooking. In contrast, 25,7% used gas, 2,7% paraffin, and 6,1% firewood for cooking (StatsSA, 2022). Wood and coal were mostly used in predominantly rural areas with Limpopo having the bulk of coal and wood users (StatsSA, 2022).

In 2022, 19,9% of households were involved in agricultural production activities. Most of the agricultural households were in KwaZulu Natal (22,3%), Eastern Cape (19,6%) and in Limpopo (21,1 %). The 2021, the survey reported that the goal for the majority of those involved in agriculture was to secure an additional source of food. For others, the motivation was to provide additional income to the main income and as a leisure activity (4,2%) (StatsSA, 2022).

The interconnection between water, sanitation, and hygiene, access to sanitary wear, and food is pivotal cannot be denied, particularly in the context of climate change. These elements are not only essential requirements but also crucial aspects of meeting women's needs during disaster events. Enhancing the capacity to fulfil these needs amidst disasters is integral to bolstering resilience.

3.1.5 Access to Information and Technology

The SDGs emphasise expanding freedoms, eliminating discrimination against women, promoting gender equality, and enhancing women's access to education, paid work, political representation, and information and communication

technologies (ICTs). SDG 5 indicators stress the significance of enabling technology in facilitating economic empowerment, particularly ICT access and utilisation. Technology, notably the internet, plays a crucial role in skill development, resource access, and enhancing women's participation across various societal sectors.

In 2022, most households in South Africa had access to landlines (5.8%) or cell phones (92.1%). Slightly more than one-tenth (13.3%) of all households had access to fixed internet at home. Cell phones have made internet more accessible to rural communities, even though mobile internet access in rural areas (52.9%) is still below urban (71.6%) and metro (66.8%) areas. Access to computers is limited with 24.7% of households owning one or more computers (Census 2022). Rural households have a lower access at 11.8% (StatsSA, 2021). The predominantly rural provinces of Eastern Cape (34.3%), North West (27.6%) and Limpopo (31.9%) had the most households with no access to the internet (Census, 2022).

Internet access empowers women by providing resources to identify and respond to dangerous situations and connecting them with otherwise inaccessible communities. It facilitates online education for girls who couldn't previously complete their studies and offers crucial information on women's rights, health and other services. It offers the potential for continued learning when school children are unable to attend face-to-face classes due to blocked access to school.

3.1.6 Gender-Based Violence

One in five females in South Africa have experienced physical violence from a partner. Females who are divorced or separated are more likely to experience physical (40%) or sexual (16%) violence. Overall, nearly 50% of assaults on females were committed by someone close such as a friend or acquaintance (22%), spouse or intimate partner (15%), relative or other household member (13%). About a third were by unknown people (StatsSA, undated).

The prevalence of physical violence is higher amongst less educated females compared to those with secondary or higher education, and those in the lower wealth quintile compared to the higher wealth quantile (StatsSA, undated). Gender-based violence and sexual abuse are often exacerbated by climate change disaster events due to the breakdown of social systems and infrastructure, as well as the increased vulnerability of marginalised groups.

3.1.7 Women in the Rural Context

In 2011, black partners were likely to live apart, with black African females being the most affected, and these females were in rural areas where 34.9% of females were not living with their partner compared to 14.8% in urban areas. In rural areas, the water source was more than a kilometre away for 8% of households compared to 1% in urban settings. Water is mostly collected by females, and when the source was far, females were more likely to fetch the water than males (StatsSA, 2012). Black African households were more likely to use wood or dung for cooking. The work of collecting fuel again fell to females and they were more likely to do so as the distance to the fuel source increased.

Rural women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change events due to the distance they must travel to access water sources, which becomes more challenging as these sources dwindle or become contaminated. Additionally, reliance on traditional methods such as fetching firewood and dung for energy makes them vulnerable to climate change impacts, as deforestation and scarcity of resources intensify. These burdens not only strain their physical health but also limit their educational and economic opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and inequality.

3.1.8 Women and Socio-Environmental Management Problems

Women often face greater susceptibility to environmental challenges due to their reliance on natural resources and their overrepresentation in impoverished communities. Limited economic resources further compound this vulnerability, especially among those whose livelihoods heavily depend on natural resources.

National statistics from South Africa reveal a higher male participation rate in the labour force, resulting in disproportionately high unemployment rates among females. Consequently, this contributes to a higher proportion of females experiencing poverty compared to males. This trend is evident in the larger number of female-headed households receiving government grants. Despite notable progress in gender equity in ministerial positions and provincial legislatures, achieving equity at the municipal level remains a significant challenge.

4 Baseline Socio-Economic Situation in the Project Sites

4.1 ALFRED NZO DM

4.1.1 Situational Analysis

Alfred Nzo DM, located in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, comprises of four LMs: Matatiele, Umzimvubu, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela (previously Mbizana), and Ntabankulu. With a district-wide population of 936,462 people, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela LM houses the largest portion at 37%, followed by Matatiele at 25%, Umzimvubu at 23%, and Ntabankulu at 15%. Notably, females make up over half of the population (54.2%), and the overwhelming majority (99.4%) identify as Black African. The demographic profile reveals that a significant portion of the population is young, with the bulk aged between zero and 34. Within this context, the 198,300 households average 4.7 members each, with 57% headed by females (StatsSA, 2016). This statistic highlights the increasing burden on females, especially in child-headed households where the absence of adult guardians exacerbates vulnerability.

The socio-economic conditions in Alfred Nzo DM are deeply intertwined with its historical legacy as part of the Transkei homelands, a factor that continues to foster high levels of poverty. The DM's economy relies on diverse sectors, with community services leading at 28%, followed by wholesale / trade (15%), agriculture (12%), and manufacturing (10%). However, an alarming unemployment rate of 60% leaves many young people—who make up 80% of the population—struggling to find stable jobs. The educational landscape reflects this challenge, as 8.3% of the population reported having no formal schooling in 2016. Although 79.5% of youth aged five to 24 were in school, the barriers to quality education remain, especially for children in households affected by displacement.

The impact of natural disasters, such as flooding, has further strained these households. For instance, the destruction of bridges has left child-headed households isolated, making it difficult for children to reach schools or access essential health services. These young individuals, often bearing the weight of familial responsibilities, find themselves navigating treacherous routes to secure education and healthcare. The absence of safe passage not only affects their academic progress but also their overall wellbeing and future prospects.

Access to basic services is another pressing issue. According to StatsSA (2018), only 47.6% of the population has access to safe water, a statistic that starkly contrasts with another report indicating 80% access to improved drinking water sources (Edmond et al., 2017). Most households (93.8%) rely on yard facilities, while only a mere 5.8% have waste collection services, forcing many to use their own dumps (StatsSA, 2018). This inadequate waste management contributes to health risks, particularly for the elderly and children who are already vulnerable due to socio-economic hardships.

Electricity is available to about two-thirds (63.3%) of households for lighting, and 46.4% use it for cooking, highlighting ongoing challenges in energy access. Additionally, internet connectivity remains dismally low at just 3.1%, further isolating the community from vital information and technological advancements (StatsSA, 2018).

In summary, the socio-economic profile of Alfred Nzo DM is full of challenges and resilience. The interplay of poverty, displacement, and inadequate access to essential services emphasises the urgent need for targeted interventions that

address the specific needs of vulnerable groups, particularly children and the elderly. The story of Alfred Nzo DM is not merely about statistics; it reflects the lives of individuals striving for better opportunities and the community's collective hope for a more equitable future.

4.2 EHLANZENI DM

4.2.1 Situational Analysis

Ehlanzeni DM, located in Mpumalanga Province, encompasses four LMs - Thaba Chweu, City of Mbombela, Nkomazi, and Bushbuckridge – and covers approximately 27,895.47 km². The district has a population of 2,270,897 individuals according to the 2022 Census by StatsSA.

Ehlanzeni DM is characterised by a higher number of females than males, and the population predominantly consists of Black Africans (93.6%). Disability affects nearly 7% (6.8%) of the population, with higher prevalence among white population groups (8.7%) (StatsSA, 2018a). A significant challenge facing this community is male out-migration as men often leave in search of employment opportunities, leaving behind households led by females. Approximately 43.7% of households are female-headed, with most heads of households aged between 30 and 39 years. Notably, 2.1% of household heads are aged between 10 and 19 years (StatsSA, 2018a). Ehlanzeni DM faces a substantial unemployment rate of 34.4% as of 2011 (StatsSA, 2022). The financial strains on families are particularly evident in child-headed households, where the absence of adult male figures leaves children to assume responsibilities beyond their years. With regards to access to safe drinking water, 4.4% of the DM's population still rely on unsafe sources such as rivers and streams (StatsSA, 2018a). A mere 23.4% benefit from waste collection services, forcing many families to resort to communal or private dumps for disposal (StatsSA, 2018a). Access to information technology is minimal in Ehlanzeni DM, with only 6.7% of the population able to access the internet, dropping to 4.8% for female-headed households (StatsSA, 2018a).

The combination of these demographics shows the kind of life experienced in Ehlanzeni DM, where environmental disasters can have devastating effects on vulnerable populations. For instance, recent floods have displaced many families, particularly child-headed households and the elderly. The destruction of bridges has forced children to undertake long, perilous journeys to school, often compromising their safety and education. Similarly, the elderly, who often depend on accessible healthcare services, face immense challenges when trying to reach clinics, further exacerbating their vulnerability. This interplay of demographic factors and environmental challenges highlights the pressing need for integrated Eco-DRR strategies that not only address immediate needs but also empower communities to build resilience against future disasters.

4.3 NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DM.

4.3.1 Situational Analysis

Ngaika Modiri Molema DM, located in the North West Province of South Africa, encompasses five LMs: Mahikeng, Ratlou, Ramotshere Moiloa, Ditsobotla, and Tswaing. The population is approximately 937,723 people residing in 257,552 households (Census 2022), the DM presents a unique socio-economic landscape. Notably, around 41.2% of households are

headed by females, and females account for 51.3% of the population. This demographic reality shapes the community's response to challenges, particularly in times of crisis, such as displacement from natural disasters.

For instance, the DM has faced significant disruptions due to environmental challenges, including damaged infrastructure like bridges, which are vital for transportation. The displacement of families, especially child-headed households, exacerbates their vulnerability. Many children, already burdened with the responsibilities of adulthood, struggle to attend school or access healthcare services. The absence of reliable transportation due to broken bridges means that these children often have to walk long distances to access essential services. In 2011, there were 12,008 child-headed households, with a notable 41.4% led by girls. This group not only face the emotional toll of their situation but also the practical challenges of navigating a disrupted community.

The socio-economic profile of the DM reflects broader trends of poverty. Approximately 640,000 people, or 67.66% of the population, live in poverty, indicating a slight increase from previous years. This ongoing struggle affects access to basic needs like water, sanitation, and energy. While over 85% of the population has access to safe drinking water, a small fraction still relies on unsafe sources, highlighting the disparities within the community. Furthermore, sanitation facilities remain inadequate for 39.9% of households, compounding health risks that can disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly.

The economic landscape reveals that 204,593 individuals were formally employed in 2019, yet a substantial portion remained in the informal sector. Agricultural activities dominate, with many households engaging in livestock production and poultry distribution. However, the reliance on subsistence farming can be precarious, especially in the face of climate-related challenges.

Access to education and technology is equally concerning. With only 7.9% of households connected to the internet, the digital divide limits opportunities for learning and economic advancement. Alarming, about 26% of the population lacks any formal education, and only 31% of children aged zero to four are attending school. This educational gap not only hampers individual potential but also limits the community's overall resilience to environmental changes.

In summary, the socio-economic conditions in Ngaka Modiri Molema DM reflect the intricate web of challenges faced by its population, especially in light of environmental disruptions. Addressing these issues through an Eco-DRR lens is essential to building a more resilient community that can withstand and adapt to future challenges, ensuring that vulnerable populations—particularly child-headed households, the elderly, and children—can thrive amidst adversity.

4.4 SEKHUKHUNE DM

4.4.1 Situational Analysis

Sekhukhune DM is a predominantly rural district in the Limpopo Province, encompasses 811 villages and is home to approximately 1,336,806 residents, as per the 2022 Census. Its population is notably young, with 32.9% under the age of 15, indicating a dynamic demographic landscape. The dependency ratio of 66.1 per 100 individuals aged 15-64 highlights the balance between working-age individuals and dependents, a crucial factor in understanding the socio-economic challenges faced by the community.

A closer examination reveals the profound implications of this ratio, especially in light of recent displacements caused by environmental shocks, such as floods that damaged crucial infrastructure like bridges. For instance, child-headed households, often formed due to the loss of parents, face significant obstacles in their daily lives. With damaged bridges isolating their villages, these children find it increasingly difficult to attend school or access healthcare services. The journey to school, once a short walk, now requires navigating longer, treacherous routes or even forgoing education altogether. Similarly, elderly community members, who depend heavily on these services, are left stranded, unable to travel for medical care or social support.

The demographic profile of Sekhukhune DM also reveals that 51.2% of households are female-headed, indicating a significant role for women in family and community structures. Despite their vital contributions, these women often bear the brunt of socio-economic pressures. The existing sex ratio of 89 males for every 100 females further illustrates the challenges faced by women, who make up 53.1% of the population. Predominantly Black African (98.7%), the community is characterised by a rich cultural tapestry, yet they are also grappling with substantial economic hurdles.

With a population growth rate of 2.10% per annum, the DM's ability to provide essential services and opportunities is strained. As families grow, so does the demand for education and healthcare—services that are already under pressure due to high poverty levels and limited resources. By integrating these narratives, the dependency ratio and demographic characteristics reflect the lived experiences of the community, particularly in the context of environmental challenges. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective Eco-DRR strategies that not only address immediate needs but also build resilience against future shocks.

5 Gender Considerations During Stakeholder Engagements

The stakeholder consultation and engagement process undertaken during the FFP development followed not only the Batho Pele Principles (people first), adopted by the South African Government, but also aligned with the principles and approaches outlined in Gann et al (2019)⁴ and Dudley et al. (2021)⁵ and was benchmarked against global principles and the GCF's "Sustainability Guidance Note: Designing and ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement on GCF-financed projects".

Emphasising the local-level scale that the interventions will take, ensuring meaningful inclusive participation was important. Guidance from GCF's environmental and social management system, the environmental and social safeguards (GCF, Development Bank of Southern Africa), Revised Environmental and Social Policy, and Indigenous Peoples Policy of GCF were key guidance documents.

In addition, to the above, consideration of gender strongly influenced the approach to stakeholder engagements. Ultimately, these principles talk to:

- Respect, courtesy, openness and transparency in approach, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity to diverse perspectives, including those related to gender;
- Clarifying the mechanisms for engagement and consultation throughout the iterative adaptation planning process, including a focus on the private sector, sub-national governments and civil society organisations, while paying attention to gender-balanced participation;
- Ensure clear communication and accessible information dissemination on climate impact, risk and vulnerability information to relevant stakeholders, recognising and addressing diverse needs based on the audience's characteristics, including gender-specific considerations.;
- Streamlining stakeholder engagement processes within existing broader development planning and coordination mechanisms, such as existing forums, meetings etc.; and
- Continuous communication and engagement to ensure progress is comprehended and actively contributed to, demonstrating accountability and ensuring equitable value for money, considering gender-inclusive impacts and benefits.
- A fundamental requirement of any approach involving building resilience to climate change and DRR, along with restoration and associated approaches (e.g., rehabilitation, mitigation, reducing impact) is genuine and active stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

The planned process followed for stakeholder engagements is summarised in the figure below:

⁴ Gann, G.D.; McDonald, T.; Walder, B.; Aronson, J.; Nelson, C.R.; Jonson, J.; Hallett, J.G.; Eisenberg, C.; Guariguata, M.R.; Lui, J.; Hua, F.; Echeverria, C.; Gonzales, E.; Shaw, N.; Decler, K.; Dixon, K.W. 2019. International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration. Second edition. Restoration Ecology 27(S1): S1-S46

⁵ Dudley, N., Baker, C., Chatterton, P., Ferwerda, W.H., Gutierrez, V., Madgwick, J., 2021, The 4 Returns Framework for Landscape Restoration. UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Report published by Commonland, Wetlands International Landscape Finance Lab and IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management.

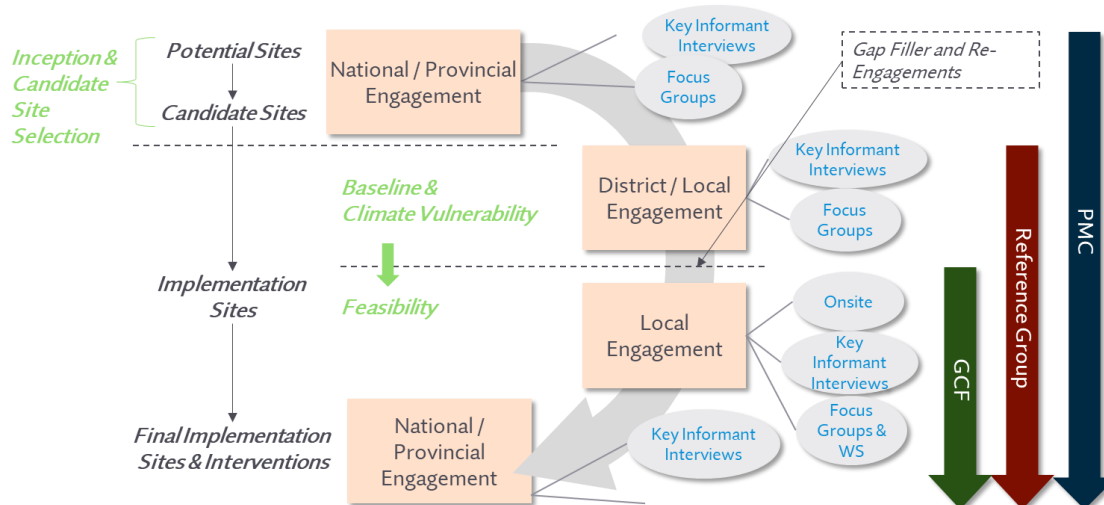


Figure 5-1: Stakeholder engagement process

Effectively, the stakeholder engagement process included a suite of initial engagements to provide the basis for future and ongoing engagement across the course of the project development and design. These were then followed up with a series of re-engagements and consultations focused on refining findings, aligning with stakeholders' evolving priorities, and moving forward the project development (Figure 5-2).

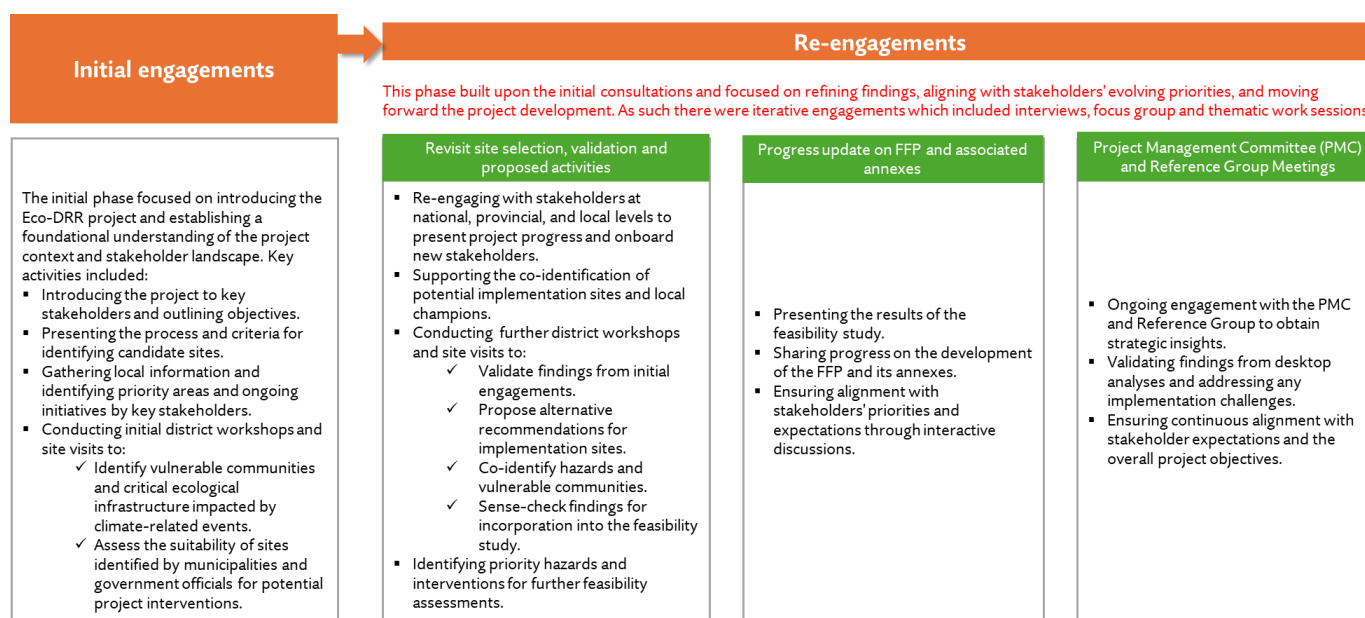


Figure 5-2: Overview of the purpose underpinning the stakeholder engagement journey

In the planning and implementation of stakeholder engagements gender and cultural aspects were carefully considered and supported. This included all engagements at national, provincial and local levels, with the more local level engagements taking cultural aspects into consideration of process. These considerations included amongst others:

- **Invitation and Participation Monitoring:** While institutional and organisational representation is not within the control of SANBI or the project development team, there was monitoring of gender participation in processes. All meetings involved both men and women.
- **Consider different and gendered priorities:** All meetings facilitated discussions that carefully considered the different priorities and needs of women and men, including the most marginalized groups.

- **Incorporation of gender-specific feedback:** All meetings, and most specifically in the design of the project interventions, considered the cultural context to capture and incorporate gender-specific feedback into project design and management. This was important noting the differing social and cultural differences between the geographic locations.
- **Use of gender sensitive approaches and language:** Throughout the engagement journey all meetings were gender sensitive in their facilitation and in the language used throughout discussions.
- **Collection of gender specific data and information:** Particularly the meetings that were held within in each District Municipality, the team gathered data and information relating to gender and cultural aspects and how the Eco-DRR project would interface and address these.
- **Cultural and traditional aspects:** Meetings and engagements at local levels were supported and guided by Municipal staff. As such, these staff provided information on the cultural and traditional leadership aspects in their areas. In some instances, meetings with traditional leaders and local councillors were arranged to address specific concerns. The team remained respectful of these norms and approaches and were mindful of the relationships between municipal staff and the local traditional leadership.

Key stakeholders were regularly kept informed of project developments, updates, and community comments. This was done via recurring reports and presentations/meetings that described the progress of the engagement and site selection initiatives to date.

It is important to note that due process was followed during engagements which was determined by government authorities. This entailed engaging with entities at a national level first before moving to provincial, district and local levels. This allowed for buy-in to be secured from the top-down with national-level stakeholders ensuring that approvals were granted at a provincial, district and local level to engage with the project. This process also allowed for national, provincial and district authorities to identify local stakeholders to engage with.

As highlighted by national, provincial and local stakeholders, community engagements need to be handled cautiously to manage expectations and reduce stakeholder and research fatigue. DMs and LMs emphasised the need to engage with communities only when the project has landed and is close to implementation.

5.1 GENDER INSIGHTS FROM ENGAGEMENTS

Stakeholder engagements consisted of interactions with a range of stakeholders in the form of key informant interviews (KIIs), focus groups (FGs), in person workshops, site visits and the Reference Group / Project Management Committee (PMG). The various types of meetings and engagements have had differing audiences, inclusive of interactions across gender, culture, and generations. Gender representation was ensured during all stakeholder engagements and opportunities were provided to both men and women to voice their concerns and provide inputs. The engagement process ensured that both men and women were involved in engagement-related activities, while also taking into consideration the cultural context so that gender and culture specific feedback was captured and incorporated into project design. Written comments were also welcomed post engagements to allow for further inputs from stakeholders who may not have been comfortable during the session. Where appropriate, inclusive language was used during engagements to ensure a gender

sensitive approach. Engagement objectives also varied across the interactions, all of which have fed into the development of the FFP and annexes.

Some of the key gender insights that were gleaned from engagements with SANBI's Gender Expert, and the Biodiversity Information and Policy Advice (BIPA) Division are presented below:

- It will be critical to align with SANBI's gender policy and frameworks and ensure incorporation of gender perspectives within the project. Understanding how this integration would be guaranteed at the project sites will be necessary.
- The gender lens is critical noting gender response activities such as those empowering women in the project sites.
- Gender is a cross-cutter across the project and gender mainstreaming is required.

In addition, district-level workshops were held, and gender issues were explored at these workshops. The approach to this included:

- Identifying distinct vulnerabilities related to gender resulting from the impacts of climate change.
- Working in smaller groups to identify the barriers to gender equality and causes of these barriers and vulnerabilities.
- Exploring potential solutions catering to gender-specific needs to ensure that women, girls, the elderly, and other vulnerable members of the communities benefit and actively participate in the project.

During the district-level workshops, a gender expert was present to capture the perspectives of stakeholders regarding gender. A presentation was made during the workshops highlighting the imperative for GESI. The workshops were structured to facilitate breakout group discussions. The breakaway groups discussed responses centred around GESI - related questions. The questions concerned four main areas of enquiry:

- Vulnerability of women during previous climate disasters, in each district based on previous events;
- Opportunities to reduce vulnerability in future climate events;
- Identification of barriers that caused gender vulnerability; and
- Identification of opportunities for women to fully participate in the proposed or planned Eco -DRR projects.

Group plenary presentations and discussions followed the breakaway group discussions. Further details were obtained through discussion with field teams and interactions with some community women.

Key findings on stakeholders' perspective from the district-level workshops are discussed below. In general, the responses are very similar between the DMs and the groups engaged. The major impacts suffered by women during climate disasters is listed below according to the climate hazard.

1. Floods

- a. Loss of human life
- b. Loss of homes
- c. Relocation
- d. Access issues- No services due to flooding of rivers or bridges being washed away (schools, hospitals, businesses)
- e. Loss of income

- f. Increased water-borne and communicable diseases.
- g. At times phone network services also affected

2. Droughts

- a. Death of livestock due to no water and poor pastures
- b. Poor crop yields or no yields at all
- c. Severe food insecurity

With regards to why women are most affected during climate disaster events, the following was noted:

- Women are responsible for taking care of children and reproduction;
- Women are responsible for subsistence farming;
- Physical aspects of women make them vulnerable;
- Cultural norms exist that discriminate against women;
- No means of income through employment, thus there is an over-reliance on food parcels and social grants;
- Lack of clean (protected) water sources close to homes;
- Settling of households in wetlands which leads to loss of homes during floods;
- Poor planning by the leadership and responsible institutions negatively impacts women; and
- Limited communication on pending weather/climate related events.

Stakeholders' responses to address these barriers that ensure vulnerable women are not disadvantaged in the Eco-DRR project were noted. These included ensuring inclusivity and implementing affirmative actions that prioritise women and vulnerable groups. Capacity development activities is also needed coupled with interventions tailored to meet women's needs (e.g. projects implemented closer to households). The introduction of income generating projects was recognised as well as the establishment of community food safety nets. Other recommendations included improving communication on flood related events and introducing smart agriculture and appropriate rangeland management activities. In addition, it was noted that settlement planning needs to consider rural areas, and the unique context associated with these areas. Furthermore, encouraging good building standards for households is also needed going forward.

Stakeholders were asked to further elaborate on the support required to address gender disparities during climate events. Recommendations included promoting gender awareness programmes at the community level to enhance participation. This should be complemented by robust capacity-building initiatives and skill development. Another proposed strategy involved supporting land users' ownership and employing gender mainstreaming campaigns within climate change agendas.

6 Gender Analysis

6.1 ASSESSMENT OF DMS' INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND CAPACITIES

6.1.1 DM Institutional Structures and Capacities

At the institutional level, the findings revealed significant gaps in structures supporting GESI mainstreaming. While the National Gender Policy mandated the appointment of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) within government institutions to oversee effective implementation, consultations uncovered widespread unawareness of the GFPs' existence among district staff. Moreover, one instance was noted where the GFP was unfamiliar with their responsibility and lacked authority within their municipality. In some cases, senior managers questioned the necessity of such positions, indicating a lack of institutional buy-in.

Regarding reporting requirements, while there is a national understanding that reports should include gender assessments, this principle was not internalised at district and local levels. Gender aspects in integrated development plans (IDPs) for instance, were often treated as add-ons without corresponding action plans and budgets. Additionally, misconceptions regarding GESI concepts were prevalent among stakeholders, including a limited understanding of equity and equal treatment, confusion between inclusion and meaningful participation, and the misconception that gender solely refers to women's issues, resulting in tokenistic approaches to gender mainstreaming.

Furthermore, there was a reported need for campaigns to increase awareness and shift negative stereotypes regarding GESI and the environment. Although many DM staff had previously participated in gender-related trainings and workshops, there was a lack of full appreciation of the objectives and benefits of gender mainstreaming. Moreover, there was a lack of ownership and commitment to gender strategies at DM and LM levels, resulting in insufficient budget allocation and human resources dedicated to addressing gender issues. This limited ownership also extends to data collection and analysis, with a notable absence of sex-disaggregated data at a local level hindering informed decision-making. The absence of sex (GESI) disaggregated data is recognised as a significant obstacle to developing informed transformative interventions.

Overall, these findings point out the urgent need for capacity-building, institutional support, and a shift towards more inclusive and informed approaches to gender mainstreaming at all levels of governance. In summary:

- The findings indicate that GFPs were not adequately trained or supported to promote gender mainstreaming within the LMs and DMs.
- Furthermore, none of the municipalities had gender mainstreaming programmes, and they all lacked gender action plans. The IDPs for these municipalities also failed to address gendered aspects of poverty, inequality, and local social and economic development.
- During discussions with senior officers, there was evidence of gender insensitivity, with a tendency to focus solely on the number of women in senior management or decision-making positions. This suggests that municipalities struggle to mainstream gender due to a lack of understanding of the importance and how to approach it.
- There was no gender disaggregated data available in all of the reports and plans produced by the DMs and LMs.

These findings align with existing literature on gender in LMs, such as studies by Vyas-Doorgapersad (2023), CGE (2022), and Hicks and Buccus (2023), which also highlight significant gender disparities in South African municipalities. Despite national efforts, there is a lack of gender transformation and insufficient internal policies and programmes to support women and address issues like sexual harassment.

To address these challenges, it is important to coordinate gender awareness training and capacity building programmes. GFPs within key departments can assist by driving the mainstreaming process to influence decision-making. Additionally, implementing Gender Equity Plans, as outlined by Vundla (2016), and instituting gender-specific evaluation frameworks for leadership development, as suggested by Nkwana et al. (2021), could be explored to help achieve gender equality in all facets of municipal life. Establishing mechanisms for the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data is critical, along with training government and community structures on gender-sensitive data collection methodologies to capture the varying impacts of climate hazards on men and women. Gender sensitive training sessions on Eco-DRR and early warning systems is also necessary, tailored to the needs and roles of both genders, with a focus on facilitating women's participation and leadership in decision-making processes. Gender-sensitive assessments will also inform the integration of gender considerations into policy and planning, advocating for the revision and alignment of national and local policies to address gender disparities at the DM and LM level. These activities aim to ensure inclusive and effective responses to climate hazards in target communities by mainstreaming gender considerations across all project components.

6.2 FINDINGS FROM PROPOSED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SITES

The Alfred Nzo, Ngaka Modiri, Ehlanzeni, and Sekhukhune DMs reflect the complex challenges faced by women due to climate change and broader societal factors. Each region presents unique adversities tied to climate extremes, often exacerbating pre-existing gender disparities. Examining these areas reveals a concerning pattern of vulnerabilities and the urgent need for inclusive, gender-sensitive interventions.

6.2.1 Alfred Nzo DM

During the assessment of Alfred Nzo DM, it became evident that the district is susceptible to climate-induced impacts, particularly flooding, which poses significant risks to communities' livelihoods and infrastructure. Stakeholders identified flooding as a major hazard during heavy rains and hailstorms, exacerbating by deforestation, overgrazing, illegal sand mining, and soil erosion. The consequences of flooding were dire, affecting dwellings, farmers' crops and livestock, as well as damaging roads and bridges, isolating villages from essential services and surrounding towns. Moreover, poor spatial planning, evidenced by houses built along drainage and flood lines, increased the communities' vulnerability to flooding.

Furthermore, the presence of invasive alien plants (IAPs), notably wattle, posed additional challenges during heavy rains or floods. These IAPs are easily dislodged and tend to block watercourses, exacerbating flood events or diverting floodwater to more vulnerable areas. Encroachment of "ouhout" bushes further aggravated the situation, forming dense thickets on overgrazed or eroded areas, contributing to runoff, erosion, and subsequent flooding downstream. Despite efforts to clear IAPs, including historical activities, the problem persists, indicating the need for enhanced strategies and scaling up of existing efforts to combat these invasive species.



Figure 6-1: Erosion at a house during a site visit in Alfred Nzo DM

Erosion, particularly visible during heavy rains, emerged as another pressing issue, threatening households, roads, and bridges. Inadequate infrastructure development, such as undersized culverts and insufficient drainage systems, exacerbates erosion, leading to landslides, road failures, and downstream flooding. Pollution, including blockage of culverts by waste like nappies, further compounds the flooding problem across the DM. Wetland degradation, attributed to pollution and encroachment by villages and poor agricultural practices, shows the importance of better spatial planning and local enforcement to address these environmental challenges effectively. These climate-induced impacts disproportionately affect women and other genders in the DM, highlighting the urgency of integrating gender-responsive strategies into climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

The gender issues in the DM include the following:

- **Impact of climate change:** Women in the DM bear a disproportionate burden of the effects of climate change. They face income loss, displacement, and restricted access to essential services during extreme weather events. This exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and makes it challenging for them to cope with the changing climate.
- **Entrenched gender roles:** Traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained in the communities, leading to unequal distribution of responsibilities and opportunities between men and women - thus limiting women's access to resources, decision-making power, and economic independence.
- **Lack of official identification:** Many women in the DM were reported to lack official identification documents, which restricted their access to government services, financial resources, and employment opportunities. This further marginalises them and perpetuates their dependence on others. This was attributed to lack of any formal education.
- **Inadequate healthcare:** Women in the rural areas of Alfred Nzo DM, including the sick and elderly, faced barriers to accessing healthcare services, including limited facilities and long distances to travel. This results in poorer health outcomes for women and contributes to their overall vulnerability.
- **Deficiency of municipal services:** The lack of essential municipal services, particularly in accessing water, poses significant challenges for households led by women. Without reliable access to clean water, women must travel long distances to fetch water, which affects their time, health, and economic productivity.

To address these gender issues, the Eco-DRR project proposes several interventions:

- **Safeguarding water sources:** The project aims to preserve and protect water sources through land management strategies that mitigate erosion and sedimentation, innovative small infrastructure e.g. for spring protection. This is essential for ensuring reliable access to clean water, which is particularly critical for women and their households.
- **Empowerment of women:** Livelihood programmes will be implemented to empower women economically and socially, enhancing their autonomy and overall wellbeing. By providing women with skills training, income-generating opportunities, and support networks, the project seeks to strengthen their resilience to climate change and other challenges.
- **Engagement of NGOs and local leaders:** The active involvement of NGOs and local leaders is crucial for ensuring that the project's interventions reflect the diverse perspectives and needs of the community. By engaging with stakeholders at all levels, the project can achieve more sustainable and inclusive outcomes.
- **Sustainable resource management:** Prioritising sustainable resource management and land conservation initiatives will help protect environmental resources for future generations. By considering the needs and capabilities of vulnerable women in these efforts, the project can promote equitable and sustainable development.

Overall, gender considerations will be integrated into all aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation. By recognising and addressing the unique challenges faced by women in these communities, the Eco-DRR project aims to promote gender equality and social inclusion while building resilience to climate change and other environmental hazards.

6.2.2 Ehlanzeni DM

In the Ehlanzeni DM, the Environmental Management Services Unit of the Community Services Department oversees efforts to maintain a clean and healthy environment. Despite its capacity to address environmental concerns, the DM faces challenges in biodiversity management, notably lacking a specialist in this area. While some climate risk and vulnerability assessments have been conducted, there are limitations in scaling up ecosystem-based interventions due to constrained resources and competencies. However, the DM benefits from the presence of active organisations such as the DFFE's Environmental Programmes (DFFE: EP), along with civil society and NGOs like Conservation South Africa, Kruger 2 Canyons, and AWARD, which offer technical and advisory support.

Through stakeholder engagements, workshops and site assessments, priority areas for ecosystem-based climate adaptation actions have been identified. Flood emerges as a significant hazard, particularly within the Bushbuckridge LM, where localised flooding is exacerbated by various factors including sand mining, deforestation, overgrazing, and unplanned settlements. These floods pose threats to dwellings, infrastructure, and crops, with recent tropical cyclones exacerbating risks. Additionally, the presence of IAPs and erosion further exacerbates environmental challenges, requiring improved management regimes and rehabilitation interventions for upstream wetlands.

During site visits, stakeholders emphasised the vulnerability of communities to intense rainfall and high wind strengths associated with tropical cyclones, especially in the Casteel area. Poor waste management practices, erosion, and inadequate infrastructure like culverts and bridges compound these challenges. The economic vulnerability of the Bushbuckridge LM shows income inequality and low economic diversity, while Thaba Chweu LM faces increasing conflict between population growth and environmental preservation.

Stakeholder engagements during workshops and on online identified several gender issues exacerbated by recurrent flooding and food insecurity during droughts. These challenges disproportionately affect women and amplify their vulnerabilities within the community. The gender issues in the DM include the following:

- **Disproportionate impact on women:** Women are disproportionately affected by flooding and food insecurity due to various factors such as their roles as caregivers, limited access to resources, and societal norms. During disasters, women often bear the brunt of caregiving responsibilities, including taking care of children, elderly family members, and the sick. This increased burden further strains their physical and mental health, making them more vulnerable to the adverse effects of disasters.
- **Inadequate early warning systems:** Stakeholders have identified inadequacies in early warning systems as a significant contributor to exacerbating disasters. These systems often fail to effectively reach women, leaving them ill-prepared and intensifying their susceptibility to the impacts of flooding and droughts. Women may not receive timely and relevant information about impending disasters, making it difficult for them to take necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families.
- **Lack of actionable guidance:** Available information about disasters often fails to provide actionable guidance for effective disaster response, particularly for women. Women may not have access to resources or knowledge about how to prepare for and respond to disasters, further exacerbating their vulnerability.
- **Compounded issues of land tenure:** The compounded issue of land tenure exacerbates the plight of women in disaster-affected areas. Women often have limited access to land and property rights, which hinders their ability to recover from disasters and rebuild their livelihoods.

Addressing these gender issues require the following:

- **Gender-sensitive early warning systems:** The project will need to develop and implement early warning systems that are sensitive to the needs of women. This includes ensuring that warnings are disseminated through various channels accessible to women, such as community meetings, radio broadcasts, and mobile phone messages. Training community leaders and volunteers to effectively communicate warnings to women and providing them with resources to assist women in taking necessary precautions can also enhance the effectiveness of early warning systems.
- **Gender-responsive disaster preparedness training:** The project will provide gender-responsive disaster preparedness training to women and men in disaster-prone areas. This training aims to equip women with the knowledge and skills needed to prepare for and respond to disasters, including first aid, evacuation procedures, and emergency communication protocols. Additionally, training will address gender-specific vulnerabilities and strategies for mitigating risks, such as ensuring access to safe shelters and sanitation facilities for women and girls.
- **Promoting Women's participation in decision-making:** Encourage and facilitate women's participation in decision-making processes related to DRR, preparedness, and response. This includes ensuring that women are represented in local disaster management committees and other relevant forums where decisions are made about disaster preparedness and response strategies. Providing training and capacity-building opportunities to women leaders can also empower them to effectively advocate for their needs and priorities in disaster planning and decision-making processes.
- **Integrating gender mainstreaming in DRR:** The Eco-DRR initiatives will integrate gender mainstreaming principles into all stages of DRR initiatives, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. This includes conducting

gender-sensitive vulnerability assessments, incorporating gender considerations into disaster risk management plans, and disaggregating data by gender to identify and address disparities in disaster impacts and responses. By mainstreaming gender considerations into DRR efforts, stakeholders can ensure that the specific needs and priorities of women are adequately addressed and that interventions are more inclusive and effective.

6.2.3 Ngaka Modiri Molema DM

In Ngaka Modiri Molema DM, flooding poses significant challenges that disproportionately affect women and other vulnerable genders. Through stakeholder engagements, workshops and site assessments involving government officials, NGOs, civil society, and private sector representatives, it was confirmed that flooding is a persistent issue across the DM. During flood events, excessive soil erosion occurs, leading to the collapse of poorly developed road and bridge infrastructure, rendering essential services such as homes, schools, hospitals, and shops inaccessible to communities. Additionally, houses become flooded, and personal assets including livestock are destroyed, exacerbating vulnerabilities, especially among those settling in hazardous areas such as pans due to poor settlement planning.

Water security and supply challenges were also highlighted, with most communities dependent on groundwater supply in the typically arid region. Furthermore, erosion associated with roads and culverts was observed during site assessments, with concerns raised by communities about the dangers of flash flooding, especially for children commuting daily. Poor rangeland management practices linked to livestock also contributed to erosion and environmental degradation, further compounding the impact on vulnerable populations in areas like Ratlou LM.



Figure 6-2: Washed away bridge in the Ngaka Modiri Molema DM

The DM's history of flooding and drought emphasises the urgent need for targeted interventions to mitigate future impacts and safeguard lives and livelihoods. While solutions like Eco-DRR interventions were explored, challenges such as the endorheic nature of pans in areas like Deelpan highlighted limitations, with resettlement of communities being a potential solution. Additionally, the DM's experience of recurrent droughts necessitates concerted efforts to address water scarcity and resilience-building measures, particularly for communities reliant on streams for water supply, further emphasising the gendered impacts of climate-induced hazards in Ngaka Modiri Molema DM.

In Ngaka Modiri Molema DM, gender issues intersect with various challenges, particularly those stemming from climate change-induced disasters and socio-economic factors. The gender issues in the DM include the following:

- **Access to vital services:** Vulnerable groups, particularly women, young children, the sick and elderly, face restricted access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and clean water during climate change-induced disasters like floods. This disproportionately affects women who are often responsible for caregiving and household management. The significant prevalence of households headed by girls contributes to a high number of vulnerable individuals.
- **Economic empowerment:** Women's economic empowerment is hindered by challenges such as unemployment, limited access to credit for agricultural production due to land tenure issues, and traditional gender roles that confine them to certain sectors of the economy. Without access to credit and land, women struggle to start or sustain agricultural enterprises, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disempowerment.
- **Gender discrimination and norms:** Traditional gender roles and norms unjustly discriminate against women in, limiting their participation in decision-making processes and excluding them from various societal opportunities such as advancing in education. These norms perpetuate gender disparities and hinder women's ability to fully engage in community development and disaster management efforts.

Through discussions the following solutions were proposed for the project include:

- **Inclusive community engagement:** Ensuring that all engagements include the vulnerable and recognising and acknowledging the crucial role of women and other genders in disaster management and community engagements will be vital. Efforts should be made to involve them in decision-making processes, ensuring inclusivity and fostering a sense of ownership within the community.
- **Tailored support for women's livelihoods:** The interventions will be designed to include tailored support for women's and other vulnerable group's livelihoods and employment opportunities, aligning these interventions with their specific needs and skills, to enhance their economic empowerment and resilience to climate change impacts.
- **Policies promoting women's access to natural resources:** The project will advocate through the appropriate channels the development of policies and implementation frameworks that facilitate women's access to natural resources.
- **Strengthening institutional capacity for climate resilience:** The project will aim to develop codes and standards that will guide investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, including gender-tailored infrastructure, for roads and bridges, and strengthening institutional capacity for infrastructure maintenance to mitigate the impacts of climate change on women and their communities.
- **Integrating gender perspectives into initiatives:** The project will, across all sites, implement awareness campaigns and initiatives that integrate gender perspectives into all project activities to contribute to greater gender equality, inclusivity, and resilience to climate change impacts in the DM.

6.2.4 Sekhukhune DM

In Sekhukhune DM, gendered impacts of climate change were highlighted through various stakeholder engagements and site assessments. Government officials, NGOs, civil society, and water users participated, shedding light on the disproportionate effects of floods on dwellings, roads, bridges, crops, and cropping land, particularly impacting women and

vulnerable genders. Access to essential services like healthcare became even more challenging during floods. Stakeholders identified overgrazing and illegal sand mining exacerbating flood events, alongside poor settlement planning at both DM and LM levels, leading to regular negative impacts on communities, especially those located close to flood plains and within wetlands.

The site assessments confirmed medium to high flood risks in densely populated peri-urban areas, where poor settlement planning compounds the impact on communities, often situated near flood plains and within known floodlines. Additionally, the region's steep topography contributes to localised flash-flooding, posing threats to homes, livelihoods, and lives, with women and other vulnerable genders disproportionately affected. The presence of IAPs exacerbate these issues, with bush encroachment linked to wetland degradation and poor rangeland management, further impacting women's roles in livestock management and exacerbating flood risks.

Furthermore, extensive erosion during rains creates gullies and dongas, posing risks to communities' livelihoods and property, with dongas also threatening culverts and bridges.

The gender issues in the DM include the following:

- **Female headed households:** In Sekhukhune DM, slightly over 50% of households are headed by females, which contributes to their vulnerability. The sex ratio indicates a higher proportion of females across all municipalities in the project sites. While not solely a gender issue, imbalances in sex ratios can have implications.
- **Care and support burden:** Dependency ratios are high, placing additional burdens on the working class and affecting their ability to support themselves and their families. This may possibly hinder individuals, particularly women, from participating in the workforce or pursuing educational opportunities.
- **Low literacy and limited decision-making power:** Women and girls in the DM have lower educational attainment compared to men due to social norms, economic constraints, and limited opportunities. Despite being the majority, women often felt excluded from decision-making processes. Some men attribute this to limited education among women, implying that they may not fully understand management issues and resource management strategies.
- **Women's role in agriculture:** Women in the DM play crucial roles in agricultural production, including crop cultivation, livestock rearing, and food processing. However, their contributions are often undervalued and marginalised, with limited access to resources, and decision-making power.
- **Access to water and security issues:** During consultations, women expressed greater challenges than men during droughts as they had to find water and food for their families. There are concerning levels of gender-based violence, and women reportedly feel insecure when traveling away from home to collect resources. Additionally, they often lost their agricultural employment, further exacerbating their vulnerability.

To address the gender issues outlined above, several strategies within the Eco-DRR project will be considered for implementation:

- **Promoting gender-responsive land and resource management:** The project will align to the national gender framework to support equitable access to natural resources for women. Review and identify barriers with the existing frameworks will be undertaken alternative approaches developed to address the barriers. The project will

implement initiatives that involve women in decision-making processes related to land use planning, conservation, and resource allocation.

- **Capacity building and training:** The interventions in the DM will include targeted training and capacity-building for women in agricultural practices, sustainable land management, and climate-resilient farming techniques. These sessions will aim to empower women with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in agricultural production, natural resource management, disaster preparedness and climate adaptation strategies.
- **Supporting women's economic empowerment:** Working with other government partners and NGOs, the project will promote women's entrepreneurship and income-generating activities in agriculture and natural resource-based enterprises. This will include encouraging the formation of women's cooperatives and self-help groups to strengthen collective bargaining power and access to markets.
- **Addressing gender-based violence:** The project takes gender-based violence seriously and will implement a SEAH policy where needed. The project will contribute to ongoing efforts to curtail gender-based violence and will foster partnerships between local authorities, civil society organisations, and community leaders to address the root causes of gender-based violence and promote gender equality and social justice.

7 GESI Innovations in the Eco-DRR Project Design

Climate change compounds several ongoing anthropogenic impacts, including inter alia overgrazing, the rapid spread of IAPs, soil compaction and the removal of natural vegetation cover, exacerbating the cycle of land degradation and poverty across large parts of rural South Africa. Due to women's strong reliance on natural resources, the cycle of degradation and decreasing resilience makes them particularly vulnerable to these impacts. For example, the loss of biodiversity forces women to spend more time and walk greater distances to collect fuel, water and food (Mubarak, 2021).

Climate change disproportionately impacts upon people in low-income and impoverished communities. In rural communities, women and girl children are responsible for a range of productive activities, as well as taking care of the family unit. Climate change impacts upon women most significantly, yet they are often excluded from decision making processes that impact upon them, most typically in communal areas where Traditional Leadership is a key part of the governance framework. Women are also vulnerable within peri-urban conditions as women control fewer resources than men in informal settlements and are frequently exposed to gender-based violence (Patel, et al., 2018). Furthermore, women in these settings often lack access to sanitation and face disruptions to paid work as a result of climate change events (Patel, et al., 2018).

South Africa also has a high proportion of peri-urban and rural communities living in formal and informal settlements that often have limited access to safe services with poor infrastructure. Within these affected communities, women and children are often most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as they are often more reliant on access to natural resources that are required to support livelihoods. These communities are often also situated in areas that are exposed to hazards such as floods, which place both lives and livelihoods at extreme risk.

The Eco-DRR project aims to actively ensure that marginalised groups, especially women, are supported to adapt to climate change and do not face exacerbated inequalities due to their increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. To this end, the project will mainstream gender equity outcomes throughout the project life cycle, supported by effective monitoring and evaluation. Understanding the capacities, needs and priorities of women in relation to climate vulnerability will help inform the response and actions by ensuring a gender-sensitive approach. Engagements and direct community involvement throughout the course of the project will explore and develop approaches that not only ensure that the inputs of women and girl-children are brought into the design of climate adaptation responses, but also that these interventions are prioritised towards reduced vulnerability.

The Eco-DRR project will actively engage with women within communities to fully understand their needs and to leverage their local knowledge into site-based actions. The project will design these local interventions to facilitate their participation and involvement, as well as support the development of commodity value-chains that support the economic empowerment of women. This will contribute to attaining SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities and SDG 5: Gender Equality.

7.1 CO-BENEFIT 2 (SOCIAL AND GENDER)

Co-benefit 2 (Social and Gender) specifically focuses on women and aims to improve gender parity in representation of females engaged in adaptation decision-making. The indicator for this co-benefit is an increase in adaptation solutions that respond to females' priorities in local planning tools or through design thinking workshops. The target at the end of the project is for 30 to 40% of adaptation actions as per the local planning tools be responsive to priorities expressed by females.

7.2 OUTPUT 1.2. LOCAL, GENDER-INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM-BASED LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION.

Outcome 1 of the Eco-DRR project looks at the incorporation of Eco-DRR strategies into integrated landscape management that enhances the resilience of ecological infrastructure and climate-vulnerable communities. The Outcome will explore how gender-inclusive and sustainable ecosystem-based livelihoods can be enabled or improved in support of locally led adaptation. Additionally, the outcome will focus on youth and the criticality of ensuring that the skills deficits that frequently exist within rural contexts are addressed. The upskilling of youths through job creation linked to sustainable ecosystem-based livelihood options by looking at SMMEs and the eco-champs model, will provide opportunities for youth to innovate and to support in developing sustainable and climate resilient futures.

In particular, Output 1.2. focuses on strengthening resilient and sustainable economic frameworks for local communities through the introduction of gender-inclusive, ecosystem-based livelihood stacking strategies to diversify income sources and reduce vulnerability in the targeted landscapes of the Alfred Nzo and Ehlanzeni DMs.

One of the activities seeks to identify and assess opportunities to develop sustainable ecosystem-based livelihoods in support of locally led adaptation. A more detailed assessment of community livelihoods in the Alfred Nzo and Ehlanzeni DMs will be conducted to assess communities' dependencies on natural, physical and social capital and their vulnerability to climate change. The analysis will link livelihoods to market opportunities for the various ecosystem-based commodity value chains and opportunities linked to green job creation. This will pay particular attention to gender aspects by ensuring women are empowered through gender-sensitive sources of employment, capacity building and awareness raising.

To ensure successful implementation of this activity, the activity's indicator will look at the number of females supported to develop ecosystem-based livelihoods with a target of 300 women (150 per DM i.e. Alfred Nzo and Ehlanzeni) at the end of the project. Specific attention will be placed on supporting women either through SMMEs or through other initiatives focused on the exchange of indigenous knowledge and the improvement of local livelihood practices. Records will be maintained and will be captured in progress reports

8 Gender Action Plan

IMPACT STATEMENT: The improved economic empowerment of women through the Eco-DRR project by integrating gender-responsive and gender-sensitive initiatives and interventions into the design and implementation of interventions as well as in the procurement, management and operational functions. This will be done by (1) enhancing the capacity of women in communities and implementing partners, (2) undertaking continuous learning and adapting the project to gender sensitive practices, (3) improving the working conditions, procurement processes and creating gender-specific contracting provisions and appointment of staff, (4) selecting interventions that are gender-responsive and that do not exacerbate existing social inequalities and (5) ensuring that there are appropriate budget allocations for gender activities.

OUTCOME STATEMENT: Women are empowered to actively participate and benefit from the Eco-DRR project through improved resilience and disaster preparedness to climate change-induced hazards.

Many of the activities under this plan will be led by staff and support teams that will be appointed. The second in command staff member will also be a monitoring and evaluation expert, and SANBI will also include as part of their shared services staff who can support the M&E and gender aspects too. Once the many initial interventions under A: Planning and Governance have been undertaken, the PMU and key lead staff will be trained to support on the aspects related to gender. Equally the support staff provided by the DFFE will have at least one person who is trained up in both community engagement, gender sensitive approaches and environmental and social safeguards.

The project and intervention level gender action plans are presented below.

8.1 PROJECT AND INTERVENTION LEVEL GENDER ACTION PLAN

Table 8.-1: Project and intervention level gender action plan.

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
Project Level				
Intervention A: Planning and Governance				
A.1 Embed gender considerations in the establishment and operationalisation of the PMU a) Develop appropriate gender mainstreaming framework for the PMU b) Apply gender specific quotas to staff complement c) Apply gender specific quotas in senior decision-making positions d) Engender participation in project management processes e) Create gender-sensitive working conditions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop contracts with gender-responsive provisions such as: maternity and paternity leave, childcare and pension provisions, as well as flexible hours and remote working for employees. Create private and safe facilities for males, females, and gender-neutral parties that are relevant and responsive to project interventions. Provide safe spaces for religious and cultural observance, and safe and private spaces for breastfeeding and other parenting needs. 	a) Gender responsive and inclusive human resources frameworks developed and approved by the Project Management Group (PMG). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of gender issues are considered in the Gender Framework (including procurement policy, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and grievance mechanisms). Communication to 100% of employees, once approved. b) % of females employed in the PMU. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% target (national target is a minimum of 30%). c) % of females in senior, decision-making positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% target. d) % of female participation in sanitation frameworks for committee members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% target. e) Contracts outlining the gender-sensitive work conditions in place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of appointment contracts are gender sensitive. 100% of operational office modalities consider gender in their protocols. 	Y1 of establishment of the PMU	PMG Project Steering Committee (PSC)	10 000 USD
A.2 Integrate gender considerations into procurement policy	a) Contracts to reflect quota for historically disadvantaged companies or female-led companies developed.	Y1 of implementation	PMU PMG	10 000 USD

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
a) Ensure procurement processes (women in the value chain) target historically disadvantaged run companies and/or female-led companies ⁶ b) Ensure all interventions have Terms of Reference and Requests for Proposals that are gender responsive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% of contracts to be contracted to historically disadvantaged companies or female-led companies⁷. b) Gender mainstreaming ⁸ integrated into Terms of Reference and Requests for Proposals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of Terms of Reference and Requests for Proposals incorporate gender mainstreaming. 			
Intervention B: Capacity Building and Awareness				
B.1 Ensure gender inclusion in Eco-DRR brand development and communications strategies a) Develop a specific strategy for communicating gender activities. b) Ensure that communication materials are gender inclusive.	a) Gender communication strategy ⁹ completed and implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved by PMG. b) Annual report that reflects gender activities published. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2-3 gender-activities are coordinated each year. c) Share gender lessons on various communities of practice locally, nationally and internationally. d) Create opportunities to share lessons learned across the project, with different intervention sites/areas.	Y1 of establishment Throughout the project	PMU	20 000 USD
B.2 Publish gender-focused knowledge products	a) Gender-focused knowledge product developed and published.	Y2 onwards	PMU	50 000 USD

⁶ Criteria for female-led companies include: companies that are at least 51% owned by one or more women in the case of any publicly-owned business or at least 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more women and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by more women. Criteria for historically disadvantaged run companies include: companies that are owned or controlled by historically disadvantaged South Africans. Historically disadvantaged individual is defined as a South African citizen – 1) who, due to the apartheid policy that was in place, had no voting rights in the national elections prior to the introduction of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1983 (Act No. 100 of 1983) or the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act No. 200 of 1993) (“the interim Constitution”), and/or 2) who is a woman, and/or 3) who has a disability.

⁷ Government policy has embedded quotas for women. The August 2024 Presidential Pronouncement put forward a target to allocate at least 40% of procurement spend to women-owned businesses.

⁸ GCF’s Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/guidelines-gcf-toolkit-mainstreaming-gender_0.pdf

⁹ Communications strategy to be inclusive of gender mainstreaming and focuses on communicating the work of the project through a gendered lens i.e. news articles, opinion pieces, etc.

1. Site-Based Gender Assessment and Action Plan

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
a) Develop gender-focused knowledge products at project level to inform intervention level outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess gender participation in decision-making processes and respond to needs and imbalances. Determine research initiatives to attract women to careers in natural resource management and climate change. Unpack current social inequalities in the natural resource management sector and publish findings. Identify the main skills women workers require for capacity building including communication skills, literacy, computer, management. Research the linkages between gender, natural resource management and climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 knowledge products published at the start of the project and 1 product at mid-term. b) Gender guidelines for landscape management developed.			
B.3 Strengthen institutional capacity and awareness a) Conduct needs assessment to identify gender-specific training interventions and at which level these interventions must be targeted towards. b) Develop a gender training plan for the project based on outcomes from needs assessments. c) Implement specific training interventions for relevant project staff (including diversity and inclusion workshops, and training on specific gender policy requirements, such as SEAH, and monitoring of gender activities, procurement). See training needs outlined in Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). d) Develop capacity of relevant senior project management regarding gender mainstreaming and its processes (oversight and grievance mechanisms).	a) Capacity amongst relevant staff developed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 training sessions held annually. 100% orientation and training on diversity and inclusion, gender policy requirements, monitoring of gender activities, procurement). b) Senior management capacity built. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 training sessions held annually. 100% orientation and training on guidance on labour standards and gender terminology. 	Annual	PMU	30 000 USD
Intervention C: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting				

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
C.1 Design a gender framework and monitoring and reporting strategies a) Develop a gender monitoring and evaluation framework and strategy, including a tracking tool.	a) Gender monitoring and evaluation framework, strategy and tracking tool developed and implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender monitoring and evaluation framework, strategy and tracking tool developed and approved by PMG. Intervention level SEAH monitoring and evaluation frameworks developed including specific indicators and monitoring tools to assess the effectiveness of SEAH prevention measures. 	Y2	PMU PMG	30 000 USD
C.2 Appoint 2 X Process Manager that Fulfils the Functions of a Social and Gender Oversight Officer a) Undertake recruitment and appointment of a process manager that fulfils the functions of a social and gender oversight officer.	b) 2 X Process Manager that fulfils the functions of a social and gender oversight officer appointed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of 2 X Process Manager approved by PMG 	Y2	PMU PMG	2 000 USD (recruitment)
C.3 Measure gender disaggregated outcomes a) Implement monitoring and evaluation framework and tracking tool that collects and collates sex-disaggregated data.	a) Quarterly reports with sex-disaggregated outcomes developed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports submitted by PMU and approved by PMG. 	Quarterly, once the interventions are initiated	Tracked and implemented PMU. Approved by PMG.	5 000 USD
C. 4 Undertake continuous monitoring, evaluation, and learning a) Implement monitoring and evaluation framework and tracking tool that ensures the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance Employment gender profiles Training and capacity building Intervention level benefits and beneficiaries SEAH Gender resources utilisation (human and finance) 	a) Quarterly reports developed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports submitted by PMU and approved by PMG. Amend frameworks, guidelines, etc based on lessons learned through the project. 	Annually once the interventions are initiated	Tracked and implemented PMU. Approved by PMG.	10 000 USD
Intervention Level				

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
Intervention A: Planning and Governance				
A.1 Alignment to project-level gender framework	a) Intervention level gender mainstreaming plans developed ¹⁰¹¹ . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of all interventions have a gender mainstreaming plan. • 100% of all intervention gender mainstreaming plans are aligned to project's policies and guidance. • All intervention level gender mainstreaming plans to have gender disaggregated indicators and targets (where appropriate), timelines, who is responsible, and costs. 	Y2 onwards	PMU and Task Teams	10 000 USD
A.2 Map institutional / governance gender elements at intervention-level	a) Intervention level gender mainstreaming assessment to identify risks and clarify gaps and roles and responsibilities of different genders in governance arrangements in the targeted DMs and communities undertaken. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of all intervention gender mainstreaming plans link to municipal and community gaps and opportunities. 	Y2 onwards	PMU and Task Teams	20 000 USD
A.3 Ensure all interventions' designs are gender sensitive	a) Site specific Gender sensitive intervention designs developed and implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of all interventions' designs prioritises females' needs. 	Y2 onwards	PMU and Task Teams	30 000 USD

¹⁰ The two process managers (that will perform the functions of the Social and Gender Oversight Officer) will support the development of the intervention level gender action plans.

¹¹ The intervention level gender mainstreaming plans will describe how gender will be mainstreamed into the different outcomes including Outcome 3 (*Output 3.1. Financial mechanisms developed and strengthened to enhance private and public sector investments in Eco-DRR and Output 3.2. Informed decision making for Eco-DRR is supported and promoted*). This will be undertaken during the inception phase. SANBI will ensure that the financial mechanisms that are developed under this Outcome are gender responsive and respond to the traditional barriers for women, women owned businesses and traditionally marginalised people encounter when accessing financing.

4 Site-Based Gender Assessment and Action Plan

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
A.4 Align intervention procurement to project's procurement framework	<p>a) Equipment from female-led¹² SMMEs procured during public procurement process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of all equipment is purchased from female -led SMMEs. • % of machinery and equipment procured from companies that are owned by historically disadvantaged individuals. • 50% of machinery and equipment purchased from companies owned by historically disadvantaged individuals (in accordance with broad based black economic empowerment). <p>b) Capacitation programmes developed at intervention level to up-skill workers to ensure that the modernisation of technology does not adversely impact the economic empowerment of women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of all interventions have a gendered capacitation and training programme. 	Y2 onwards	PMU and Task Teams	30 000 USD
Intervention B: Capacity Building and Awareness				
B.1 Shared repository of resources, templates, information and tools	<p>a) Database of templates, information and tools developed and operationalised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of all gender policies, guidance material and tools are available at intervention level through a shared portal. • Training session held on the use of these policies, guidance materials and 	Y1 Throughout the project	PMU and Task Teams	20 000 USD

¹² Criteria for female-led companies include: companies that are at least 51% owned by one or more women in the case of any publicly-owned business or at least 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more women and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by more women.

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
	<p>tools at the inception phase of all interventions.</p> <p>b) Document library generated for gender-focused narratives regarding climate vulnerability within targeted communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of all gender-focused narratives are available at intervention level through a shared portal. 			
B.2 Create awareness	<p>a) Implementing partners and key stakeholders capacitated regarding gender and its intervention and project level implications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of interventions have an awareness creation session held at the beginning of each intervention regarding gender mainstreaming and its importance. 100% of all interventions have a mid-term project awareness session on gender mainstreaming and its progress. 	<p>Y2 onwards</p> <p>Project staff to drive</p>	PMU and Task Teams	20 000 USD
B.3 Implement training activities	<p>a) Intervention level training interventions are gender focused and available to all women at intervention level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of training interventions consider gender aspects. 100% of intervention training are attended by at least 50% females All interventions host at least 2 gender training sessions per year. 	Y2 onwards	PMU and Task Teams	Budgets linked to ESMF training which included gender, SEAH etc
B.4 Support gender sensitive engagements	<p>a) Gender sensitive intervention community engagements undertaken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of engagements at intervention level are gender sensitive. 	<p>Y2 onwards</p> <p>Project staff to support</p>	PMU and Task Teams	10 000 USD

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
	b) Engagements with women focused organisations undertaken during inception. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 engagements during inception. 			
Intervention C: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting				
C.1 Determine the baseline	a) Intervention level baseline assessments undertaken for each intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% projects included a baseline gender assessment. b) Findings from the assessment collated to support the current gender assessment and action plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding from the assessments are integrated into intervention level gender mainstreaming plans and monitoring of project impacts. 	Y2 onwards	PMU and Task Teams	Costed in M&E Plan Annexure
C.2 Report on monitoring and evaluation activities (with disaggregated data, where available)	a) Compliance at intervention level assessed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% compliance with policies, guides and tools is ensured in all interventions. b) Employment gender profiles developed for each intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender employment targets for all interventions achieved. c) Training and capacity building undertaken at intervention level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All training and capacity building interventions are monitored and reported upon in terms of gender. Capture and track stories of change from baseline throughout project implementation. d) Intervention level benefits and beneficiaries tracked and monitored.	Y2 onwards Beneficiation and utilisation to be determined by PMU as project is delivered.	PMU and Task Teams	Training costed under M&E plan Annexure.

Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline	Responsible	Budget
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of interventions are monitored for impact on beneficiaries, using gender disaggregated data collection. <p>e) SEAH tracked and monitored at intervention level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of all cases of SEAH are addressed in accordance with policies and guidelines. 100% of all SEAH cases are sensitively documented in alignment with policies and protocols. In 100% of SEAH cases, appropriate actions and interventions are taken and reported. <p>f) Gender resources utilisation (human and finance) monitored and tracked at intervention level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of interventions monitor and document the utilisation of gender resources, both in terms of time and budget. Corrective action to address utilisation of under 50% (on both time and budget) is documented and reported. 			
TOTAL				307 000 USD

8.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The PMU will be responsible for implementing the overarching gender action plan for the Eco-DRR project. The process managers (X2) will be responsible for performing the functions of the Social and Gender Oversight Officers at an intervention level. As such, they will be responsible for implementing the intervention-level gender action plans that will be developed during inception.

As highlighted in the ESMF, the Social and Gender Oversight Officers (i.e. process managers) will have expertise in conducting social and gender studies, ensuring compliance and auditing, including knowledge of the supporting legislation and regulations, guidelines and policies related to social, gender and SEAH aspects. The officers must conduct audits in terms of the ESMF and the Gender Action Plan for the intervention. A minimum of one site inspection must be undertaken per quarter, for the duration of the implementation activities.

Each Social and Gender Oversight Officer will be responsible for monitoring, reviewing and verifying compliance with the ESMF and the Gender Action Plan by the Contractor within their respective DMs. Duties in this regard will include the following:

- Monitor and verify that the ESMF, Gender Action Plan and programme policies are adhered to at all times and recommending necessary action if the specifications and mitigation measures are not followed;
- Monitor and verify that social and gender impacts are kept to a minimum;
- Must obtain, examine and approve method statements to overview processes;
- Assist the Contractor in finding socially responsible solutions to problems;
- Report back on the social and gender issues at the site meetings and other meetings that may be called regarding environmental matters, if required;
- Monitor and review the site diary of all activities / incidents / complaints concerning the social and gender aspects onsite;
- Inspect the site and surrounding working areas regarding compliance with the ESMF;
- Be reachable by the public regarding matters of social and gender concerns as they relate to the development;
- Provide social and gender awareness training for site personnel;
- Recommend corrective actions to the Environmental Programmes and Safeguards Officer and the Contractor where activities are not in compliance with the ESMF;
- Inform the Environmental Programmes and Safeguards Officer immediately of the occurrence of non-compliances and recommend appropriate measures of rectification;
- Ensure that activities onsite comply with legislative and regulatory requirements; and
- Undertake quarterly site visits, compile and submit quarterly reports to the Beneficiary, PMU, Environmental Programmes and Safeguards Officer and Contractor.

During closure, the Social and Gender Oversight Officers (i.e. 2 X Process Managers) will be responsible for monitoring, reviewing and verifying compliance with the Closure Plan by the Contractor during intervention closure. The officer must

conduct audits in terms of the Closure Plan during the intervention closure. A minimum of one site inspection must be undertaken per month, for the duration of the closure activities.

Duties in this regard will include the following:

- Monitor and verify that the Closure Plan and project policies are adhered to at all times and recommending necessary action if the specifications and mitigation measures are not followed;
- Monitor and verify that social and gender impacts are kept to a minimum;
- Must obtain, examine and approve method statements to overview processes;
- Assist the Contractor in finding socially responsible solutions to problems during intervention closure;
- Report back on the social and gender issues at the site meetings and other meetings that may be called regarding environmental matters, if required;
- Monitor and review the site diary of all activities / incidents / complaints concerning the social and gender aspects onsite, during the closure process;
- Inspect the site and surrounding working areas regarding compliance with the Closure Plan;
- Be reachable by the public regarding matters of social and gender concerns as they relate to the intervention closure process;
- Recommend corrective actions to the Environmental Programmes and Safeguards Officer and the Contractor where closure activities are not in compliance with the Closure Plan;
- Inform the Environmental Programmes and Safeguards Officer immediately of the occurrence of non-compliances and recommend appropriate measures of rectification;
- Ensure that activities onsite comply with legislative and regulatory requirements; and
- Undertake quarterly site visits, compile and submit quarterly reports to the Beneficiary, PMU, Environmental Programmes and Safeguards Officer and Contractor.

8.3 MECHANISMS TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

While the Eco-DRR project does not entail any major construction, the implementation of activities related to rangeland management, wetland rehabilitation, slope management and IAP removal may entail the introduction of contractors and workers in specific areas. Those who are away from home on these types of jobs are separated from their family and may act outside their normal sphere of social control. This can lead to inappropriate and criminal behaviour, such as sexual harassment of women and girls, exploitative sexual relations, and illicit sexual relations with minors from the local community. Influx of male labour may also lead to an increase in exploitative sexual relationships and human trafficking whereby women and girls are forced into sex work.

Projects can create changes in the communities in which they operate and can cause shifts in power dynamics between community members and within households. These changes can contribute to higher levels of gender-based violence associated with the project. Gender-based violence incidents are likely to occur as a result of higher wages for workers in a community contributing to transactional sex. The risk of incidents is among labourers and minors in the community as well as between male workers and lower earning females or adult females in the community. Gender-based violence is also

associated with SEAH. Sexual harassment involves any unwelcome sexual or requests for sexual favours or acts of a sexual nature that are offensive and humiliating among the same company's employees, including companies contracted to do works on behalf of government. Sexual exploitation and abuse are more likely and occur when a company's workers use their position to extract an unwanted sexual act from a member of the community in exchange for access to project benefits, including inclusion of households for casual labour positions.

Gender-based violence can also include rape, contracting sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Male jealousy, a key driver of gender-based violence, can be triggered by an influx of labourers on a project and when the workers are believed / perceived to be interacting with community women. Abusive behaviour can also occur not only between project-related staff and those living in and around the project site, but also within the homes of those affected by the project.

To address these issues, the Environmental Social Management Framework (ESMF) process will be followed during project implementation. During the Screening, Categorisation and Assessment Phase, SEAH and environmental and social screening checklists will be used to ensure that there are no risks to communities in the implementation sites regarding gender-based violence or SEAH. This is also highlighted in the exclusion list which excludes any interventions that:

1. Negatively affect specific socio-economic groups such as ethnic groups, women, minorities, etc., their basic needs (e.g. reducing income and food supply) and strategic needs (e.g. limiting agency and decision-making power).
2. Are likely to intensify discriminatory practices particularly against women, including gender-based violence.

In addition to the above, site specific ESMFs will be developed to provide specify ways to address potential gender-based violence in interventions based on the type of activities. Use of conflict resolution mechanisms, grievance redress mechanism (GRM), SEAH procedures (as guided by national legislation, GCF safeguards and SANBI's gender policy and strategies), gender-based approaches and ongoing stakeholder engagements will support the management of these risks.

Training and capacity building regarding gender-based violence and SEAH is presented in the table below:

Table 8-2: Capacity development and training plan regarding gender-based violence and SEAH for the Eco-DRR project¹³

Capacity Building and Training Plan						
Objectives	Issues for engagement	Method of engagement	Stakeholders / Target population and area	Responsible person	Timeline	Potential Costs (USD)
Gender-based violence procedures for reporting and prevention	Training and monitoring during project implementation to prevent GBV and support reporting of cases	Training and monitoring	Community members / vulnerable groups	Process Managers, Gender-Based Violence / Gender Consultant	Prior to commencement of activities (Year 1-2)	10,000
Gender-based violence / SEAH	Training of all relevant agencies / staff in the ESMF	Training	Eco-DRR relevant agencies / staff responsible for the implementation of environmental and social instruments.	PMU, Process Managers, Gender Specialist	Prior to commencement (Year 2)	16,000

¹³ More details regarding the training and capacity building plan can be found in Annex 6: ESMF

Capacity Building and Training Plan						
Objectives	Issues for engagement	Method of engagement	Stakeholders / Target population and area	Responsible person	Timeline	Potential Costs (USD)
Gender-based violence	Response to domestic issues in a non- gender biased manner. This considers the changes in household power dynamics that may unintentionally increase levels of gender-based violence. To address this potential risk, male engagement strategies will also be included under this activity to mitigate these concerns.	Training	Local leaders in intervention locations	PMU, Process Managers	Prior to commencement of activities (Year 2)	10,000
Mitigate impact of workers on local communities (Labour management procedures and gender-based violence / SEAH)	Implement training of contracted project workers designed to heighten awareness of risks and to mitigate impacts on local communities and their rights	Training	Contracted workers and community workers in intervention locations	All relevant agencies / staff	Prior to deployment (Year 2-3)	5,000

8.3.1 GRM

According to the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, a GRM is defined as an organisational system and resources established by national government, regional or municipal agencies to receive and address concerns about the impact of their policies, programmes and operations on external stakeholders (UNDP, 2017).

The GRM outlined in this section is designed to support the Eco-DRR project and serves as a platform for targeted communities, affected stakeholders, project workers, and other involved parties at the local level to address any grievances related to the project. The GRM presented in the report would not impede access to South Africa's judicial or administrative procedures. Three key GRMs are presented for the Eco-DRR project: 1) Project-Level GRM; 2) SANBI's Whistleblowing Hotline and SANBI's Environmental and/or Social Harms and Gender Discrimination complaints process and 3) GCF's Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM).

Project Level GRM

The Eco-DRR Project-Level GRM addresses a variety of pertinent issues related to the project, including environmental impacts, land use conflicts, socio-economic disruptions, discrimination in benefit sharing, violation of rules or cultural practices, and cultural heritage preservation. It focuses specifically on the impacts and risks stemming from the Eco-DRR project throughout its life cycle. Stakeholders involved or affected by the project, such as local communities, government agencies, and project implementers, are within the purview of this mechanism. This framework will handle complaints and requests, which may include but are not limited to:

- Misconduct of project workers towards communities;
- Gender-based sexual harassment;
- Misconduct of project contractors;
- Water and land pollution;
- Damage to private assets, community, and public infrastructure;
- Inappropriate waste disposal;
- Environmental degradation; and
- Other related concerns.

The Project-Level GRM complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and international standards as well as several project specific documents such as the ESMF, SANBI's and DFFE's environmental, social and gender policies and procedures.

SANBI GRM

Grievances related to any SANBI activities can be raised through SANBI's Whistleblowing Hotline and through SANBI's Environmental and/or Social Harms and Gender Discrimination complaints process. Information on communication channels for inquiries and complaints can found in the Annex 7: Summary of Consultations, Site Level Stakeholder Plan and Grievance Mechanism.

Communication channels for inquiries and complaints received

SANBI has an environmental and/or social harms and gender discrimination complaints process. SANBI's flowchart on complaints regarding Environmental and/or Social Harms and Gender Discrimination demonstrates the mechanism used to deal with complaints. In 2024 minor changes were made to the process to receive and respond to complaints to better align with SANBI's operational procedures. The process is reflected in the flowchart which is available on the "Contact" page of SANBI's website, as per the description below.

SANBI's high-level statement communicating its zero tolerance for environmental and/or social harms and gender discrimination arising from SANBI's activities appears on SANBI's official website (<https://www.sanbi.org/contact/>). The main landing page (<https://www.sanbi.org/>) includes the following text: "Report complaints on environmental and/or social harms and gender discrimination arising from SANBI's activities Email: safeguards@sanbi.org.za".

This is linked to further details on the Contact page (<https://www.sanbi.org/contact/>) on the official SANBI website where it states: "Environmental and/or social harms and gender discrimination... SANBI has zero tolerance for environmental and/or social

harms and gender discrimination arising from SANBI's activities. To report complaints on environmental and/or social harms and gender discrimination: Email: safeguards@sanbi.org.za"

Whistle blowing

A Whistleblowing Hotline is fully functional and is administered and managed by Advance Call: Ethics and Fraud Hotline. Advance Call reports any cases of fraud or misconduct to SANBI Management for investigation if warranted. The Whistleblowing Hotline can also be used to receive complaints regarding Environmental and/or Social Harms and Gender Discrimination. The Advance Call system allows for anonymous whistleblowing. SANBI also receives and administers formal, informal and anonymous matters from various communication mediums. This includes a dedicated internal SANBI fraud email address, administered by SANBI's Director: Governance, Risk and Compliance. The protection of Whistleblowers is included in SANBI's Fraud Prevention Policy.

SANBI maintains Hotline Registers of all reported matters reported through the hotline. SANBI's Risk Management and Fraud Prevention Committee, which is chaired by the Chief Operations Officer, adjudicates on alleged cases reported through the whistleblowing system or other approved means. These cases are reported quarterly to the Audit and Risk Committee, which is a sub-Committee of the SANBI Board. Enterprise Risk Management Reports are presented at SANBI's Audit and Risk Committee, as per the process above. SANBI's Hotline Registers include details of the incident, progress in its resolution, status and responsible party.

SANBI's Whistleblowing Hotline is accessed through SANBI's website, as per the description below.

SANBI's high-level statement communicating its zero tolerance for fraud and corruption appears on SANBI's official website (<https://www.sanbi.org/contact/>). The main landing page (<https://www.sanbi.org/>) includes the following text: "To report suspected fraud at SANBI. Email: sanbi@behonest.co.za. Call: 0800 160 999". This is linked to further details on the Contact page (<https://www.sanbi.org/contact/>) on the official SANBI website where it states:

- Ethics and fraud hotline reporting channels
 - SANBI has zero tolerance of fraud and corruption. To report suspected fraud at SANBI:
 - Tel.: 0800 160 999
 - WhatsApp: 0860 004 004
 - SMS number: 48691
 - Free post: BNT165, Brooklyn Square, 0075
 - E-mail: sanbi@behonest.co.za
 - Website and chat link: www.behonest.co.za

SEAH in Relation to the GRM

The Eco-DRR project will develop and implement a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all participants and stakeholders across the targeted DMs. The prevention of SEAH requires an approach that will address both individual behaviours and systemic factors. The project will, from the onset, implement the following to prevent SEAH:

- **Policy Development:** The project will develop a clear and comprehensive SEAH policy that outline expected behaviours, define prohibited conduct, and establish consequences for violations. The policy will be communicated to all project participants and stakeholders during the inception phase through training and workshops.
- **Training and Awareness:** Throughout the project, gender awareness training will be conducted including regular sessions and awareness campaigns to educate project staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, and partners about SEAH, its impact, and ways to prevent and respond to incidents. The SEAH sessions will include topics such as consent, boundaries, power dynamics, and reporting procedures and should be led by trained gender focal points or other issue experts. Engagements with local communities and stakeholders will help to raise awareness about SEAH, build trust, and foster collaboration in prevention efforts. Community leaders, religious leaders, and other influential figures will be involved in promoting positive social norms and values.
- **Code of Conduct:** To ensure compliance, contractors and implementing partners will be required to sign a code of conduct which will include guidelines for respectful communication, appropriate interactions, and the avoidance of abusive behaviour and consequences should one violate the agreement.
- **Promotion of Gender Equality:** SEAH can also be prevented by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within the project as well as challenging gender stereotypes and norms that perpetuate SEAH.
- **Safe Reporting Mechanisms:** The project will establish accessible and confidential reporting mechanisms for individuals to report incidents of SEAH. Multiple reporting options, such as hotlines, email, physical drop-boxes, and designated focal points, will be provided to accommodate different preferences and ensure survivors' privacy and safety. In addition, the project will encourage open communication channels and feedback mechanisms to empower individuals to raise concerns and grievances.
- **Response and Support Services:** The project will refer survivors of SEAH to established local-level appropriate support services, including psychosocial support, medical assistance, Legal Aid, and referrals to specialised service providers. The project will also facilitate access to support resources and follow-up services as needed.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The project will collect data on reported incidents, response times, and outcomes to identify areas for improvement and adjust approaches as necessary. This will enable evaluation of the effectiveness of SEAH prevention strategies and interventions.

GCF's Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM)

The GCF has established an IRM¹⁴ that is responsible for:

1. Reviewing requests for reconsideration of a project or programme that has been denied funding by the Board and, as appropriate, make recommendations to the Board;
2. Addressing grievances or complaints by a person, group of persons or community who/which have been or may be adversely impacted by a GCF funded project or programme through problem solving and/or compliance review, as appropriate;
3. Initiating proceedings on its own to investigate grievances of a person, group of persons or community who/which have been or may be adversely impacted by a GCF funded project or programme;

¹⁴ Independent Redress Mechanism | Green Climate Fund

4. Monitoring whether decisions taken by the Board based on recommendations made by the IRM, or agreements reached in connection with grievances or complaints through problem solving, have been implemented, and reporting on that monitoring to the Board;
5. Recommending to the Board the reconsideration of existing policies, procedures, guidelines and systems of the GCF based on lessons learned or good international practices;
6. Sharing best practices and give general guidance that can be helpful for the GCF's readiness activities and accreditation process and for supporting the strengthening of the capacities of accountability / redress mechanisms of Direct Access Entities; and
7. Providing education and outreach to GCF staff, relevant stakeholders and the public (GCF, n.d.).

Points 2 and 3 apply to the Eco-DRR project and GRM.

When submitting a grievance or complaint by those adversely affected¹⁵ or who may be affected by GCF funded projects or programmes, the grievance or complaint can be submitted through the Project-Level GRM. If the grievance / complaint is not addressed through the Project-Level GRM and/or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant can submit their grievance / complaint to the IRM. The grievance or complaint can also be submitted by the complainants' government or duly authorised representative.

The GCF's IRM policy notes that there are no formal requirements for filing a grievance or complaint. However, the name, address, telephone number, email, and other contact information of the complainant must be provided. In addition, the following information needs to be provided:

- The name, location, and nature of the project or programme that has caused or may cause adverse impacts;
- A brief explanation as to how the complainant has been, or may be, adversely affected by the GCF funded project or programme; and
- An indication of whether confidentiality is requested by the complainant.

The complainant can also include additional information related to GCF policies and procedures that are not being complied with, a description of other efforts/GRMs that the complainant pursued, and relevant documents, photographs, videos etc.

The grievance or complaint can be submitted to the IRM through any means (online complaints form, mail, email, voice or video recording, or by calling a toll-free hotline setup by the IRM). Within 5 calendar days from the receipt of a grievance or complaint, the IRM shall send an acknowledgment and register the grievance or complaint in the IRM registers. The IRM shall then consider whether the grievance or complaint meets the eligibility criteria set out in its policy (see Appendix E). The eligibility determination shall be made within 30 calendar days from the date of acknowledgment. The IRM will publish its eligibility determination on the IRM website within 5 calendar days of making its determination.

Once the grievance or complaint is determined to be eligible, the IRM will within 60 calendar days engage with the complainant to understand the issue and to ascertain whether the complainant would like to pursue problem solving and/or compliance review (a separate process if followed for compliance review and this is included in Appendix E). The IRM will

¹⁵ This can include by a person or group of persons or community who has/have been or who may be adversely affected

also engage with other stakeholders, comprising of the GCF, NDA or Focal Point, Direct Access Entity and Executing Entity, to understand better the issues and the context, as appropriate. Problem solving will be offered to the complainant, but if this is declined or is unviable, the IRM shall within 5 calendar days of that event refer the grievance or complaint to compliance review in accordance with the provisions in its policy (Appendix E). Within 5 calendar days of the decision to refer to compliance review, in consultation with the other stakeholders, the IRM shall publish a report on the IRM website of this decision and the outcome of problem solving.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

South Africa has made significant strides in bridging the gender gap over the years. One of its notable achievements is the constitutional commitment to gender equality, which is supported by legislative frameworks promoting women's rights and participation in various spheres. The country has witnessed an increase in women's representation in politics and decision-making roles, with women holding key positions in government and the private sector. Efforts to address gender-based violence have also seen improvements through legal reforms and initiatives aimed at supporting survivors and raising awareness. Additionally, educational opportunities for girls have expanded, contributing to greater gender parity in schools and higher education.

However, despite these advancements, challenges persist in achieving full gender equality in South Africa. Gender-based violence remains a significant concern, with high rates of femicide and intimate partner violence affecting women's safety and well-being. Economic disparities continue to exist, with women facing barriers to accessing equal opportunities in the workforce, including wage gaps, engineering and science occupations and limited representation in senior leadership positions. Additionally, cultural norms and societal attitudes perpetuate gender stereotypes and discrimination, hindering progress towards complete gender equality especially for rural communities. To address these remaining challenges, sustained efforts are needed to enforce existing laws, enhance economic empowerment programmes for women, initiate gender indicator tracking in all institutions, promote gender-sensitive education, and foster societal change through awareness and advocacy campaigns.

With regards to this project, the analysis showed that the integration of gender considerations into all development planning and strategies hasn't permeated into local government such as DMs and LMs. The absence of gender-sensitive reports, strategies, tracking gender indicators and budgeting in IDPs suggests a significant gap in understanding and implementing gender mainstreaming in these institutions. The Eco-DRR project aims to address these gaps by adopting and implementing a gender sensitive approach that ensures gender responsiveness to climate change, DRR and ecosystem-based approaches.

The project aims to bridge the gap between the high-level conceptualisation of gender mainstreaming and its practical implementation at the grassroots level. It's crucial to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into every stage of the Eco-DRR project, from planning to execution, to create more effective and inclusive strategies that benefit all members of the community.

Addressing the gender gap in South Africa's rural areas is imperative to confront the unequal impact of floods, wildfires and droughts on women and other marginalised groups. Empowering women and marginalised groups through education, economic opportunities, enhanced participation, and improved infrastructure is pivotal for building resilience and fostering sustainable development. By prioritising inclusive strategies, we can ensure that rural women and marginalised groups are equipped to face climate extremes and contribute meaningfully to their communities' resilience.

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APPENDIX A Gender Assessment Checklist

Guidance Note:

- **Part A - CN Stage:**
This section should be completed during the Conceptual Note (CN) stage. At this point, focus on identifying potential risks associated with the project's design and scope.
- **Part B - FP Stage:**
This section should be filled out during the Full Proposal (FP) stage. At this stage, provide a detailed assessment of the identified risks and refine your mitigation strategies based on further analysis and available data.

Gender Impact Screening questions

Part A – To be done/ filled/ considered at Concept Note (CN) Stage

1. Is the Project/Fund/Programme aligned with:

- National gender policies?
- GCF's gender policy requirements?
- International gender commitments?

Answer here providing with the justification:

1a. Has sex-disaggregated data been collected and provided to GCF Secretariate for review? If not, please provide justification and explain how and when this will be done.

Answer here providing with the justification:

1b. Has description of gender related country context been provided?

Answer here providing with the justification:

Part B – To be done/ filled/ considered Funding Proposal (FP) Stage

2a. Will the Project/Fund/Programme provide gender awareness training for project staff?

2b. Will there be a capacity building programme for local women's organisations?

2c. How will Knowledge sharing on gender and climate change be facilitated?

2a) Yes. As noted in the Gender Action Plan (Section 6), Action B3 focuses on strengthening institutional capacity and awareness. This includes developing specific training interventions for relevant project staff as well as developing capacity of relevant senior project management regarding gender mainstreaming and its processes (oversight and grievance mechanisms).

2b) Yes. Output 1.2 of the project looks at local gender-inclusive and sustainable ecosystem-based livelihoods that supports locally led adaptation. This will include capacity building initiatives that target local women's organisations, particularly SMMEs.

2c) As per Action B2, gender focused knowledge products will be developed at project and intervention level to promote knowledge sharing. This includes determining research initiatives to attract women to careers in natural resource management and climate change; unpacking current social inequalities in the natural resource management sector; and researching the linkages between gender, natural resource management and climate change.

3. Consultation process:

- Includes participation of both women and men
- Covers vulnerable groups in consultations
- Uses gender-sensitive consultation methods
- Documents stakeholder inputs and concerns

The consultation process will ensure meaningful inclusive participation that promotes inclusivity, transparency, accountability and non-discrimination. In addition, this emphasis ensures that gender considerations are included throughout the planning and engagement processes. All interactions should promote inclusivity across gender, culture, and generations, including marginalised groups, while paying close attention to the cultural customs, practices, and values of all parties.

Some of the key principles that will underline stakeholder engagements include:

- Respect, courtesy, openness and transparency in approach, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity to diverse perspectives, including those related to gender;
- Clarifying the mechanisms for engagement and consultation throughout the iterative adaptation planning process, including a focus on the private sector, sub-national governments and civil society organisations, while paying attention to gender-balanced participation;
- Ensure clear communication and accessible information dissemination on climate impact, risk and vulnerability information to relevant stakeholders, recognising and addressing diverse needs based on the audience's characteristics, including gender-specific considerations.;
- Streamlining stakeholder engagement processes within existing broader development planning and coordination mechanisms, such as existing forums, meetings etc.;
- Continuous communication and engagement to ensure progress is comprehended and actively contributed to, demonstrating accountability and ensuring equitable value for money, considering gender-inclusive impacts and benefits; and
- Genuine and active stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

Stakeholders will need to be regularly kept informed of project developments, updates, and community comments. This will be done via recurring reports and presentations/meetings that describe the progress of the project and key decisions made. More details regarding the stakeholder engagement plan can be found in Annex 7.