

Gender Policy

This document captures the policy as adopted by the Board in decision B.24/12. The policy was sent to the Board for consideration at B.24 in document GCF/B.24/15 titled "Updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan 2020–2023".

All decisions and documents adopted at B.24 can be found in document GCF/B.24/17 titled "Decisions of the Board – twenty-fourth meeting of the Board, 12 – 14 November 2019".



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I. Background

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

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

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

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

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

II. Rationale

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

6. The Gender Policy is closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which make explicit commitments to gender equality, both as a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG5) and as a theme cutting across all the SDGs. An aim of combating climate change is to promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries and small island developing States, and includes focusing on women from vulnerable communities.

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

7. The Gender Policy will be consistent with and linked to the existing relevant frameworks, policies and standards of GCF as well as relevant policies that GCF may develop in the future.

III. Objectives

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

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

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

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

11. The Gender Policy has three main objectives:

- (a) To support climate change interventions and innovations through a comprehensive gender approach, applied both within the institution and by its network of partners, including accredited entities (AEs), national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points, and delivery partners for activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme;
- (b) To promote climate investments that:
 - (i) Advance gender equality through climate change mitigation and adaptation actions; and
 - (ii) Minimize social, gender-related and climate-related risks in all climate change actions; and
- (c) To contribute to reducing the gender gap of climate change-exacerbated social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and exclusions through GCF climate investments that mainstream gender equality issues.

IV. Scope of application

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

- (a) **At the GCF institutional level:** to adopt, implement and document the GCF approach to addressing gender issues in its day-to-day governance, operations and procedures, and its performance measurement frameworks as reflected in the Gender Action Plan while committing the necessary resources, financial and human, to make this approach robust and effective;
- (b) **At the project/portfolio level:** to address and reduce gender inequality, deepen stakeholder engagement and deliver better accountability to both men and women to

generate sustainable livelihood opportunities, health and well-being, and resilience against climate-induced shocks and risks;

- (c) **At the national level:** to support and sustain an enabling environment among GCF stakeholders – including NDAs/focal points, AEs, and delivery partners – that builds on existing policy commitments, environmental and social standards, and redress mechanisms to achieve gender equality in accordance with the decision B.24/12;
- (d) **At the sector level:** to contribute to high-quality, more comprehensive, systematic and participatory sex-disaggregated data collection, qualitative and quantifiable gender analysis and action plans, and a knowledge base that supports gender-related learning outcomes.

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

V. Guiding principles

14. Guiding principles underpin the core values and premises of the Gender Policy and are aligned with the objectives and guiding principles of the Governing Instrument.² These principles are presented in the following sections.

5.1 Principle 1

15. The Fund's gender policy is guided by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in which the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change note that when addressing climate change, principles of gender equality and empowerment of women should be respected, promoted and considered.³

16. The Fund's gender policy is congruent with international arrangements⁴, in particular with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the International Labour Organization's core conventions, in that it recognizes the equal rights of women and men to access the Fund's services in order to adapt to and mitigate against the impact of climate change.

17. GCF recalls the preamble to the Paris Agreement which states: "Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking actions to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.

18. The Gender Policy is also guided by Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement, where parties acknowledge that that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems and should be based on and guided by the best available science

² The Governing Instrument, in paragraph 3, states: "The Fund will strive to maximize the impact of its funding for adaptation and mitigation, and seek a balance between the two, while promoting environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits and taking a gender-sensitive approach."

³ Available at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf#page=2>>.

⁴ Not all Parties to the UNFCCC are Parties to such instruments listed in this paragraph and some have entered reservations.

and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.

5.2 Principle 2

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

20. GCF requires that women and men be provided with equal opportunity to take an active part in stakeholder consultations and decision-making during project preparation, implementation and evaluation. In this regard, GCF will encourage the NDAs/focal points serving as coordinating mechanisms for the engagement of their countries with GCF to apply the principles of inclusion, equality and non-discrimination with respect to stakeholder consultations and decision-making aligned with any existing capacities and applicable policies and priorities of the country on gender, this Gender Policy, the guideline for enhanced country ownership and drivenness, and initial best practice options for country coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement approved by the Board.⁵

5.3 Principles 3

21. For the purposes of this Gender Policy, GCF requires that in line with the Fund's Environment and Social Policy, women and men, including from vulnerable groups⁶, be provided with an equal and equitable opportunity to be fully and effectively engaged in consultations and decision-making throughout the project cycle, taking into consideration the initial best practice options for country coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement,⁷ the country ownership guidelines,⁸ and the principle of free, prior and informed consent in projects involving indigenous peoples in line with the environmental and social safeguards standards of GCF and the Indigenous Peoples Policy.⁹

22. The GCF process requires AEs to undertake consultation that is gender sensitive and culturally aware, pursuant to the GCF Environmental and Social Policy¹⁰ and Indigenous Peoples Policy, and that will be supported by the disclosure of relevant information pursuant to the Information Disclosure Policy of the GCF.¹¹

5.4 Principle 4

23. GCF recognizes the importance of transparency, non-discriminatory access and accountability in all aspects of its operations. Through its Information Disclosure Policy, GCF

⁵ Decision B.17/21.

⁶ Decision B.19/10. Annex X, paragraph 2(f) "Disadvantaged or vulnerable" refers to those who maybe more likely to be adversely affected by the project impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits. Such an individual/group is also more likely to be excluded from/unable to participate fully in the mainstream consultation process and as such may require specific measures and/or assistance to do so.

⁷ Decision B.08/10.

⁸ Decision B.17/21.

⁹ Decision B.19/11.

¹⁰ Decision B.19/10.

¹¹ Decision B.12/35, paragraph (a).

endeavours to provide accurate, gender-related and timely information to its stakeholders and the public at large, about its policy guidelines, standards, procedures and project operations.

VI. Policy requirements

24. The Gender Policy requirements are categorized as follows:
- (a) GCF responsibilities;
 - (b) AE commitments; and
 - (c) Project-level requirements.

6.1 GCF responsibilities

25. GCF is responsible for dedicating financial, human and other resources as required to implement the Gender Policy, specifically:
- (a) GCF will ensure that entities applying to be accredited by GCF are assessed in and considered for accreditation in accordance with the accreditation framework¹² and taking into account their commitment and capacity to meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy;
 - (b) GCF will ensure that under the accreditation master agreements and funded activity agreements with AEs, the AEs are required to comply with the requirements of the Gender Policy;
 - (c) GCF will review the gender assessment and the project-level gender action plan submitted by the AE with each funding proposal and monitor implementation;
 - (d) GCF will ensure that the design and implementation of GCF-financed activities are informed by the results of the gender assessments undertaken by the AE during the preparation of the activities;
 - (e) GCF will require that annual performance reports submitted by AEs on GCF-funded activities include progress made in implementing project-level gender action plans;
 - (f) GCF will commit resources as necessary towards independent verification and project reviews and assessments to document and publish the benefits and considerations of actions and achievements that address gender issues as deemed necessary;
 - (g) GCF will, to the extent feasible, develop specific targets and progress indicators aligned with the SDG framework, particularly SDG5 and gender targets in the other goals; integrate both qualitative and quantitative targets and indicators as per the GCF results management framework and performance measurement frameworks, and require all projects financed by GCF to report progress and impact against these frameworks;
 - (h) GCF will generate, document, publish and archive experience gained through its actions and project investments to promote learning from the best practice implementation of its partners. GCF will also commit to capitalize on knowledge and expertise gained from other organizations and comparable climate finance mechanisms;
 - (i) GCF will organize gender training or provide technical and material support for gender resources as requested by the Board. Where requested, the Secretariat may organize gender training and capacity-building for AEs and delivery partners, including through

¹² Decision B.07/02.

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

6.2 Accredited entities and commitments

- 26. The AEs will dedicate the necessary financial, human and other resources, as appropriate, to comply with the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy.
- 27. At the project level, the AEs will be responsible for meeting the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy and supporting the implementation of the project-level gender action plan as it relates to the GCF-approved activity as well as for reporting on results, including the generation and use of sex-disaggregated as well as qualitative data.
- 28. The AEs will take the necessary measures to ensure that proposed projects, as well as proposed activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, submitted to GCF for financing are aligned with national policies and priorities on gender.

6.3 Project-level requirements

- 29. At the project preparation stage, the GCF will require AEs to:
 - (a) Ensure that concept notes and funding proposals submitted for GCF financing meet the principles and requirements of the Gender Policy;
 - (b) Submit as a part of the funding proposal (i) a gender assessment, along with appropriate environmental and social assessments (as may be required according to the level of risks and impacts), and (ii) a project-level gender action plan; and
 - (c) Integrate analysis of context and sociocultural factors underlying climate change-exacerbated gender inequality and optimize the potential contributions of women and men of all ages to build both individual and collective resilience to climate change.
- 30. At the project implementation, monitoring and reporting stage:
 - (a) GCF will ensure that AEs take necessary measures to implement the project-level gender action plan submitted as part of the funding proposal approved by GCF;
 - (b) GCF will require that in implementing the project-level gender action plan, AEs will refine, as may be necessary, the gender-related baseline, indicators and targets;
 - (c) GCF will require that AEs take the necessary measures to ensure periodic updates on the gender assessments and notify GCF when there are major changes in the design and execution of projects, or other circumstances that may affect the implementation of the gender action plan. AEs will also notify GCF of any changes in the project-level gender action plan; and
 - (d) GCF will require AEs to monitor and report on the progress made in implementing the project-level gender action plan.

VII. Key priority areas for operationalizing the Gender Policy of the GCF and Gender Action Plan of the GCF 2020–2023

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

VIII. Effectiveness and revision

32. This Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan will come into effect upon adoption by the Board. The policy will apply to ongoing activities to the extent reasonably possible and those that will be approved after the effective date of this policy.¹³ This Gender Policy will remain in effect until amended or superseded by the Board.

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

¹³ Unless otherwise provided for in any signed accreditation master agreement, in which case the relevant provisions of the accreditation master agreement will prevail.



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