# Gender Assessment

## FP318: Regional Programmatic Approach on Climate Action (RPACA)

Pacific Island Countries | Asian Development Bank (ADB) | GCF/B.46/02/Add.11

5 October 2026

GREEN CLIMATE FUND



# Regional Programmatic Approach on Climate Action (RPACA)

## Annex 8: Gender Assessment and Action Plan (GAAP)

July 2026

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

ADB

**Acronyms** ..... i

**1. Programme Background** ..... 1

**1.1 Purpose, Vision and Program Structure** ..... 1

**1.2 GAAP Scope and Framework** ..... 2

Box 1: GESI-Transformative Climate Action ..... 4

Figure 1: GTCA and Transformative Climate Resilience ..... 7

**2. Regional and Country Analyses** ..... 8

**2.1 Climate and Social Context** ..... 8

**2.2 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Dimensions of Vulnerability** ..... 10

Figure 2: Climate Hazards and Intersectional Vulnerabilities in the Pacific ..... 15

**2.3 Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Climate Policy Landscape** ..... 17

Figure 3: Readiness Score ..... 22

Figure 4: Frequency of GESI Mentions in National Climate Frameworks ..... 22

Figure 6: Gaps in gender and social inclusion integration Across NAPs ..... 24

**3. Programme-wide GESI Standards** ..... 27

**3.1 RPACA Gender and Inclusion Criteria** ..... 27

**RPACA Gender Equality and Inclusion Criteria for Sub-Projects** ..... 27

**3.2 Alignment with international guidance and economic rationale** ..... 27

**3.3 Programme-wide standards** ..... 28

**3.4 Gender Equality and Inclusion specific Transformative Shifts Across RPACA Components** ..... 28

Figure 7: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Transformative Shifts Across Components ..... 30

**4. Component 1: Gender Equality and Inclusion Operational Requirements – Climate Finance** ..... 30

**4.1 Enhancing Pacific Island's Access to Climate Finance** ..... 30

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Requirements for PFM** ..... 31

Figure 8: Gender Equality and Inclusion Requirements for PFM ..... 32

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Requirements for Financial Instruments and Mechanisms** ..... 33

**Gender Equality and Inclusion requirements for Strengthening National Financial Institutions** ..... 33

**Minimum Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Standards for Component 1 Activities** ..... 34

Figure 9: Minimum Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Standards for Component 1 Activities ..... 35

**5. Component 2: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Requirements** ..... 35

5.1 Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Coastal Protection ..... 35

**5.2 Expected Outcomes** ..... 36

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Requirements for RPACA Infrastructure Investments** ..... 37

Figure 10: Gender Equality and Social Requirements for RPACA Infrastructure Investments ..... 39

**6. Risk Identification, Mitigation and Monitoring** ..... 39
**7. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Action Plan: Components 1 & 2** ..... 45
**Appendix 1: Pacific Country GESI-Climate Profiles** ..... 62
**Cook Islands** ..... 62
**Federated States of Micronesia** ..... 69
**Fiji Islands** ..... 76
**Kiribati** ..... 88
**Nauru** ..... 96
**Niue** ..... 102
**Palau** ..... 107
**Papua New Guinea** ..... 115
**Republic of the Marshall Islands** ..... 123
**Samoa** ..... 129
**Solomon Islands** ..... 135
**Tuvalu** ..... 141
**Tonga** ..... 148

**Acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| AEs | Accredited Entities |
| CRPD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) |
| DMF | Design and Monitoring Framework |
| DRM | Disaster Risk Management |
| FIPC | Free informed prior consent |
| FRDP | Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific |
| GAAP | Gender Assessment and Action Plan |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GBV | Gender-Based Violence |
| GGGI | Global Green Growth Institute |
| GESI | Gender Equality and Social Inclusion |
| GTCA | Gender-Transformative Climate Action |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| MFEDs | Ministries of Finance and Economic Development |
| NAP | National Adaptation Plan |
| NCDs | Non-Communicable Diseases |
| NDAs | National Designated Authorities |
| NDC | Nationally Determined Contribution |
| NEET | Not in Employment, Education, or Training |
| NSO | National Statistics Offices |
| PLGED | Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration |
| PFM | Public Financial Management |
| PICs | Pacific Island Countries |
| PIFS | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat |
| RPACA | Regional Programmatic Approach on Climate Action |
| SADEL | Sex, Age, Disability, Ethnicity and Location (disaggregated data) |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SEAH | Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment |
| SOGIESC | Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics |
| SPC | Pacific Community |
| SPREP | Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme |
| TVET | Technical, vocational education and training |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

# 1. Programme Background

## 1.1 Purpose, Vision and Program Structure

The Regional Programmatic Approach on Climate Action (RPACA) is a multi-country, multi-sector initiative designed to strengthen resilience across Pacific Island Countries (PICs). It responds to the region's urgent need for adaptation measures that are inclusive, evidence-based, and sustainable. The programme will be financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) serving as the Accredited Entity. The Pacific Community (SPC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) will implement Components 3 and 4 respectively. RPACA is designed to address the structural drivers of vulnerability across governance, infrastructure, public finance, and essential services, ensuring that adaptation investments are equitably targeted to populations most exposed and impacted by climate risks, as evidenced by sex, age, disability, and location disaggregated data and national vulnerability assessments.

Pacific ownership is central to RPACA. Pacific Leaders initiated the regional programmatic concept in 2023 and have since guided the design through the Program Working Group, co-chaired by the Governments of the Cook Islands and Palau, with coordinated inputs from National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and Accredited Entities (AEs). Successive regional and national consultations have shaped the programme, culminating in the regional design workshop held in March 2026, where gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) were formally adopted as core principles of RPACA. This reflects the region's recognition that climate impacts are inseparable from social inequality, and that adaptation must be grounded in Pacific-led priorities, cultural legitimacy, and inclusive governance. Regional women's and disability organisations attended the March 2026 Design Workshop and Consultation, and follow-up meetings were conducted in Suva, Fiji with a wide range of CSOs, as detailed in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 07, Appendices 1 and 5).

A total of 35 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) participated in the RPACA design consultations, spanning nine countries and a regional consultation in Suva, Fiji. The consultations engaged 35 representatives, of whom 23 were women, approximately two-thirds (66%). These representatives collectively represented 23 organizations, of which 13 of these agencies have a primary focus on women. At the time of report preparation, 16 of these 23 CSOs were led by women, underscoring strong female leadership across both national and regional levels.

The programme is aligned with the '2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent[1]', the 'Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific' (FRDP)[2] and guided by global commitments including the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is also grounded in regional gender equality and social inclusion frameworks, as outlined in Section 1.3, which set the standard for inclusive development in the Pacific, including the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration[3] (PLGED, revitalised in 2021), the Pacific

[1] 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). 2022. *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.* Suva: PIFS. Available at: https://www.forumsec.org/2050-strategy

[2] Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) 2017–2030 Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), UNDP, UNISDR, and University of the South Pacific (USP). 2016. *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2017–2030.* Suva: SPC.

[3] Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED, revitalised 2021/2023) Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). 2012 (revitalised 2021/2023). *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.* Suva: PIFS. Available at: https://www.forumsec.org/plged

Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights[4] (PPA, updated in 2015), and the Pacific Regional Disability Framework (2016–2025)[5], which is now being transitioned into the Pacific Disability Inclusive Humanitarian and Resilient Development Strategy (2022–2030)[6]. RPACA therefore operationalises regional and global mandates into a programmatic platform that delivers measurable resilience outcomes, demonstrated through reductions in vulnerability indicators, strengthened institutional capacity, and compliance with ADB and GCF gender and social inclusion requirements.

The RPACA vision aligns with the vision of Pacific leaders that "all Pacific peoples remain resilient to the impacts of climate change and disasters and are able to lead safe, secure and prosperous lives" (2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent). The programme goal is to ensure climate impacts and threats—including sea level rise, drought, coastal erosion, ecosystem degradation and flooding—are sustainably managed across the Pacific and that the vulnerability of key communities and sectors is significantly reduced.

RPACA is structured around four components:

- **Component 1:** Enhanced Public Financial Management (PFM) capacity to support inclusive access to climate finance (implemented by ADB)
- **Component 2:** Protecting Pacific Communities through Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (implemented by ADB)
- **Component 3:** Building Climate-Resilient Food, Water and Public Health Systems (implemented by SPC) – to be developed separately as a funding proposal by SPC
- **Component 4:** Strengthening Our Resilience: Addressing Pollution and Waste Management Challenges in the Pacific, and Knowledge Sharing, Communications and Coordination (implemented by SPREP) - to be developed separately as a funding proposal by SPREP.

Together, these components form an integrated climate resilience package that links national systems strengthening with community-level adaptation, ensuring that climate investments address both immediate risks and long-term structural vulnerabilities.

RPACA implementation is guided by an adaptive, programmatic approach. The final selection of most RPACA sub-project activities will occur after GCF approval, following a full ADB project cycle.

### 1.2 GAAP Scope and Framework

This Gender Assessment and Action Plan (GAAP) is guided by the ADB Policy on Gender and Development (1998), the ADB Social Protection Strategy (2001), and the GCF Gender Policy (2022). Together with regional climate and gender equality and social inclusion frameworks, these policies require that adaptation investments address unequal exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity across population groups, and that climate finance delivers equitable and measurable benefits.

[4] Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights (PPA, updated 2015; current 2018–2030) Pacific Community (SPC). 2015. *Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights (Revised 2005–2015).* Suva: SPC. Available at: https://www.spc.int/digitallibrary

[5] Pacific Regional Disability Framework (2016–2025) Pacific Community (SPC). 2016. *Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016–2025.* Noumea: SPC. Available at: https://www.spc.int/disabilityframework

[6] Pacific Disability Inclusive Humanitarian and Resilient Development Strategy (2022–2030) Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), and Pacific Community (SPC). 2022. *Pacific Disability Inclusive Humanitarian and Resilient Development Strategy 2022–2030.* Suva: PDF/SPC/PIFS. Available at: https://www.pacificdisability.org

Section 2 provides the analytical evidence base for the GAAP. It examines climate hazards, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and the differentiated impacts on women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly populations, and sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) communities. Section 2.3 expands this evidence base by analysing the climate-GESI policy landscape, including regional frameworks (FRDP, 2050 Strategy, PLGED, disability strategies), global mandates (Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, SDGs, human rights conventions), and national adaptation plans. Together, these analyses establish the structural drivers of vulnerability and the normative standards that the GAAP must operationalise.

Section 3 sets out the RPACA Gender equality and Inclusion Criteria (consulted and verified by Pacific Island and stakeholder representatives at the March 2026 Design Workshop), which function as programme-wide standards guiding design, implementation, and monitoring. Section 4 applies these criteria to Component 1 (climate finance), detailing the operational requirements, institutional reforms, and Minimum GESI Standards needed to ensure inclusive and equitable access to adaptation resources. Section 5 applies the criteria to Component 2 (resilient infrastructure), embedding universal design, SEAH safeguards, and sub-project GAAP requirements to ensure measurable inclusion outcomes. Section 6 identifies systemic gender equality, disability and social inclusion risks related to implementation of Components 1 and 2, and sets out mitigation measures structured around RPACA GESI principles, criteria, standards and requirements.

Section 7 presents the Gender Action Plan (GAP) for RPACA Component 1 (finance systems) and Component 2 (infrastructure and coastal resilience), applying RPACA's gender equality and social inclusion principles, criteria, standards, and requirements in detail. This GAP will be a foundation to prepare more nouned GAPs by SPC (Component 3) and SPREP (Component 4) as those workstreams are developed into Funding Proposals, ensuring alignment with the overall RPACA gender and inclusion principles, criteria and overall programme framework. The GAAP assesses gender considerations across the 14 participating Pacific countries under RPACA Components 1 (Climate Finance Systems) and 2 (resilient infrastructure and climate resilience).

The GAP is guided by a Gender Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) approach (see Section 1.3), recognising that systemic change is progressive rather than immediate. Foundational actions are required to institutionalise GESI mainstreaming, creating the enabling conditions for transformative action over time. To support this, the GAP is organised into three approximate horizons.

- Foundations (Years 1–3): embedding gender equality and intersectionality in governance, safeguards, and data systems, with early milestones such as adoption of gender-responsive budget tagging and inclusive pipeline screening.
- Institutionalisation (Years 4–6): consolidating inclusive finance and infrastructure practices, scaling women's empowerment and disability inclusion, with mechanisms such as SEAH-safe protocols and inclusive MSME finance facilities.
- Transformation (Years 7–10): delivering systemic change through legal reform, tenure access, and positioning women and excluded groups as leaders in resilience strategies, evidenced by shifts in decision-making power, equitable access to climate finance, and representation in national climate governance bodies.

Across all horizons, the GAP emphasises not only participation but also meaningful decision-making authority, voting rights, and leadership roles for women and excluded groups, supported by institutional resources to prevent tokenism and enable influence.

By structuring actions across these horizons, RPACA ensures gender equality, women's empowerment, and intersectionality are embedded throughout the programme cycle, aligned with regional frameworks such as the 2050 Strategy, FRDP, PLGED, PPA, and the Pacific Regional Disability Framework (transitioning to the Pacific Disability Inclusive Humanitarian and Resilient Development Strategy 2022–2030).

Note: Given that specific programme investments are not yet determined, this GAAP does not provide activity-by-activity GESI guidance. Instead, it establishes the guiding principles for all RPACA activities (Section 1.3), the RPACA Gender and Inclusion Criteria for Sub-Projects (Section 3.1), and the Minimum GESI Standards for Component 1 (Section 4) and Component 2 (Section 5). Specific indicators and outcomes will be defined during sub-project preparation and appraisal, in alignment with the Programme Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF). All Component 2 investments will follow a full ADB project cycle, with sub-project-specific GAAPs prepared and implemented for each investment. The GAAP applies a Gender Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) approach (Section 1.3), which will guide all RPACA Components.

This GAAP also includes Appendix 1 which provides a summary of the GESI-Climate context in each Pacific Island Country engaged with RPACA. Country Summaries are structured as follows:

- Section 1: Country context — demographic, economic, and climate vulnerability overview.
- Section 2: GESI analysis — labour force participation, political representation, GBV/SEAH prevalence, financial inclusion, disability, youth, education, and social protection and the regional climate-GESI enabling environment including key policies, strategies, institutional arrangements, and constraints to implementation. National level enabling environments are detailed in Appendix 1: Pacific Country GESI-Climate Profiles.
- Section 3: outlines program wide gender equality and inclusion standards and criterion for RPACA sub-projects
- Section 4: Key gaps and challenges — evidence-based identification of systemic barriers and risks.
- Section 5: Potential GESI support actions — drawn directly from national frameworks, authoritative reports, and recent assessments. These actions highlight areas where RPACA could contribute, without implying comprehensiveness or prescribing national priorities. They are anchored in existing strategies (e.g., NAPs, NDCs, Gender and Disability Policies, Climate Finance Roadmaps) and framed to align with RPACA's GESI principles, criteria, standards, and requirements.

**Box 1: GESI-Transformative Climate Action**

GTCA is the core approach that will be applied across all RPACA components. It moves beyond participation to structural change, ensuring that climate adaptation measures actively challenge and transform the social norms, power relations, and institutional barriers that drive vulnerability.

Key features of GTCA include:

- Embedding GESI as a core design principle rather than an add-on.
- Addressing intersectional and compounding vulnerabilities across gender, age, disability, and socio-economic status.
- Shifting from protection to empowerment, positioning vulnerable groups as leaders in resilience strategies.
- Aligning with regional commitments and global frameworks to ensure legitimacy, accountability, and measurable impact.

Based on the preliminary gender analysis and the scope of Components 1 and 2, the programme is expected to meet the criteria for Effective Gender Mainstreaming (EGM) under Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects, 2025. The final categorization will be confirmed once DMF indicators are agreed and the GAP is finalised. The EGM categorisation reflects the programme's commitment to measurable gender equality outcomes across institutional strengthening, infrastructure design, public finance reforms, and community-level resilience, consistent with regional climate and GESI frameworks, ADB policy, and GCF gender requirements.

### 1.3 GAAP Methodology, Approach and Guiding Principles

The RPACA GAAP applies a Gender-Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) approach across all RPACA components. This approach is grounded in human rights and intersectionality, ensuring that adaptation measures do not simply protect vulnerable groups but actively transform the social norms, power relations, and institutional barriers that drive exclusion. GTCA recognises that climate impacts are shaped by unequal access to resources, services, decision-making, and safety, and therefore requires interventions that shift underlying systems rather than only addressing symptoms.

Guided by the principle of *leave no one behind*, the GAAP positions gender equality, disability, and social inclusion as central to climate resilience. It recognises that vulnerabilities intersect across gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, rural/urban divide, household structure, and geography and therefore demands systemic responses that embed equity into governance, infrastructure, finance and cooperation. This means ensuring that adaptation investments are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the lived realities of groups facing overlapping disadvantages, particularly in rural and outer-island contexts.

Historically, gender equality and social inclusion were treated as "add-ons" in climate adaptation policies and projects, which limited impact and reinforced vulnerability. RPACA represents a paradigm shift by embedding GESI at the core of programme-wide design. This shift goes beyond token participation, working to ensure women, youth, persons with disabilities, and groups facing intersectional or compounding vulnerabilities are not only protected but increasingly empowered in adaptation and resilience strategies.

The Gender Equality Assessment underpinning the GAAP was developed through a structured, multi-layered methodology combining policy alignment, evidence-based analysis, and stakeholder validation. It draws on key frameworks including the ADB Policy on Gender and Development (1998, Social Protection Strategy (2001), and GCF Gender Policy (2022), alongside regional (e.g., FRDP, 2050 Strategy, Pacific Platform for Action) and global commitments (Paris Agreement, SDGs, Sendai Framework), ensuring strong normative alignment. To avoid the fatigue of multiple consultations happening in the Pacific, the analytical approach integrated desk reviews of national and regional assessments, GCF projects in the Pacific, ADB country gender assessments[7], and project-level poverty, social, and gender analyses to examine differentiated climate risks and vulnerabilities across population groups, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, and SOGIESC communities. Development of the GAAP also included a targeted assessment of how Pacific Island Countries operationalize these commitments in national systems, drawing on ADB's February 2026 review of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Disaster Risk Management (DRM) strategies, and related climate policies to assess the extent to which gender equality, disability inclusion, and broader

[7] The information contained in ADB's Country Gender Assessments (CGAs) as well as specific project documents have been developed from government sources, key informant interviews, CSOs, and community consultations with vulnerable groups.

social inclusion are embedded in national priorities, governance arrangements, and monitoring frameworks.

It is also important to note that, in many Pacific countries, stakeholders represented multiple roles during consultations. For example, representatives from government agencies, civil society organisations, national women's machineries, community organisations, and regional bodies often participated in multiple capacities. Accordingly, while not all organisations are explicitly identified solely as “women's organisations” in the main consultation tables, the detailed appendices in Annex 7 identify the specific gender and women's organisations consulted under each country and regional consultation. This approach reflects the integrated nature of stakeholder engagement in Pacific SIDS while ensuring that women-led organisations and organisations representing women's perspectives were meaningfully consulted throughout the development of RPACA.

The above evidence base informed the development of RPACA’s Gender Equality and Inclusion Criteria, which were consulted on and verified by Pacific Island government and civil society stakeholder representatives during the March 2026 Design Workshop and Consultation, inclusive of women stakeholders, ensuring the framework reflects regional priorities, lived realities, and country contexts. The GAAP adopts a Gender Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) approach, structuring actions across phased implementation horizons (foundation, institutionalisation, transformation) to progressively embed GESI principles into climate finance systems and resilient infrastructure investments. Given the programmatic nature of RPACA, the methodology establishes overarching principles, criteria, and minimum standards, with detailed, context-specific GAAPs to be developed at sub-project level in alignment with ADB safeguards processes and the programme’s monitoring framework.

RPACA recognises that resilience requires long-term coordinated approach that cannot be achieved through isolated, project-specific interventions. By embedding GESI across governance, infrastructure sector, coastal ecosystems, finance and cooperation, RPACA advances a shift from protection toward transformation, positioning women and vulnerable groups as leaders in adaptation strategies while acknowledging that full transformation remains an ongoing process. This approach aligns with regional commitments under the FRDP, the 2050 Strategy, Pacific Platform for Action and Women’s Human Rights (2018 – 2030) and the Pacific Regional Disability Framework, and global mandates such as the Belém Gender Action Plan (2025), the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Together, these frameworks establish a unified standard for climate action that is inclusive, rights-based, and grounded in equitable access to decision-making, finance, and services.

Development of the GAAP also included a targeted assessment of how Pacific Island Countries operationalize these commitments in national systems, drawing on ADB’s February 2026 review of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Disaster Risk Management (DRM) strategies, and related climate policies to assess the extent to which gender equality, disability inclusion, and broader social inclusion are embedded in national priorities, governance arrangements, and monitoring frameworks.

For the purposes of this analysis, “readiness” refers to the extent to which Pacific Island Countries have embedded gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GESI) into their national climate and resilience frameworks. The score was calculated using the following six features:

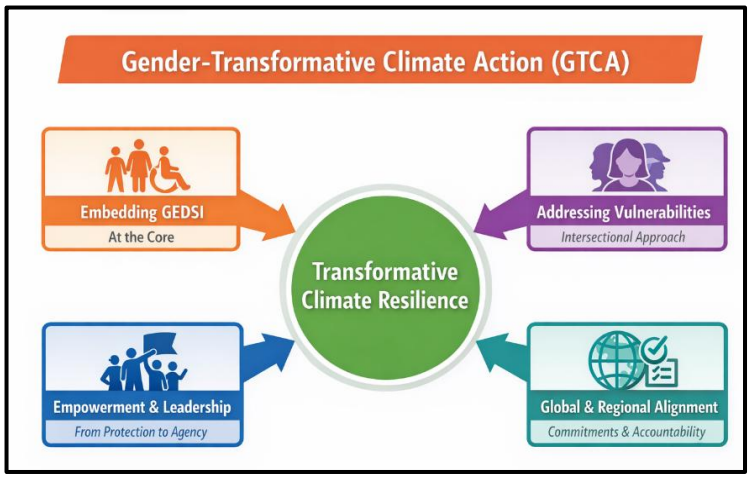
- Presence of a dedicated GESI pillar in NAPs/NDCs.
- Inclusion of quantified GESI targets.
- Explicit references to disability inclusion.
- Budget tagging or costed GESI actions.

- Mechanisms for participation and representation in governance structures.
- Commitment to sex-, age-, disability, and location-disaggregated data in monitoring frameworks, ensuring differentiated vulnerability and resilience are tracked over time.

Each country was scored against these features, with results normalised to a 10-point scale. This readiness scoring framework underpins the analysis presented in Section 2.3.3, providing evidence base for interpreting national GESI integration results.

The above evidence base informed the development of RPACA's Gender and Inclusion Criteria, which were consulted on and verified by Pacific Island government and civil society stakeholder representatives during the March 2026 Design Workshop and Consultation, inclusive of women stakeholders, ensuring the framework reflects regional priorities, lived realities, and country contexts. The GAAP adopts a Gender Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) approach, structuring actions across phased implementation horizons (foundation, institutionalisation, transformation) to progressively embed GESI principles into climate finance systems and resilient infrastructure investments. Given the programmatic nature of RPACA, the methodology establishes overarching principles, criteria, and minimum standards, with detailed, context-specific GAAPs to be developed at sub-project level in alignment with ADB safeguards processes and the programme's monitoring framework.

Figure 1: GTCA and Transformative Climate Resilience




## RPACA Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Principles

1. **Paradigm Shift:** Gender equality and social inclusion embedded as a central design principle across all programme components and activities; resilience outcomes driven by equity, not limited to compliance checkboxes. Adaptation investments must address structural inequalities and ensure benefits reach those most exposed to climate risks.
2. **Inclusive Governance**: Governance structures institutionalize women, youth, and vulnerable group influence in leadership and decision-making. Representation must be resourced, accessible, and embedded in PMUs, steering committees, and national adaptation processes.
3. **Recognition & Agency**: Women, youth, and marginalized groups positioned as drivers of change, not passive beneficiaries. Their knowledge, leadership, and lived experience inform programme design, delivery, and monitoring.

4. **Capacity Development:** Institutional systems and enabling environments strengthened to integrate inclusion into resilience planning and delivery. This includes training, policy reform, and accountability mechanisms that sustain inclusive practice beyond the programme cycle.
5. **Safety & Protection:** GBV/SEAH safeguards and accountability mechanisms embedded to ensure safe participation. Protection systems must function across shelters, relocation sites, community engagement, and grievance redress.
6. **Infrastructure Accessibility**: Gender-responsive and universal design standards applied across climate-resilient infrastructure. Infrastructure must be safe, accessible, and usable for persons with disabilities, elderly persons, women, and children.
7. **Monitoring & Evaluation**: Sex-, age-, disability- and location-disaggregated data and intersectional performance indicators embedded into results frameworks; participatory monitoring captures lived realities, not just numbers.
8. **Financing & Accountability**: Dedicated gender and inclusion budgets with transparent reporting. Climate finance mechanisms must remove access barriers for marginalised groups and ensure equitable distribution of benefits.
9. **Transformative**: Move beyond incremental inclusion to systemic change so equity becomes a foundation of resilience. This requires shifting norms, strengthening rights-based approaches, and addressing discriminatory laws, policies and practices.
10. **Partnership & Voice**: Civil society, community organisations, and PID/SOGIESC groups engaged as equal partners in design, delivery, and oversight to ensure legitimacy and regional ownership. Pacific-led organisations must be resourced to participate meaningfully and sustainably.

The application of these principles across all RPACA components creates opportunities for systemic change in how adaptation is governed, financed, and delivered. RPACA's role is not only to build on existing momentum but to catalyse transformative change, shifting inclusion from acknowledgement to systemic embedding. These shifts align with international best practice and ensure that RPACA's approach is globally recognised and regionally grounded. Further detail on how these transformative shifts are operationalised across Components 1–4 is provided in Section 3.4.

# 2. Regional and Country Analyses

## 2.1 Climate and Social Context

Pacific Island Countries are among the most climate-vulnerable in the world. Rising sea levels, ocean warming, and more frequent extreme weather events are already displacing communities, damaging infrastructure and constraining economic growth. Climate migrants, including families forced to relocate due to sea-level rise and coastal erosion, experience heightened risks of exclusion and exploitation, alongside loss of livelihoods and social disruption. These impacts are intensified by limited land availability, high dependence on coastal zones, and the cultural significance of ancestral land, which complicates relocation and recovery.

These impacts are not socially or economically neutral, with women and girls, persons with disabilities, people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, elderly populations, poor and female-headed households, and communities in remote or under-serviced areas

facing intersecting vulnerabilities and compounded risks. Socio-economic constraints such as geographic isolation, dependence on climate-sensitive sectors, and limited fiscal capacity to finance adaptation further magnify these risks. Urban informal settlements and outer-island communities face particularly acute exposure due to inadequate infrastructure, limited-service coverage, and constrained access to early warning systems.

### *Climate Risks*

Pacific Island Countries face a range of interconnected climate hazards that are already undermining resilience and development, thereby increasing socio-economic vulnerability. Key risks include:

- **Sea level rise**: Projections indicate that average sea levels across the Pacific will continue to rise throughout the 21st century. In Fiji, annual losses equivalent to 1.8% of GDP are projected from inundation and coastal erosion if adaptation measures are not scaled up.[8] Low-lying atolls face existential risks, with some communities already experiencing chronic flooding and saltwater intrusion.
- **Ocean warming and acidification**: The Southwest Pacific recorded its highest sea surface temperatures in 2024, with marine heatwaves affecting over 40 million km² of ocean area.[9] These changes threaten fisheries, coral reefs, and coastal livelihoods, with cascading impacts on food security and tourism.
- **Extreme weather events**: PICs are experiencing more intense cyclones, droughts, flooding, and saline intrusion. Tropical Cyclone Harold (2020) and Cyclone Yasa (2020) caused damages equivalent to 30–40% of national GDP in Vanuatu and Fiji respectively.[10] Climate models project increasing cyclone intensity, compounding risks for communities with limited adaptive capacity and ageing or poorly maintained infrastructure.

### *Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities*

These climate hazards compound existing socio-economic vulnerabilities, which heighten the exposure of communities and constrain adaptive capacity. Major vulnerabilities include:

- **Coastal exposure:** More than half of Pacific populations live within 1.5 km of the coast, making communities highly vulnerable to inundation and storm surges.[11] Critical infrastructure—including schools, health facilities, and transport networks—is also concentrated in coastal zones, amplifying systemic risk.
- **Economic dependence**: Agriculture, fisheries, and tourism — all climate-sensitive sectors — account for a large share of GDP and employment. Climate shocks disrupt supply chains, reduce income stability, and increase household vulnerability, particularly for informal workers and subsistence producers.
- **Population displacement**: Rising seas and coastal erosion are already forcing relocation of villages in Fiji, Tuvalu, and Kiribati, with loss of ancestral

[8] Government of Fiji and World Bank. 2017. *Climate Vulnerability Assessment: Making Fiji Climate Resilient*. Suva/Washington DC: Government of Fiji & World Bank.
[9]. *Pacific Data Hub* climate datasets
[10]. ADB. 2020. *Tropical Cyclone Harold: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment*. Manila: ADB; ADB. 2021. *Tropical Cyclone Yasa: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment*. Manila: ADB.
[11]. SPC. 2023. *Pacific Data Hub: Coastal Exposure Indicators*. Noumea: SPC.

land and cultural heritage.[12] [9] Displacement disrupts social cohesion, traditional governance structures, and access to services.

- **Food and water insecurity**: Saline intrusion into groundwater and declining fish stocks threaten nutrition and health security. Droughts and changing rainfall patterns further reduce agricultural productivity and safe drinking water availability.
- **Health impacts**: Climate change increases risks of vector-borne diseases, heat stress, and mental health burdens associated with displacement. Health systems in many PICs face capacity constraints, limiting their ability to respond to climate-related health shocks.
- **Socioeconomic vulnerabilities** such as geographic isolation, dependence on climate-sensitive sectors, tenure insecurity, and limited access to credit or finance further magnify these risks. These constraints disproportionately affect women, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and remote communities, reducing their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate impacts.

***Implications for Adaptation***

Together, these risks and vulnerabilities carry significant implications for adaptation planning and investment. Critical considerations are:

- **High economic cost:** Climate impacts could reduce GDP growth across PICs, with adaptation costs estimated at 2–3% of GDP annually in some countries.[13] Without scaled-up investment, climate impacts may outpace national capacity to respond, deepening long-term development losses.
- **Limited fiscal space**: Many PICs face debt constraints, limiting their ability to finance large-scale adaptation without external support. Strengthening public financial management (PFM) systems is therefore essential to mobilise, absorb, and track climate finance effectively.
- **Community resilience**: Traditional knowledge and community-based adaptation practices remain critical but require integration with modern climate science and infrastructure investment. Locally led adaptation must be resourced and supported through inclusive governance, accessible finance, and culturally grounded approaches.

## 2.2 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Dimensions of Vulnerability

Climate impacts affect different groups of people differently. In the Pacific, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, socio-economic status, cultural norms, traditional roles, workloads, land tenure, access to services, planning processes, and finance all determine who is most exposed to climate hazards, who can adapt, who recovers fastest, and who is left behind. These factors interact to shape unequal exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity across population groups, reinforcing the need for intersectional analysis.

The following dimensions show how these factors create disproportionate risks and barriers to resilience for different groups in PICs, Together, they demonstrate that climate change

[12]. International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2024. *Climate Migration in the Pacific: Risks of Exclusion and Exploitation.* Geneva: IOM.
[13]. ADB. 2023. *Pacific Economic Monitor: Mid-Year Update – Climate Change and Fiscal Space*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.

amplifies pre-existing inequalities and requires targeted, group-specific and system-wide responses.

***Risks to and Impact on Women and Girls***

- **Women's livelihoods** are concentrated in informal and subsistence sectors, leaving them highly exposed to climate shocks and with limited access to formal finance and recovery mechanisms. Climate-related disruptions to markets, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism disproportionately affect women's income security, with limited access to insurance, collateral, and adaptive technologies constraining recovery.[14][10]

- **Female labour force participation** in PICs ranges from around 25–40%, with women earning on average 20–30% less than men. Gendered labour segmentation and unpaid care burdens reduce women's ability to diversify livelihoods or participate in climate-resilient economic opportunities.[15]

- **Gender-based violence** (GBV) and sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) increase during displacement and post-disaster contexts, with heightened prevalence in temporary shelters and relocation sites. Overcrowding, weakened protection systems, and limited access to survivor-centered services elevate risks for women and girls, particularly those with disabilities or limited mobility.[16]

- **Women remain under-represented in governance**, holding less than 20–25% of parliamentary seats and fewer than 15% of leadership roles in disaster management committees. This limits the integration of gender-specific priorities into preparedness, relocation, and adaptation planning, and reduces women's influence over resource allocation.[17]

- **Women in female-headed households** face insecure land tenure, limited relocation finance, and restricted access to credit. These constraints reduce adaptive capacity and increase exposure to climate-related displacement, food insecurity, and housing instability.

- **Girls face heightened risks of school dropout** during climate shocks, as caregiving workloads and household economic pressures often force them out of education. Damage to school infrastructure, unsafe WASH facilities, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products further disrupt attendance and learning continuity[18].

- **Climate-related displacement and economic stress** can increase child marriage rates, undermining girls' long-term resilience and opportunities. Loss of livelihoods, protection breakdowns, and heightened household stress during disasters increase the likelihood of negative coping strategies that disproportionately affect adolescent girls.[19][11]

---

[14]. ADB. *2018. Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pacific Region. Manila: Asian Development Bank.*

[15] World Bank. 2025. *Pacific Economic Update: Boosting Women's Employment Could Lift Pacific Growth.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

[16] UNICEF. 2024. *Climate Crisis and Gender-Based Violence: Intersecting Risks, Integrated Solutions*. New York: UNICEF**.**

[17] Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). 2024. Women's Political Representation in Pacific Parliaments and Disaster Governance. London: CPA Secretariat.

[18] Plan International & Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN). 2024. Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate. Melbourne: Plan International Australia.

[19] Plan International. 2024. Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate. Melbourne: Plan International Australia.

[20] FAO. 2022. *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the Pacific Islands*. Rome: FAO; UNICEF Pacific. 2022. *Nutrition in Emergencies: Pacific Regional Update*. Suva: UNICEF Pacific.

[21] Save the Children. 2024. Pacific Regional Child Protection Situational Analysis. Wellington: Save the Children New Zealand.

[22] UNICEF & SPC. 2021. *Climate Change and Children in the Pacific Islands*. Noumea: Pacific Community.

***Risks to and Impact on Children***

- **Displacement disrupts education**, with school closures and damaged infrastructure leading to prolonged learning gaps. Children in rural and outer-island communities face the longest interruptions due to limited alternative learning modalities, damaged transport links, and slow restoration of essential services. In some PICs, up to 30% of children experience interrupted schooling following major disasters. Loss of learning materials, overcrowded temporary classrooms, and reduced teacher availability further undermine continuity and learning outcomes.
- **Food insecurity and malnutrition** disproportionately affect children, undermining health and long-term development outcomes. Climate-related crop losses, rising food prices, and reliance on imported foods heighten risks of stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, and weakened immunity.[20]
- **Children are more vulnerable to trauma and mental health impacts** associated with disaster displacement and loss of safe spaces, with limited psychosocial services and child-focused protection mechanisms available in many PICs. Exposure to repeated shocks, family stress, and unsafe shelter conditions increases risks of anxiety, distress, and long-term psychosocial harm.[21]
- **Climate shocks increase workloads for children** in subsistence households, reducing time for education and play. Girls are particularly affected due to gendered caregiving roles, while boys may face increased labour demands in agriculture and fisheries.[22]
- **Children's voices are rarely included in planning and governance processes**, limiting their role in shaping resilience and recovery. This exclusion reduces the relevance of adaptation measures for child-specific needs, including safe schools, WASH access, and protection systems during displacement[23].

***Risks to and Impact on Persons with disabilities***

- **PWD face exclusion from evacuation and shelter facilities**, with documented cases of inaccessible infrastructure, denial of entry, and lack of disability-inclusive design. Limited mobility, inaccessible transport, and the absence of multi-format early warning systems further restrict evacuation capacity, particularly for those who are homebound or reliant on assistive devices.[24]
- **An estimated 15–20% of Pacific populations live with disabilities**, yet fewer than 10% are represented in formal adaptation planning processes. This exclusion results in adaptation measures that do not reflect disability-specific risks, including the need for accessible shelters, inclusive WASH facilities, and continuity of care during climate shocks.[25]
- **Health risks are compounded by limited access to medical services, assistive devices, and social protection during climate emergencies**, with exclusion from adaptation planning and finance reinforcing invisibility. Breakdowns in health and support systems after disasters disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, who may lose access to medication, rehabilitation, caregivers, and essential assistive technologies.[26]
- **Persons with disabilities face heightened risks of GBV and SEAH in displacement settings,** with limited access to survivor-centered protection service. Women, girls, and persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities are at

[23] UNICEF. 2023. Children Displaced in a Changing Climate. New York: UNICEF.

particular risk due to dependence on caregivers, overcrowded shelters, and the absence of accessible reporting and referral pathways[2612].

- **Barriers to participation in governance processes mean disability perspectives are rarely integrated into resilience and recovery planning**. Inaccessible consultation processes, communication barriers, and limited representation of DPOs reduce the visibility of disability-specific needs, undermining inclusive relocation, preparedness, and recovery strategies.

***Risks to and Impact on Elderly persons***

- **Reduced mobility and health challenges increase vulnerability during evacuation and relocation, with chronic medical conditions compounding risks and limited data on elderly populations constraining targeted adaptation measures**. High rates of frailty, cognitive impairment, and NCDs among older persons in Tonga further reduce coping capacity, and disasters frequently disrupt access to medication, treatment, and essential services, increasing mortality and morbidity.[28]
- **Elderly persons often face compounded risks due to limited access to services and social protection,** including disruption of treatment for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) during climate emergencies. Older women and men also face heightened risks of neglect, GBV, and SEAH in displacement settings, with limited access to survivor-centered protection services. Social isolation, weakened traditional support systems, and poor-quality housing—particularly in urban informal areas and outer islands—intensify exposure to climate hazards, with homebound elders and those with low social support facing the greatest risks.[29]
- **Barriers to participation in governance and planning processes mean elderly perspectives are rarely integrated into resilience and recovery strategies**.
- **Exclusion from early warning systems, preparedness activities, and adaptation planning** limits the relevance of resilience measures, while the erosion of traditional knowledge held by elders reduces opportunities to integrate Indigenous coping practices into community-level adaptation.

***Risks to and Impact on People of Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression, and Sex Characteristics***

People of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) have longstanding cultural identities across the Pacific, such as fa'afafine and *fa'afatama* in Samoa, *leiti* in Tonga, and *vakasalewalewa* in Fiji. Despite this recognition, SOGIESC communities continue to face exclusion driven by laws, policies, stigma, and discriminatory attitudes. In several PICs, laws criminalising same-sex intimacy remain in place, reinforcing stigma even when not enforced. Social biases and negative attitudes further limit access to services, justice, and safe spaces. These barriers also restrict access to climate-relevant services such as shelters, WASH facilities, and health care, particularly in rural and outer-island settings. Limited legal protections and persistent social stigma further constrain participation in adaptation planning and access to recovery support.

---

[24]. Pacific Disability Forum (PDF). 2024. *Climate Change, Disability, and Inclusive Humanitarian Action in the Pacific*. Suva: PDF.
[25]. Ibid.
[28] WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. 2023. Climate Change and Health in the Western Pacific Region. Manila: WHO WPRO.
[29] Ibid.
.

The Pacific Women Lead Guidance Note "*Strengthening SOGIESC Inclusion in the Pacific: Many Petals, One Whole Bloom"* (2026)[29][13] emphasises that transformative and inclusive outcomes require intentionally including SOGIESC in program design and governance. While Pacific-led SOGIESC organisations are active in advocacy and service delivery, their leadership is not embedded in climate governance structures (PMUs, steering committees, national adaptation planning) to ensure agency and voice.

Key dimensions of vulnerability include:

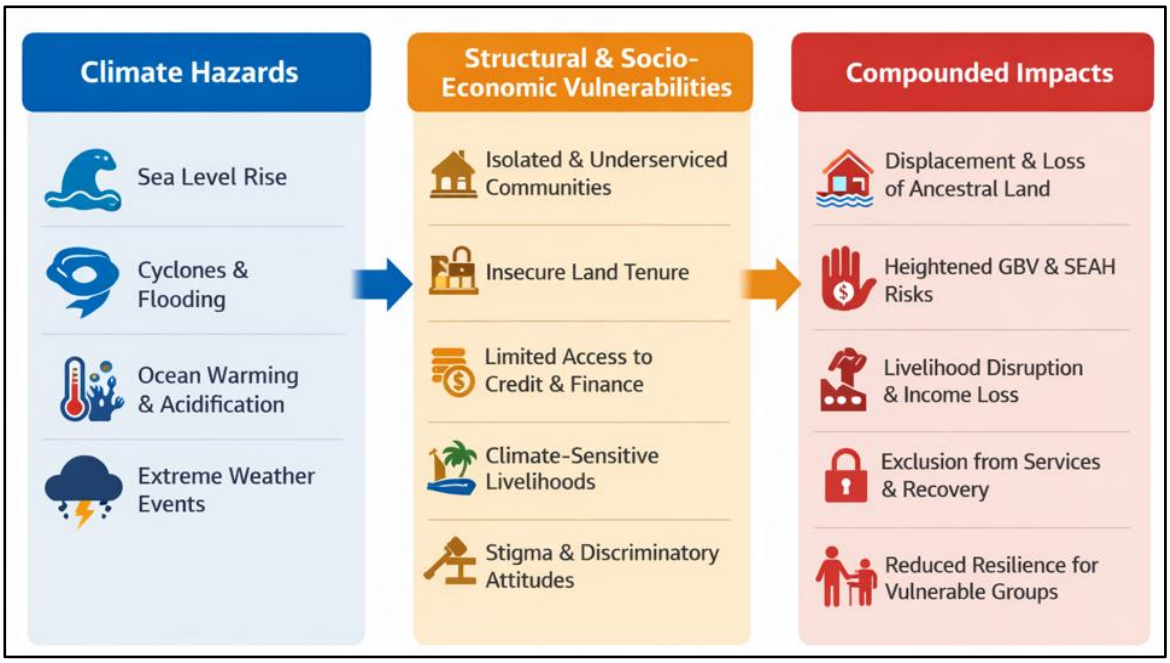
- **Climate change and disaster displacement magnify risks**, with SOGIESC individuals often encountering unsafe or discriminatory conditions in evacuation centres and relocation sites, including heightened risks of GBV, SEAH, harassment, and denial of services.
- **Stigma and discriminatory attitudes** limit access to finance, land, and livelihood recovery mechanisms, constraining adaptation and recovery. SOGIESC persons are over-represented in informal and precarious work, making them highly vulnerable to climate-related livelihood disruptions.
- **Disruption of HIV treatment and sexual health services during disasters** further compounds risks for SOGIESC individuals, with limited access to inclusive health services. Stigma within health systems, lack of trained providers, and supply chain disruptions during climate shocks heighten risks of treatment interruption and reduced access to psychosocial support.

***Intersectionality***

Intersectionality means that vulnerabilities do not exist in isolation. Gender, age, disability, SOGIESC, household structure (e.g., female-headed households), land tenure, and geographic isolation intersect to magnify exclusion. For example, women with disabilities in female-headed households face multiple barriers to relocation, finance, and protection. Increased migration from many PICs due to climate impacts and participation in labour mobility schemes has further expanded the number of female-headed households, intensifying economic stress and caregiving burdens. Recognising these overlaps is essential to designing adaptation strategies that respond to lived realities rather than abstract categories. Intersectional analysis also highlights how climate impacts compound pre-existing inequalities, producing differentiated exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity across groups and requiring tailored, context-specific adaptation measures.

[29] Pacific Women Lead. 2026. Strengthening SOGIESC Inclusion in the Pacific: Many Petals, One Whole Bloom. Suva: Pacific Community (SPC).

Figure 2: Climate Hazards and Intersectional Vulnerabilities in the Pacific




This figure shows how climate hazards interact with structural and socio-economic vulnerabilities to produce compounded outcomes. Rising seas, cyclones, and ocean warming magnify risks for groups of people already facing isolation, insecure land tenure, limited finance, and stigma. The compounded outcomes include displacement, livelihood disruption, heightened risks of GBV and SEAH, exclusion from services and governance, disruption of education and childhood wellbeing, increased health and nutrition risks, stigma and discrimination, and overall reduced resilience. These pathways highlight how climate change and disasters intensify social inequalities and reinforce the need for cross-cutting GESI integration in adaptation strategies. They also demonstrate that climate impacts follow existing fault lines of inequality, disproportionately affecting groups with the least access to resources, services, and decision-making.

These intersecting pathways show that climate change does not create new inequalities but intensifies existing ones, reinforcing the need for cross-cutting GESI integration, inclusive governance, and targeted support for groups facing overlapping forms of marginalisation. Embedding intersectionality in adaptation planning ensures that interventions address the structural drivers of vulnerability—rather than treating groups as homogenous categories and supports transformational rather than incremental resilience outcomes.

### *Cross-cutting Implications*

The compounded outcomes of climate change and disasters — displacement, disrupted livelihoods, heightened GBV/SEAH risks, exclusion from services and governance, disruption of education and childhood wellbeing, health and nutrition impacts, and reduced resilience — demonstrate that adaptation cannot succeed without systemic change. Climate strategies must therefore embed gender equality, disability, and social inclusion as core foundations. Intersectional vulnerabilities across women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly populations, and SOGIESC require integrated responses that cut across governance, infrastructure, finance, and service delivery. This requires shifting from sector-by-sector interventions to whole-of-system approaches that address structural inequalities and ensure equitable access to climate-resilient development.

Key cross-cutting implications include:

- **Governance and Leadership***:* Decision-making structures must institutionalise diverse representation, ensuring women, youth, persons with disabilities, elderly populations, and SOGIESC have agency and voice in adaptation planning and oversight. This includes resourcing participation, removing accessibility barriers, and embedding representative organisations (e.g., DPOs, women's groups, SOGIESC networks) in PMUs, steering committees, and national adaptation processes.
- **Protection and Safeguards:** Survivor-centered GBV/SEAH referral pathways must explicitly include all vulnerable groups, with universal design standards applied to shelters and relocation sites to guarantee privacy, dignity, and safety. Protection systems must also address risks in temporary shelters, evacuation centers, and relocation sites, where overcrowding, discriminatory rules, and lack of privacy heighten exposure to violence and exploitation.
- **Inclusive Access***:* Finance, services, relocation support, and secure land tenure must be equitably accessible, recognising that female-headed households, those without credit, and geographically isolated communities are disproportionately disadvantaged. Adaptation finance mechanisms must remove collateral requirements, expand social protection coverage, and ensure accessible service delivery for persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and remote communities.
- **Migration and Household Structures:** Increased migration due to climate impacts and labour mobility schemes has expanded the number of single-headed households, intensifying economic stress and caregiving burdens. Adaptation strategies must account for these shifting household dynamics. This includes recognising the gendered impacts of remittances, care deficits, and the heightened vulnerability of households with absent working-age adults.
- **Data and Evidence**: Intersectional data systems must capture overlapping vulnerabilities (gender, age, disability, household structure, land tenure, geographic isolation) to inform monitoring, evaluation, and learning frameworks. This requires investment in sex-, age-, disability- and location-disaggregated data, inclusive census tools, and community-based monitoring systems that reflect lived realities.
- **Social Norms and Legal Barriers:** Addressing stigma, biases, and discriminatory laws is essential to dismantle structural exclusion and ensure equitable access to services and justice. Norms that restrict women's mobility, exclude SOGIESC persons, or devalue persons with disabilities undermine adaptation outcomes and must be addressed through policy reform, community engagement, and rights-based programming.
- **Community Prioritisation:** Under-served and geographically isolated communities must be prioritized in adaptation planning, ensuring equitable access to health, education, and emergency services. Outer-island and rural communities face compounded risks due to limited infrastructure, transport, and service coverage, requiring targeted investment and decentralized delivery models.
- **Partnerships and Cultural Legitimacy:** Pacific-led civil society organisations must be engaged as equal partners in design, delivery, and oversight to ensure legitimacy, ownership, and sustainability of adaptation measures. This includes recognising Indigenous knowledge systems, traditional governance structures, and culturally grounded resilience practices as core components of adaptation.

These cross-cutting implications highlight the areas where systemic change is required to make adaptation effective and equitable. The next section explores how institutional and policy frameworks including regional commitments such as the FRDP and 2050 Strategy, and global mandates such as the Belém Gender Action Plan and ADB/GCF policies

establish the mandates and pathways needed to integrate gender equality, women's empowerment, disability and social inclusion across adaptation practice.

## 2.3 Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Climate Policy Landscape

### 2.3.1 Regional Climate and GESI Frameworks

The RPACA GAAP is anchored in a dense regional policy environment that establishes both the mandate and the accountability standards for inclusive climate action. Pacific Leaders have repeatedly affirmed that resilience cannot be achieved without equity, and the following policy frameworks provide the political legitimacy, strategic direction, and measurable indicators that RPACA must embed. Together, they set the expectation that gender equality, disability inclusion, and social safeguards are core foundations of climate and disaster risk management. They also provide the regional coherence required for a multi-country programme such as RPACA.

*Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP, 2017–2030)*

The FRDP sets the regional standard for integrated climate change and disaster risk management. It explicitly calls for *"mainstreaming gender and social inclusion across climate change and disaster risk management policies, plans and programmes"*. For RPACA, this means:

- Embedding sex, age disaggregated and disability-inclusive data systems into monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- Ensuring inclusive participation in governance structures, with women, youth, persons with disabilities, and SOGIESC represented in national adaptation planning and programme steering committees.
- Prioritising capacity development for institutions to integrate GESI safeguards into resilience planning and delivery.
- Applying FRDP indicators such as women's representation in DRM committees, disability-inclusive evacuation planning, and integration of social safeguards into infrastructure projects.

*2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2022)*

The 2050 Strategy provides the long-term vision for Pacific resilience, stating that *"the health and well-being of our people, and human rights and equity for all, are central to securing the future of the Blue Pacific Continent."* For RPACA, this translates into:

- Linking climate resilience to Pacific identity and solidarity, ensuring adaptation measures reflect cultural legitimacy and community agency.
- Committing to inclusive growth and equitable access to services, with adaptation investments prioritising underserved and geographically isolated communities.
- Embedding youth and intergenerational equity into resilience planning, recognising that the 2050 horizon demands strategies that safeguard future generations.
- Using the Strategy's emphasis on regional solidarity to justify cross-country learning platforms and inclusive leadership pipelines under RPACA Components 3 and 4.

*Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED, 2012; revitalised 2021)*

The highest-level political commitment by Pacific Leaders to advance gender equality in the region. It recognizes that climate change and disasters disproportionately affect women and

girls in all their diversity, especially those with disabilities and those in rural, remote, and maritime areas, and affirms that achieving resilience and the 1.5°C goal requires their full participation. RPACA aligns its GESI integration with PLGED to ensure regional legitimacy and coherence, which means:

- Women's leadership: Measurable targets for representation in governance, adaptation planning, and local DRM structures.
- Protection: Strengthened GBV/SEAH referral pathways, with survivor-centered mechanisms embedded in shelters, relocation sites, and infrastructure.
- Economic empowerment: Expanded access to finance, land, and climate-smart livelihoods, aligned with Component 3 on inclusive finance.
- Monitoring: Alignment with PLGED indicators, including women's participation rates, GBV prevalence reduction, and gender-responsive budgeting.

*Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030*

The Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights set the regional mandate for integrating gender equality across all sectors, including climate change, by requiring governments to mainstream gender in policies, planning, and budgeting processes.

- Establishes clear accountability through national reporting and monitoring frameworks ensuring countries track progress on gender outcomes.
- The platform explicitly links climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and gender equality, mandating that women's leadership, participation, and access to resources are embedded in climate action and decision-making.
- Promotes inclusive governance and safeguards, requiring attention to vulnerable groups (including rural women and those in customary systems), thereby setting standards for equitable benefit-sharing and risk management in climate finance and projects.
- Creates a shared framework for implementation, learning, and oversight, strengthening both the mandate and accountability for inclusive, gender-responsive climate action across the Pacific.

*Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016–2025)*

This framework establishes regional standards for disability-inclusive development and resilience. It calls for *"full participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes at all levels"* and requires governments to integrate disability data into monitoring systems. For RPACA, this means:

- Embedding disability-inclusive design standards in climate-resilient infrastructure under Component 2.
- Ensuring representation of persons with disabilities in programme steering committees, national adaptation planning, and DRM governance structures.
- Integrating disability statistics into RPACA's MEL framework, aligned with SPC's Regional Guidebook on Disability Statistics.
- Strengthening access to assistive devices, health services, and social protection during climate emergencies.

*Pacific Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian and Resilient Development Strategy (2025–2035)*
This strategy provides a forward-looking roadmap for embedding disability inclusion into humanitarian and resilience programming. It commits to:

- Applying universal design standards in shelters, evacuation centers, and relocation sites.

- Establishing survivor-centered GBV/SEAH referral pathways tailored to persons with disabilities, recognising heightened risks in displacement settings.
- Building institutional capacity to integrate disability perspectives into resilience planning and finance.
- Monitoring progress through indicators such as accessibility of infrastructure, participation rates of persons with disabilities in governance, and availability of inclusive protection services.

Together, these regional frameworks provide the mandate, standards, and accountability mechanisms that RPACA must operationalise, ensuring that climate adaptation across the Pacific is inclusive, rights-based, and aligned with regional priorities.

### 2.3.2 Global Climate, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Frameworks and Implications for RPACA

Pacific regional commitments are reinforced by binding global frameworks that establish universal standards for inclusive climate and disaster resilience. These frameworks provide the normative foundation for embedding gender equality, disability inclusion, youth participation, and child protection into adaptation strategies. They move beyond broad principles to set out specific requirements, such as sex, age, disability and location disaggregated data, survivor-centered GBV/SEAH safeguards, universal design standards, and measurable targets for women's leadership.

For RPACA, alignment with these global frameworks is essential to ensure donor compliance, uphold human rights obligations, and guarantee that resilience outcomes are socially transformative as well as technically sound. The following global instruments provide the standards and reference points that guide RPACA's GAAP: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the core human rights conventions including CEDAW, CRPD, and CRC. Together, they establish the normative benchmarks for alignment and shape RPACA's approach to inclusive, rights-based climate resilience.

*Paris Agreement and UNFCCC Gender Action Plan*
The Paris Agreement (2015) established the principle that climate action must be gender-responsive, equitable, and inclusive. It recognises the importance of gender equality, empowerment of women, and intergenerational equity in achieving effective climate outcomes. To operationalise this principle, Parties adopted the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP) in 2017, updated in 2019, and renewed at COP30 (Belém, 2025). The GAP provides structured activities, indicators, and reporting requirements to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion are embedded across all aspects of climate policy and practice.

For RPACA, this alignment involves:

- Gender-Responsive Climate Policy: Ensuring that adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building integrate gender equality and social inclusion.
- Leadership and Participation: Promoting women's leadership and meaningful participation in climate governance, with measurable targets for representation in programme steering committees and national adaptation planning.
- Data and Monitoring: Strengthening systems for sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to track participation, benefits, and resilience outcomes.

- Capacity and Knowledge: Building institutional capacity to integrate gender considerations into climate planning and supporting knowledge systems that document gendered impacts of climate change.
- Finance and Budgeting: Applying gender-responsive budgeting and ensuring equitable access to climate finance and livelihood opportunities for women and marginalised groups.
- Safeguards and Protection: Embedding survivor-centred GBV/SEAH safeguards into climate and disaster contexts, linking climate action to human rights obligations.
- Reporting and Accountability: Designing outputs that can feed into national communications and UNFCCC reporting obligations, strengthening donor compliance and global legitimacy.

*Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)*
The Sendai Framework sets the global standard for disaster risk reduction and explicitly calls for *"a people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk"*. It emphasises inclusive, accessible, and non-discriminatory participation. For RPACA, this requires:

- Ensuring representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in DRM governance and planning structures.
- Embedding sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data into monitoring systems to track who benefits from resilience investments.
- Applying universal design standards in shelters, evacuation centers, and infrastructure to guarantee accessibility.
- Strengthening community-based early warning systems that reach women, children, elderly populations, and persons with disabilities.

*Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015–2030)*
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out 17 global goals, with multiple targets directly relevant to GESI and climate resilience. For RPACA, alignment with the SDGs means:

- *Goal 5: Gender Equality*
  Calls for ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, ensuring full participation in leadership, and guaranteeing equal access to resources. For RPACA, this requires measurable targets for women's representation in governance, GBV/SEAH safeguards in disaster contexts, and gender-responsive access to finance and livelihoods.
- *Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities*
  Commits to empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, or economic status. For RPACA, this translates into disability-inclusive infrastructure, youth participation platforms, and targeted support for poor and female-headed households.
- *Goal 13: Climate Action*
  Calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, with explicit recognition of the need for inclusive adaptation and resilience. For RPACA, this means embedding equity into climate governance, infrastructure, finance, and cooperation, and tracking resilience outcomes through sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data.
- *Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*

Stresses inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. For RPACA, this requires institutional reforms that embed GESI safeguards into governance structures and ensure accountability for inclusive resilience outcomes.

*Other Core Human Rights Conventions*

- CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women): Establishes obligations to eliminate discrimination and advance women's rights in all spheres, including disaster and climate contexts.
- CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities): Requires accessibility, universal design, and full participation of persons with disabilities in governance, infrastructure, and resilience planning.
- CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child): Protects children's rights to survival, development, and participation, with obligations to safeguard them in disaster and climate contexts.

In summary, the Pacific's policy environment for GESI in climate action is robust, anchored in the FRDP, the 2050 Strategy, and the Pacific Platform for Action are reinforced by global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, and the SDGs. These commitments provide legitimacy and clear standards for equity-driven resilience.

However, alignment at the regional level is not enough. RPACA must translate these mandates into country-specific and activity-level action and implementation**,** ensuring that national adaptation plans, infrastructure investments, and governance structures embed GESI safeguards in practice. This requires closing gaps in data, representation, accountability, and building institutional capacity to design, implement, and monitor GESI interventions.

The 2025 UNFCCC Gender Strategy sets the global expectation that climate action must be transformative, dismantling discriminatory norms and institutional barriers rather than treating inclusion as an add-on. RPACA has a central role in supporting partner countries and agencies to strengthen their capacity for Gender Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) analysis and implementation, in line with national priorities and programmes. By combining operational delivery with this paradigm shift, RPACA can move from policy alignment to measurable systemic change, ensuring resilience outcomes are regionally legitimate, globally recognised, and locally grounded.

Together, these global frameworks ensure that RPACA's GAAP is not only regionally grounded but globally compliant, rights-based, and aligned with international best practice.

### 2.3.3 Gender Equality and Social inclusion Analysis of National Adaptation Plans

Building on the regional and global commitments outlined in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, this section examines how Pacific Island Countries are reflecting these mandates within their national climate and resilience frameworks. This analysis, undertaken by ADB in February 2026 as part of the RPACA gender and inclusion assessment, covers National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Disaster Risk Management (DRM) strategies, and related climate policies, assessing the extent to which gender equality, disability inclusion, and broader social inclusion are embedded in national priorities, governance arrangements, and monitoring systems.

Drawing on the readiness scoring framework described in the methodology section, the results are expressed on a normalised 10-point scale. They show how gender equality, disability inclusion, and broader social inclusion are embedded in national priorities, governance arrangements, and monitoring systems. The analysis highlights current levels

of integration, identifies gaps, and points to opportunities for embedding inclusive, rights-based climate action. Annex 2 expands this analysis through country-level situational snapshots, presenting concise profiles of 14 Pacific Island Countries that capture the climate–GESI nexus and identify priority entry points for transformative action.

***Summary of Findings***

Figure 3: Readiness Score

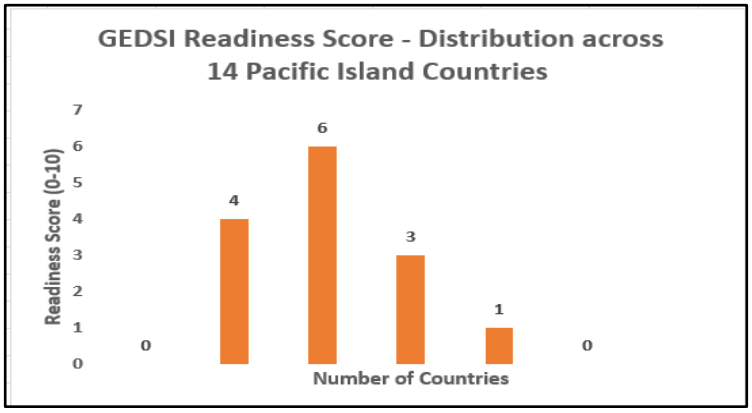
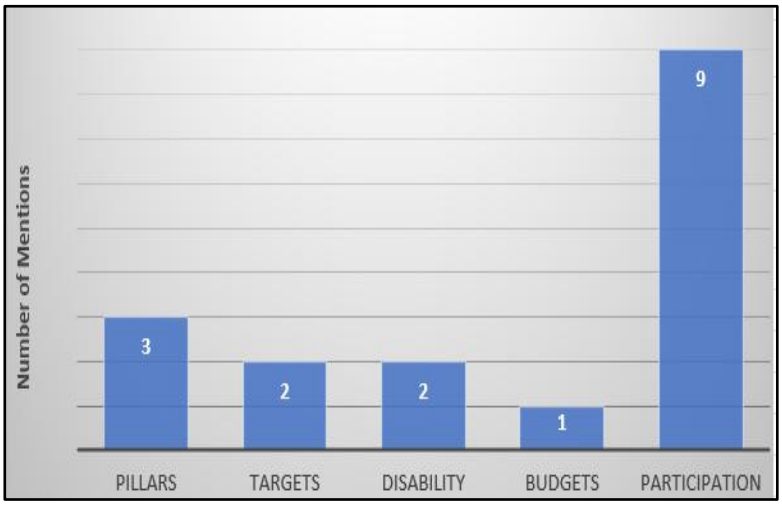



Figure 4: Frequency of GESI Mentions in National Climate Frameworks

**GESI Coverage in National Frameworks**

- 9 of 14 PICs reference GESI in their NAPs/NDCs.
- 6 countries explicitly link climate resilience to national gender strategies (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga, Solomon Islands, PNG).
- Only 3 countries currently reference disability inclusion (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu).
- Fewer than 30% of PICs include quantified GESI targets, and only 20% have dedicated GESI pillars.



**Thematic Focus**

- Gender equality is the most consistently referenced theme, tied to women's leadership, livelihoods, and GBV/SEA/SH protection.
- Youth participation is emerging, with 5 countries noting the role of young people in adaptation governance.
- Disability inclusion remains limited, with references often general rather than operational.
- SOGIESC recognition is rare, but Samoa and Fiji provide culturally grounded references (*fa'afafine, vakasalewalewa*).

Figure 5: Frequency of GESI Themes in National Climate Frameworks

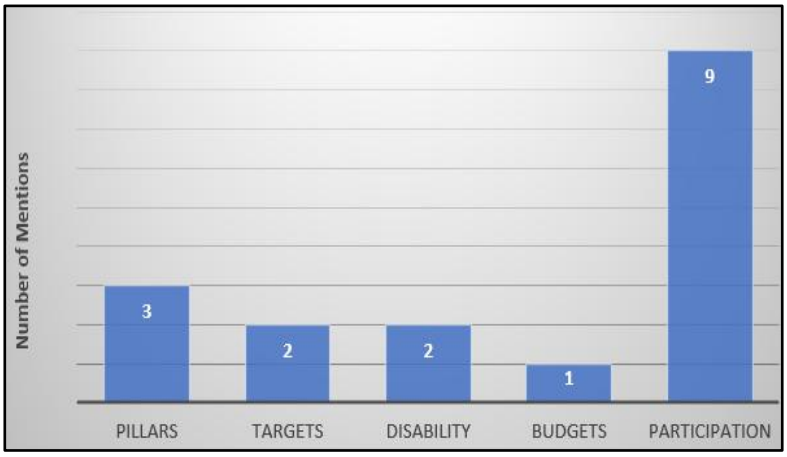



Figure 5 highlights the uneven emphasis placed on different GESI themes, with gender and participation referenced more frequently than disability inclusion, youth and SOGIESC.

**Governance and Accountability**

- Fiji and Vanuatu embed GESI into climate governance structures, mandating representation in steering committees.
- Most other PICs reference vulnerable groups but no not specify governance mechanisms.
- Participation is mentioned in roughly 50% of the frameworks, but mechanisms for meaningful engagement remain limited.

**Infrastructure and Services**

- 4 countries (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga) reference accessible infrastructure standards.
- Few countries link adaptation measures to universal design or disability-inclusive evacuation facilities.

**Data and Monitoring**

- Only 2 countries (Fiji, Samoa) commit to sex-disaggregated data in climate monitoring frameworks.
- No country yet has comprehensive intersectional data systems capturing overlapping vulnerabilities.

- Indicators are often limited only to sex disaggregation, with SADLE-style monitoring absent. As a result, PICs are not yet collecting the intersectional data required to design and monitor inclusive climate action.

**Budgeting**

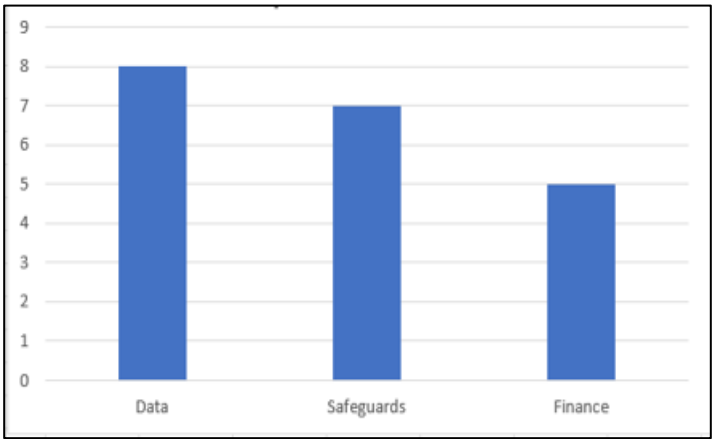
- Dedicated GESI budget lines are rare; most references remain at framework level without financial commitments.
- Budget tagging is present in about 25% of PICs but costed GESI actions are still the exception.

### 2.3.4 Key Gender and Inclusion Gaps and Barriers in NAPs

This analysis shows that Pacific Island Countries are progressing along a continuum of GESI advancement in their climate and resilience frameworks. While commitments to equality and inclusion are increasingly visible, they are not yet consistently embedded as structural outcomes across national systems. A small number of countries demonstrate more advanced integration. For example, Fiji's mandated gender-inclusive representation in climate governance and commitment to age-sex-location and disability disaggregated monitoring; Samoa's culturally grounded recognition of *fa'afafine* and *vakasalewalewa* alongside disability-inclusive infrastructure standards; and Vanuatu's legislative requirements for women's and disability representation in DRM governance. These examples illustrate what deeper integration looks like and provide models for replication across the region.

The analysis of gender and inclusion in NAPs also highlights persistent gaps that constrain equitable resilience outcomes. These include limited sex-age-disability and location disaggregated data; weak enforcement of GESI safeguards; and structural barriers to finance, land, services, and leadership. Youth and persons with disabilities are inconsistently included, and SOGIESC recognition remains rare. A regional average readiness score of 4.5/10 underscores both the momentum and the gaps: inclusion is present, but not yet transformative. Without stronger institutional mechanisms, costed actions, and intersectional monitoring, climate action risks reinforcing existing inequalities rather than dismantling them.

Figure 6: Gaps in gender and social inclusion integration Across NAPs




These findings highlight the extent to which national frameworks are beginning to reflect, but have not yet fully met the regional and global standards and commitments outlined in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. Pacific Leaders have affirmed through the FRDP, the 2050 Strategy, the revitalised PLGED, and disability frameworks that resilience must be inclusive, rights-based, and grounded in equitable participation. Global frameworks - including the

Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, the Sendai Framework, the SDGs, and core human rights conventions—reinforce these obligations and set clear expectations for gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and socially just climate action.

RPACA's role is therefore pivotal. The programme provides the mechanism to translate these regional and global mandates into country-specific, activity-level implementation. By embedding GESI across governance, infrastructure, finance, and cooperation, RPACA can shift the region from incremental progress to systemic, transformative resilience. The following section builds on this evidence base to set out how RPACA will operationalise its GESI guiding principles, ensuring that programme design and delivery are aligned with regional expectations, global standards, and the needs identified through the national and country-level analyses.

### 2.3.5 PIC Situational Analysis of PIC GESI and Climate Summary

Appendix 1 to this annex presents country-level summaries of the GESI and climate context across the 14 Pacific Island Countries participating in RPACA. These summaries synthesise the climate-GESI nexus in each PIC, drawing together demographic patterns, national policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, and key structural challenges. They show how gender, disability, youth, and social inclusion considerations shape vulnerability, resilience, and access to climate-related services and decision-making. Each country summary includes:

- Country context outlining demographic and socio-economic characteristics such as population distribution, poverty, disaster risk, and migration dynamics.
- GESI situation describing gender, disability, youth, and social inclusion realities, including labour force participation, political representation, GBV prevalence, disability inclusion, youth NEET rates, and livelihood roles.
- National climate and GESI frameworks summarising gender equality policies, disability and youth strategies, DRR and adaptation plans, NDCs, and other sectoral frameworks that articulate national commitments for inclusive climate action.
- Key challenges identifying structural barriers such as exclusion from land and resources, limited integration of GESI in DRM systems, accessibility gaps for persons with disabilities, high GBV prevalence, and limited disaggregated data.

Based on existing data and analysis in Appendix 1, these summaries provide a critical GESI lens for RPACA's climate adaptation and finance planning. They highlight national commitments and targets and identify the structural and institutional barriers that limit equitable access to climate finance, participation in decision-making, and inclusion in adaptation investment pipelines.

Some **regional level trends** with implications for RPACA GAAP emerge from the national level analysis:

- A consistent trend is the high and increasing exposure of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and outer island communities to climate-related hazards, with impacts amplified through structural inequalities in land tenure, service delivery, and mobility constraints. Climate risks such as cyclones, sea level rise, flooding, drought, and coastal erosion disproportionately affect these groups due to their reliance on climate-sensitive livelihoods, caregiving roles, and limited access to resilient housing and infrastructure.
- A second key trend is at the regional level the systemic exclusion of vulnerable groups from climate governance, finance, and decision-making systems, particularly in relation to land, credit, and institutional representation. Across Pacific governance

more broadly, women hold only around 7-8% of parliamentary seats and remain significantly underrepresented in national decision-making structures, including climate-related governance bodies14.

- A third cross-cutting barrier at the regional level is the limited institutional capacity and weak integration of GESI across climate, DRM, and infrastructure systems, reinforced by data gaps and underdeveloped accountability mechanisms. Most countries lack systematic sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to inform climate planning, budgeting, and monitoring, reducing the visibility of unequal impacts and constraining evidence-based targeting.

The above-regional level trends are informed by the following **national level gaps and barriers**:

- At the national level, outer island and rural populations experience compounded vulnerability due to geographic isolation, weaker service delivery systems, and delayed recovery support, while rapid urbanisation in some contexts (e.g., Fiji, Kiribati, PNG) has intensified exposure in informal settlements with inadequate WASH, housing, and evacuation infrastructure.

- Women's land ownership remains extremely low or mediated through customary systems, limiting access to finance and adaptation investments, while youth and PWD face similar barriers due to collateral requirements and lack of tailored financial instruments.

- Climate finance systems remain largely donor-driven and project-based15, with limited integration of gender-responsive budgeting, disability inclusion, or youth participation. Hence there is need for RPACA to target representation of women, youth, PWD, and SOGIESC groups in climate finance committees and technical decision-making bodies is generally weak, ad hoc, or absent, with participation more commonly occurring through consultation mechanisms rather than formal governance roles.

- While policies on gender equality, disability inclusion, and youth engagement exist (Appendix 1), implementation is uneven due to limited technical capacity, weak coordination between ministries, and insufficient budget tagging or operational guidance.

- The above constraints are further compounded by high GBV and SEAH risks during climate emergencies, inadequate disability-inclusive infrastructure and services, and the absence of climate-responsive social protection systems - together reinforcing persistent exclusion and vulnerability across all country contexts assessed.

This synthesis enables RPACA to design interventions across its components that strengthen systems, governance arrangements, and financing mechanisms so that adaptation investments are accessible, inclusive, and capable of driving structural and transformative change across all components.

The country-specific summaries also establish a common analytical baseline across PICs, enabling RPACA to understand variations in GESI–climate vulnerability, policy readiness, and institutional capacity. At the operational level, this baseline will be applied to site-specific and subproject assessments, ensuring that each subproject GAAP builds on country-level findings while tailoring actions to local contexts and community priorities.

[14] Pacific Aid Map: 2025 Key Findings

[15] [1] Owens, K., Carter, G., Park, S., & Viney, G. (2025). Bridging the adaptation-finance gap: Pathways for the green climate fund in the Pacific. Earth System Governance, 24, 100247.

These analyses also support prioritisation, safeguards, and monitoring by identifying where systems strengthening, accessibility measures, and inclusive governance reforms are most needed and where RPACA can add the greatest value.

# 3. Programme-wide GESI Standards

## 3.1 RPACA Gender and Inclusion Criteria

RPACA will apply seven gender equality and social inclusion standards to guide the design, implementation, and monitoring of all sub-projects. Verified by and co-developed with Pacific Island country representatives at the regional design workshop in Nadi (March 2026), these overarching standards set minimum requirements for inclusive, evidence-based, and accountable adaptation. They operationalise the GTCA approach across all components.

The programme GESI analysis shows that Pacific countries are missing significant opportunities to draw on the leadership, innovation, and adaptive capacities of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and the knowledge of older people. These standards respond directly to that gap by ensuring RPACA investments move beyond safeguard compliance and intentionally embed these strengths in activity design and delivery**.**

**RPACA Gender Equality and Inclusion Criteria for Sub-Projects**

1. **Identify gender equality and inclusion barriers and gaps** through analysis and show how transformational impacts will be achieved via a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Action Plan (GAAP).
2. **Ensure representative governance**, with women and other under-represented groups holding formal seats in project decision-making structures.
3. **Build capacity through customised training, mentoring, and work experience** opportunities that strengthen the skills and leadership pathways of women and other under-represented groups.
4. **Integrate GBV/SEAH prevention and risk-mitigation** measures into all project designs and operations.
5. **Apply gender-responsive and universal design standards** to all built and renovated infrastructure.
6. **Use disaggregated data (**sex, age, disability, ethnicity, income, and location) and both qualitative and quantitative monitoring as the evidence base for project performance**.**
7. **Align with regional, national Climate and GESI requirements,** ensuring compliance and legitimacy across all levels.

Together, these programme-wide standards create the foundation for the transformative shifts outlined below. They operationalise the Gender Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) approach, embedding inclusion across all RPACA components.

## 3.2 Alignment with international guidance and economic rationale

These standards are consistent with international guidance, including the UNDP Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Climate Cost–Benefit Analysis (2023), the GGCA Gender Equality and Climate Policy Scorecard (2025), the UNFCCC Gender Action Plans (COP 29–30), and UN Women's Driving Gender Responsive Climate Action (2025). They

are further reinforced by ADB's ADB Strategy 2030 and its midterm review's Strategic Focus Area 5 – resilience and empowerment, the ADB Gender Equality and Climate Change Sectors Guide (2024), and the GCF Gender Policy (2022), which together define best practice for mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in climate adaptation and finance.

Across these frameworks, common requirements include intersectional analysis, inclusive governance, survivor-centered GBV/SEAH safeguards, gender-responsive and universal design, quantified equality and inclusion targets, and costed, budget-tagged actions.

The economic rationale for applying these standards is well established. Evidence from IPCC AR6, OECD, UNDP, ADB, and GCF consistently shows that GESI-integrated adaptation delivers higher resilience outcomes, greater economic efficiency, and reduced maladaptation risks. Collectively, the evidence indicates that GESI-integrated adaptation delivers higher returns, more durable outcomes, and stronger compliance with donor requirements for Pacific Island countries.

### 3.3 Programme-wide standards

Across RPACA, these GESI standards function as programme-wide requirements that guide design, implementation, and monitoring. All components must apply intersectional analysis, embed inclusive governance, integrate survivor-centered SEAH safeguards, apply universal design principles, and allocate and track resources for GESI actions. These requirements ensure consistency across sectors and implementing partners, provide a common basis for monitoring and reporting, and establish defensible compliance anchors for review.

The next section outlines the component-specific GESI implications and requirements for Components 1 and 2, which form the basis of the RPACA Gender Action Plan (GAAP). Components 3 and 4, led by SPC and SPREP, will prepare their own GAAPs as those workstreams come online. All GAAPs must align with the RPACA Gender and Inclusion Standards to ensure a consistent, accountable, programme-wide approach.

### 3.4 Gender Equality and Inclusion specific Transformative Shifts Across RPACA Components

The application of these standards across all components creates opportunities for systemic change in how adaptation is governed, financed, and delivered. RPACA's role is not only to build on existing momentum but to catalyse transformative change, shifting inclusion from acknowledgement to systemic embedding. These shifts are grounded in the international and regional best practice frameworks outlined in Section 3.2, ensuring RPACA's approach is globally recognised and regionally anchored.

**Component 1 – Enhancing Pacific Island Access to Climate Finance**

- ***Transformative shift*:** From women and other under-represented groups — including youth, persons with disabilities, and SOGIESC groups — being excluded from climate finance decisions and benefits to their formal participation with decision-making authority, voting rights, and leadership roles, and equitable access embedded in governance and resource allocation.
- ***RPACA Pathway***: Establish inclusive governance structures with formal seats for women and other under-represented groups, backed by gender-responsive budgeting and tagged climate finance systems, leading to climate finance redistributing power and resources equitably and embedding accountability into financial governance.

**Component 2 – Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Coastal Protection**

- ***Transformative shift****:* From infrastructure design that overlooks gender-responsiveness and accessibility to planning and delivery where inclusive design standards are embedded as resilience norms.

- ***RPACA Pathway:*** Embed gender-responsive and accessibility standards across all infrastructure and coastal resilience investments, leading to inclusive design becoming common practice that redefines how infrastructure is conceived, delivered, and governed — embedding equity, safety, and resilience at the core of Pacific adaptation.

**Component 3 – Climate-Resilient Food, Water and Public Health Systems** (to be developed separately by SPC)

- ***Transformative shift***: From one-size-fits-all services that fail to understand and respond to the unique needs of those most affected by climate impacts to responsive systems that use evidence of differentiated impacts to deliver inclusively.

- ***RPACA Pathway:*** Strengthen food, water, and health systems by embedding inclusive early warning systems, accessible service points, and community-led adaptation pathways that prioritise women, youth, persons with disabilities, and SOGIESC groups**,** leading to essential services being delivered equitably, resiliently, and in direct response to diverse community needs — including those historically left out.

**Component 4 – Pollution, Waste Management and Regional Environmental Governance** (to be developed separately by SPREP)

- ***Transformative shift:*** From fragmented, project-level efforts to regional governance that is coordinated, inclusive, accountable, and aligned with Pacific and global frameworks.

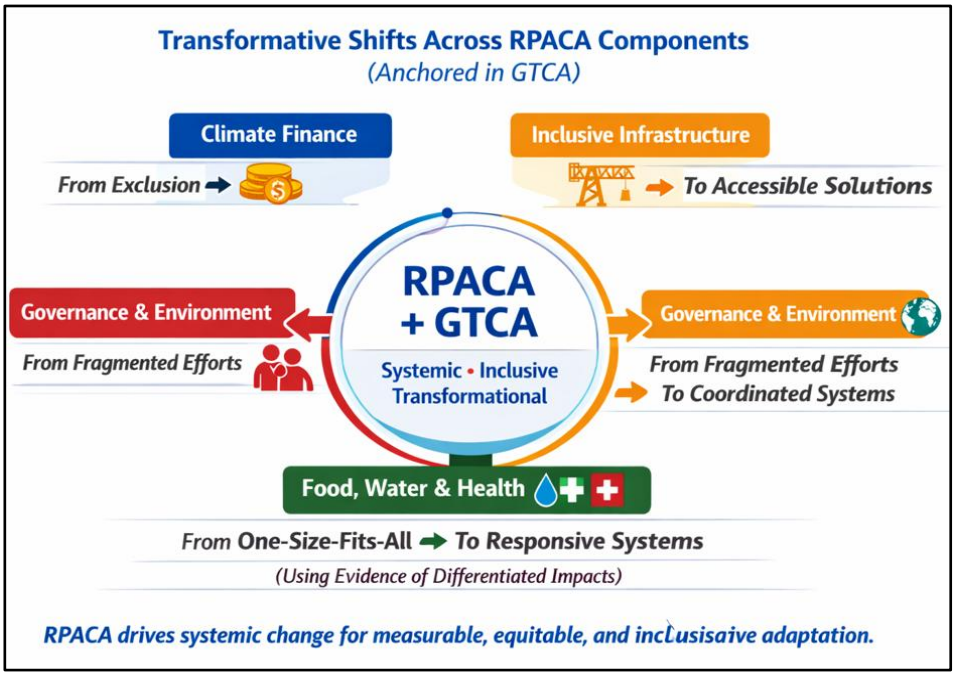
- ***RPACA Pathway:*** Build Pacific-led knowledge platforms, strengthen inclusive leadership, and standardise SADEL monitoring to generate evidence for decisions. Apply RPACA Gender and Inclusion Standards (intersectional analysis, inclusive governance, disaggregated data, universal design, SEAH safeguards), leading to governance that is evidence-driven, equitable, and consistent with regional and global commitments.

Intersectional analyses, inclusive participation and governance, survivor-centered SEAH safeguards, universal design, and GESI resource tracking will be applied across all components and embedded in GAAP activities. These activities establish the framework for sub-project GAAPs, which are refined through sector analyses and consultations to ensure context-appropriate, inclusive implementation. Systemic change is therefore advanced both through whole-of-programme standards that embed inclusion, accountability, and resilience across all components, and through sub-project GAPs that operationalise them.

SEAH risk assessments will be conducted as part of due diligence process, alongside training for contractors, project management units, and local partners. While SEAH actions are managed under safeguards rather than gender action plans, RPACA will ensure that mitigation measures are budgeted and implemented, including awareness programs, codes of conduct, and periodic audits. Additionally, RPACA will be guided by the ADB's Good Practice Note (GPN) to strengthen operational approaches to addressing SEAH risks in its operations with a specific focus on sovereign projects with civil works.

As a result of these efforts, RPACA will drive systemic change across climate finance, resilient services, inclusive governance, pollution and waste management — embedding quantified targets, budget tagging, and intersectional evidence. Over the next decade, this pathway will strengthen resilience and equity across 14 Pacific Island Countries, aligned with regional and global frameworks and reinforcing the GTCA as the anchor for transformational action.

Figure 7: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Transformative Shifts Across Components




## 4. Component 1: Gender Equality and Inclusion Operational Requirements – Climate Finance

### 4.1 Enhancing Pacific Island's Access to Climate Finance

Building on the gender equality and social inclusion criteria outlined in Section 3, this section identifies the operational requirements, institutional reforms, and minimum standards needed to ensure that Component 1 delivers gender-transformative, socially inclusive, and climate-finance-aligned outcomes.

Component 1 addresses the systemic exclusions embedded in Pacific public financial management and climate finance systems, which limit equitable access to adaptation resources. These exclusions affect women and girls, persons with disabilities, youth, SOGIESC groups, older people, and female-headed households, who remain under-represented in fiscal governance and underserved by financial sector services. Climate decision-making bodies globally average ~40% women, but Pacific-specific bodies are often below this level, particularly in technical and finance committees under ministries of finance and planning (based on UNFCCC constituted body trends, not national committees). Institutional norms, inaccessible financial systems, and the absence of gender-responsive budgeting and fiduciary safeguards reinforce these inequities, positioning Component 1 as a critical entry point for reshaping the region's inclusive climate finance architecture.

All reforms under Component 1 will be implemented in alignment with ADB and GCF gender and social inclusion requirements and will be tracked against RPACA DMF indicators to demonstrate compliance and measurable outcomes.

#### 4.1.1 Enhanced Public Financial Management (PFM) Capacity to support inclusive access to climate finance.

The programme will focus on building long-term regional capacity to access climate finance, with direct implications for representation, leadership, and knowledge equity. It will use innovative and bespoke capacity building strategies that target critical needs including internship pathways, apprenticeship schemes, university programmes, and online learning platforms that must intentionally include women, youth, persons with disabilities, and SOGIESC individuals, addressing structural barriers such as caregiving responsibilities, digital exclusion, and limited mobility.

Operationalising GTCA requires shifting from participation to influence, ensuring that under-represented groups hold decision-making authority and accountability within climate finance governance structures. This includes representation in the RPACA Steering Committee, Advisory Panel, and technical subgroups.

Regional knowledge products, such as SOPs, guidelines, and policy briefs, must integrate gender-responsive budgeting, disability inclusion, SEAH-safe financial sector protocols, and universal design principles, and explicitly support countries to meet climate-finance readiness, accreditation, and fiduciary requirements.

This outcome will prioritise building a diverse, regionally grounded talent pipeline capable of influencing climate-finance decision making, strengthening institutional capacity, and embedding inclusive practices across national and regional climate-finance systems.

#### 4.1.2 Outcome: Enhanced PFM capacity to support inclusive access to climate finance

This outcome addresses the structural reforms required to ensure equitable and inclusive access to climate finance. Fiscal risk analytics, budget processes, and adaptation investment pipelines must integrate sex-, age-, disability-, and location-disaggregated data, in line with ADB/GCF requirements and RPACA DMF indicators for inclusive data systems. Countries may require support to institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting, disability-inclusive fiscal planning, and transparent reporting on GESI-tagged climate finance flows, including alignment with national climate-finance strategies, readiness plans, and accreditation pathways.

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Requirements for PFM**

i. Integrate gender-responsive budget tagging into national climate finance systems, ensuring that allocations and expenditures are visible, trackable, and aligned with inclusive adaptation priorities.

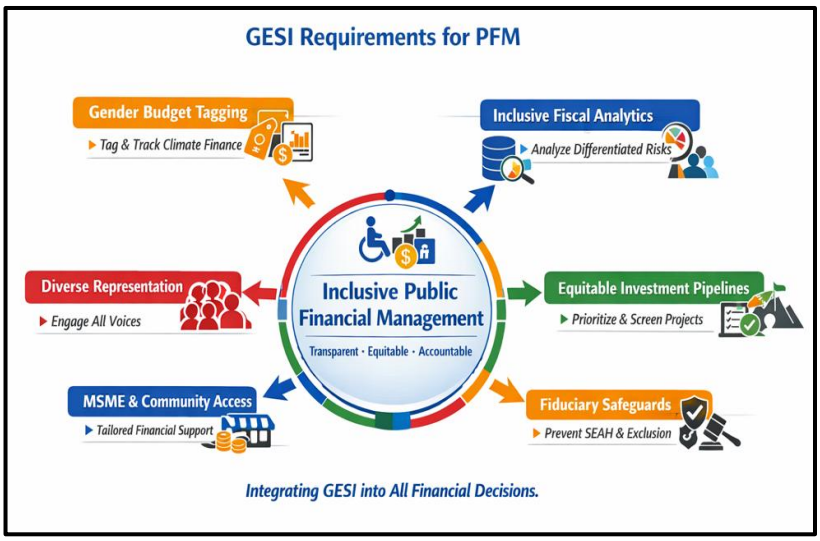
ii. Embed inclusive fiscal risk analytics that capture differentiated climate impacts on women, children, persons with disabilities, older populations, SOGIESC groups, rural households, and underserved communities, and using these analytics to inform budget ceilings, contingency planning, and investment prioritisation.

iii. Ensure that adaptation investment pipelines apply inclusive prioritisation criteria, including accessibility, safety, and equitable benefit distribution, and that pipeline screening tools incorporate gender equality and social inclusion-responsive risk and opportunity assessments.

iv. Strengthen fiduciary safeguards to prevent SEAH, discrimination, and exclusion in financial decision making, including integration of SEAH-safe protocols into PFM manuals, procurement systems, and audit processes.

v. Ensure representation of under-represented groups in national climate finance committees, NDAs, and PFM reform processes, with clear mechanisms for influence rather than symbolic participation.

Figure 8: Gender Equality and Inclusion Requirements for PFM




Operationalising GTCA within PFM systems requires shifting from technical compliance to structural influence, ensuring that fiscal governance processes actively redistribute decision-making power and resources toward under-represented groups, and that climate-finance decisions reflect lived experience, accessibility needs, and differentiated climate impacts.

### 4.1.3 Regional support for development, piloting and scaling of innovative financial instruments and mechanisms

This outcome focuses on developing and piloting innovative financial instrument, such as blended finance facilities, MSME lending mechanisms, and infrastructure de-risking facilities, which must be accessible to women-owned enterprises, informal workers, rural households, and persons with disabilities. Ensuring equitable access to these instruments is essential for enabling under-represented groups to participate meaningfully in climate-related economic opportunities.

Operationalising GTCA requires that new financial instruments actively dismantle structural barriers (collateral, discriminatory lending, digital exclusion), ensuring that financial inclusion is treated as a systemic reform rather than a product-level intervention, and that all instruments are monitored against gender-tagged budget flows and inclusive finance indicators.

Early analysis indicates that the market for women-led and youth-led MSME adaptation activity in PICs remains at an early stage. Structural constraints identified through the GESI analysis, informality, limited collateral, sector concentration, uneven PFI capacity, and gaps in climate-related business support—mean that commercial mobilisation is unlikely in the short term. The design of any financial facility under Outcome 1.3 will therefore need to prioritise market-building and de-risking functions, rather than assume immediate readiness

for blended finance approaches, and must be sequenced to reflect the current maturity of adaptation-related MSME ecosystems.

Structural barriers to finance in PICs include lack of collateral, discriminatory lending practices, limited financial literacy, and digital exclusion. Operationalising GTCA requires that new financial instruments actively dismantle these barriers rather than simply expand supply, ensuring that financial inclusion is treated as a structural reform rather than a product-level intervention.

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Requirements for Financial Instruments and Mechanisms**

i. Design MSME finance facilities with tailored eligibility criteria for women, persons with disabilities, and informal workers, including flexible documentation requirements and recognition of informal income streams.

ii. Ensure de-risking mechanisms prioritise enterprises led by or serving women and under-represented groups, and that guarantee structures explicitly address gendered and social exclusion risks.

iii. Embed SEAH-safe customer service protocols and grievance mechanisms in all financial products, including requirements for safe outreach, client protection, and confidential reporting pathways.

iv. Ensure digital finance platforms meet accessibility standards and are available in local languages and accessible formats, and that digital onboarding processes do not inadvertently exclude low-literacy or low-connectivity users.

v. Support market testing and feasibility studies that explicitly analyse gendered and social inclusion barriers, including differentiated climate-related financial needs and sector-specific adaptation opportunities.

These measures ensure that financial instruments under Component 1 contribute to equitable access and benefit distribution across PICs, and that adaptation-related financial markets evolve in ways that center inclusion, accessibility, and long-term resilience.

#### 4.1.4 National Financial Institutions Strengthened

Outcome 1.4 focuses on strengthening reserve banks, local banks, and insurance companies to integrate gender-responsive financial sector policy, inclusive credit assessment tools, and accessibility standards. This includes building capacity for climate-aligned financial regulation, inclusive risk assessment, and equitable insurance coverage. Strengthening national financial institutions is essential to ensuring that climate finance reaches under-represented groups through equitable, accessible, and safe financial systems, and that financial sector reforms support countries to meet climate-finance readiness, accreditation, and fiduciary requirements in line with ADB and GCF standards.

**Gender Equality and Inclusion requirements for Strengthening National Financial Institutions**

i. Integrate gender-responsive financial sector policy into reserve bank regulatory frameworks, including supervisory guidance, prudential standards, and consumer-protection requirements that explicitly address discrimination, exclusion, and SEAH risks.

ii. Develop inclusive credit assessment tools that recognise non-traditional collateral and informal income sources and embedding these tools within PFI lending policies and risk-rating systems to reduce structural bias in credit allocation.

iii. Ensure insurance products are accessible to women, persons with disabilities, older people, and rural households, including through simplified claims processes, accessible communication channels, and premium structures that do not disadvantage low-income groups or reinforce gendered risk assumptions.

iv. Embed SEAH-safe protocols and anti-discrimination safeguards in financial institutions, including integration into compliance frameworks, staff training, and customer-facing procedures to ensure safe access to financial services.

v. Ensure equitable representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in financial sector governance and regulatory processes, with mechanisms that enable meaningful influence over policy and regulatory decisions, rather than advisory-only roles.

These reforms strengthen the inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability of national financial systems, ensuring that climate finance is accessible to those most affected by climate change, and that financial institutions play an active role in driving structural and transformative change across the climate-finance ecosystem as part of a region-wide shift toward inclusive climate finance architecture.

**Minimum Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Standards for Component 1 Activities**

The following minimum standards apply across all Component 1 activities to drive structural change in climate finance systems and ensure inclusive and equitable access across all population groups, and to align national systems with ADB and GCF requirements for inclusive climate finance readiness, fiduciary standards, and adaptation investment pipelines across the full programme cycle and to ensure measurable reporting against RPACA DMF indicators.

i. Gender-responsive budget tagging and transparent reporting on climate finance allocations and expenditures, including public disclosure of gender and inclusion-tagged adaptation spending and integration into national budget statements. (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activities 1 and 2)

ii. Inclusive fiscal risk analytics and data systems that use sex, age, disability, and location-disaggregated data to identify and address unequal climate impacts, and that inform budget decisions, pipeline prioritisation, and contingency planning in line with national climate finance strategies. (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 1)

iii. Equitable representation of diverse groups in climate finance governance, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, PID/SOGIESC groups, older persons, and rural households, with mechanisms that ensure meaningful influence rather than symbolic participation through voting rights, delegated authority, or structured consultation processes. (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 1)

iv. Accessible financial services and digital platforms designed to meet gender responsive and universal design standards and accommodate different languages and abilities, including low-connectivity and low-literacy users to ensure no-one is excluded from climate finance access. (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 4)

v. SEAH-safe and non-discriminatory financial sector practices, including clear grievance mechanisms and protections for all users, embedded within institutional compliance and customer-protection frameworks and monitored through regular audits (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 5).

vi. Inclusive MSME finance criteria and tailored financial products that recognise informal income, non-traditional collateral, and the needs of small and community-based enterprises, and that explicitly address gendered and social exclusion barriers in climate-related value chains. (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 4)

vii. Capacity building for NDAs, MFEDs, reserve banks, and local banks, as needed, to integrate gender equality and social inclusion into climate finance policies, systems, and decision making, including regulatory guidance, fiduciary processes, and pipeline development tools that reflect GTCA principles. (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 5)

viii. Gender and inclusion responsive monitoring and accountability, including clear indicators, targets, and public reporting on inclusive climate finance outcomes, aligned with national M&E systems and climate-finance reporting requirements and feeding into RPACA-wide reporting structures (Addressed under GAP Component 1, Activity 1).

Figure 9: Minimum Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Standards for Component 1 Activities




## 5. Component 2: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Requirements

### 5.1 Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Coastal Protection

Pacific infrastructure is inadequate and increasingly climate-vulnerable, with persistent gaps in accessibility, safety, and design across roads, bridges, ports, WASH systems, and public facilities (ADB Pacific Infrastructure Sector Assessment, 2023). Many assets lack universal design, safe access, lighting, and SEAH-safe spaces (UNESCAP Disability-Inclusive Infrastructure Report, 2022). These gaps disproportionately affect women, persons with disabilities, older people, children, and rural communities (ADB Gender and Infrastructure Assessment, 2021). Climate change and recurrent disasters

further damage fragile assets, disrupt services, and widen inequalities (IPCC AR6 Pacific Chapter, 2022).

Infrastructure and coastal planning sectors remain male-dominated, with limited participation of women and persons with disabilities in engineering, planning, and asset management (ADB Gender Audit of Infrastructure Ministries, 2020). This reduces visibility of their mobility, safety, and service needs. Expanding representation strengthens relevance, safety, and resilience (GCF Gender Policy, 2019).

Demographic trends intensify these challenges. Pacific populations are youthful, disability prevalence is rising, and ageing communities require accessible facilities (SPC Pacific Demographic Trends Report, 2023). Urbanisation and outer island disparities further shape service access (World Bank Pacific Urbanisation Study, 2022). Infrastructure must reflect differentiated mobility, safety, and service needs across diverse groups (ADB Pacific Inclusive Infrastructure Guidance, 2023).

Coastal protection measures—seawalls, drainage, early warning systems, and nature-based solutions such as mangrove restoration and ecosystem-based shoreline management—show major GESI gaps (SPREP Coastal Adaptation Review, 2021). Women, persons with disabilities, and rural communities often lack influence in planning, face unsafe evacuation routes, and have limited roles in community adaptation (UN Women Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Report, 2022). Strengthening their leadership improves effectiveness and ownership (ADB Gender and Climate Resilience Brief, 2023).

Component 2 embeds gender-responsive and disability-inclusive design, accessibility benchmarks, accountable data systems, representative governance, survivor-centered SEAH safeguards, and tenure access measures across all infrastructure and coastal protection investments, consistent with ADB safeguard requirements (ADB Environmental and Social Framework 2024). and GCF gender policy (GCF Gender Policy, 2019). The aim is to move beyond compliance toward system-level reforms that expand agency, safety, mobility, equitable access, and legitimacy, while integrating nature-based and hybrid solutions that deliver long-term, community-centered resilience (Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility Annual Report, 2023).

## 5.2 Expected Outcomes

### 5.2.1 Climate risk mainstreamed in ADB's sectoral infrastructure investment planning

Upstream climate assessments will reshape how infrastructure investments are identified, selected, and designed in Pacific Island Countries (ADB Pacific Infrastructure Sector Assessment, 2023). Programme activities will be organised into batches: Batch 1 sub-projects already prepared for approval with demonstrated adaptation impacts, and Batch 2 projects at concept stage with strong adaptation potential. All sub-projects under this outcome will meet the GESI requirements outlined in Section 5.3 and be tracked against RPACA DMF indicators. This ensures that climate risk is not treated as an add-on but embedded into investment planning, aligning with ADB safeguard requirements and GCF gender policy.

### 5.2.2 Key transport, energy, water supply, and coastal infrastructure systems are climate -resilient

Infrastructure investments across multiple sectors will strengthen resilience and sustainable management capacity (World Bank Pacific Resilience Program, 2022; PRIF Annual Report, 2023). The scale of these investments is expected to move systems to a tipping point where climate resilience becomes standard practice. All sub-projects will adopt gender-responsive and universal design standards that guarantee equitable access, consistent with ADB and GCF compliance requirements.

Historically, Pacific infrastructure has been designed without considering the mobility, safety, and service needs of women, persons with disabilities, older people, and rural communities (ADB Enhancing Gender Equality in Infrastructure Development, 2023). Weak national standards, inconsistent accessibility codes, and limited disaggregated data have reinforced these gaps (UNESCAP Disability-Inclusive Infrastructure Report, 2022).

Outcome 5.2.2 addresses these structural gaps by embedding universal design, accessibility benchmarks, disaggregated data systems, and quantified targets into every stage of planning, construction, and monitoring. This shifts delivery from ad hoc, asset-focused projects to system-level reforms that guarantee equitable access, safe mobility, and inclusive service delivery.

### 5.2.3 Inclusive Service Delivery Systems

Applying Criteria 2, 3, and 4, RPACA will embed inclusivity into the delivery of essential services linked to infrastructure investments. Sub-projects will institutionalise representative governance, tailored capacity building, and survivor-centered SEAH safeguards to ensure equitable and protective service delivery (UN Women Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Report, 2022).

- Representative governance: Women, persons with disabilities, youth, older people, and PID/SOGIESC groups will hold seats in infrastructure planning committees.
- Capacity building: Training and mentoring tailored to vulnerable groups, linking vocational skills to infrastructure projects and creating leadership pathways beyond participation.
- SEAH safeguards: Survivor-centered protection measures integrated into service delivery protocols, including grievance pathways and referral mechanisms aligned with regional and GCF standards. These are elaborated in Annex 6: Environment and Social Management Framework.
- Quantified targets: % of women and youth trained, % of facilities meeting accessibility standards.
- Budget tagging: Resources allocated to inclusion safeguards visible, trackable, and accountable.

In summary, by embedding barrier analysis, representative governance, legal alignment, quantified targets, and inclusive design into land and resource planning, RPACA moves beyond minimum compliance. These measures expand agency, safety, and equitable use, ensuring that tenure access and infrastructure systems are legitimate, resilient, and inclusive for all population groups.

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Requirements for RPACA Infrastructure Investments**

i. Apply gender responsive and universal design standards including accessible WASH, child-friendly spaces, safe lighting, tactile surfaces, ramps and handrails, accessible signage, and dignity measures for persons with disabilities across all public facilities and transport nodes. (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 8).

ii. Assess all sub-projects against accessibility benchmarks to ensure equitable access for women, girls, and under-represented groups, including rural and outer island communities, older people, and persons with limited mobility. (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 8).

iii. Embed disaggregated data systems (sex, age, disability, ethnicity, income, location) in monitoring frameworks to support intersectional analysis and track differentiated

mobility, safety, and service access outcomes. (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 11).

iv. Set quantified accessibility and inclusion targets, with mandatory reporting against RPACA DMF indicators. (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 11).

v. Apply budget tagging for inclusive infrastructure, ensuring resources allocated to accessibility and inclusion are visible, trackable, and compliant with ADB/GCF requirements (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 8).

vi. Conduct inclusive design consultations with women, persons with disabilities, youth, older people, and rural communities to ensure infrastructure reflects lived experience, differentiated risks, and cultural norms (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 7).

vii. Integrate climate-resilient design standards (e.g., flood-proofing, heat-resilient materials, storm surge protection, elevated pathways) that account for differentiated climate impacts on vulnerable groups (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 8).

viii. Require inclusive procurement and contractor compliance, including SEAH-safe worksites, non-discriminatory labour practices, and mandatory universal design specifications in all contracts and supervision protocols (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 9).

ix. Ensure accessibility and safety during emergencies, including evacuation-ready design, accessible shelters, safe transport routes, and continuity of essential services for persons with disabilities, older people, and caregivers (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 10).

x. Embed inclusive operations and maintenance (O&M) requirements to ensure accessibility, safety, and universal design features are preserved throughout the asset lifecycle (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 11).

xi. Integrate nature-based and hybrid infrastructure solutions (e.g., mangrove buffers, vegetated swales, ecosystem-based shoreline protection) that provide safe community-centered resilience benefits and reduce gendered and social vulnerabilities (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 12).

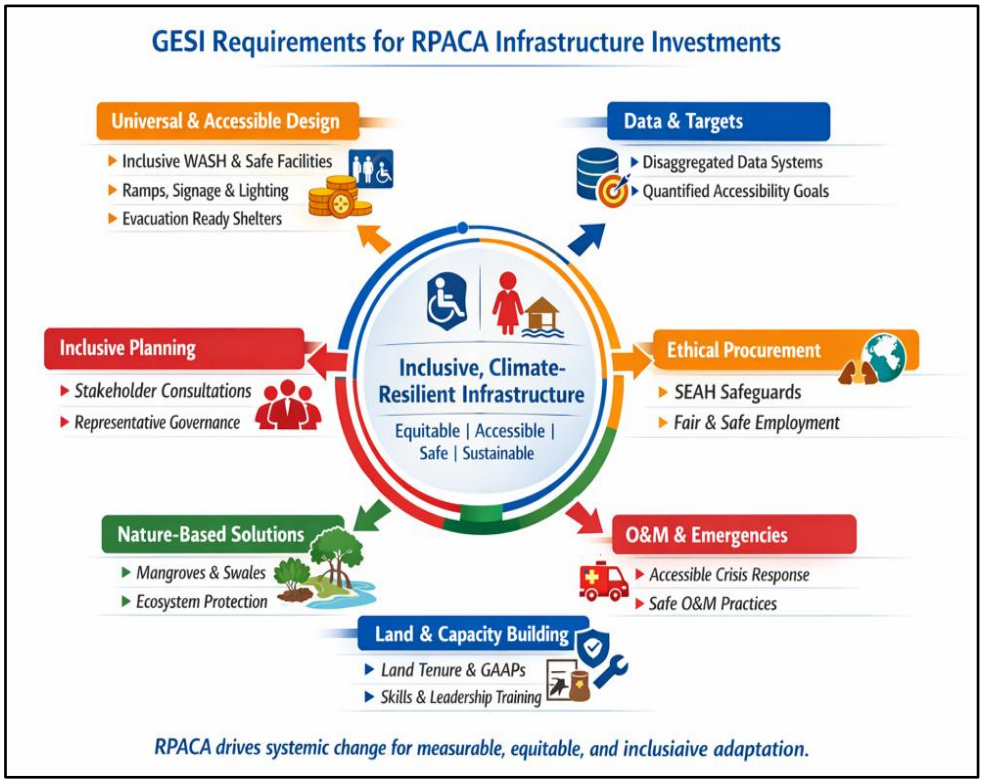
xii. Institutionalise representative governance structures in infrastructure and coastal planning committees, ensuring seats for women, persons with disabilities, youth, older people, and SOGIESC groups (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 13).

xiii. Provide tailored capacity building and vocational training linked to infrastructure projects, creating leadership pathways for under-represented groups (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 14).

xiv. Integrate survivor-centered SEAH safeguards into shelters, evacuation centers, and service delivery protocols, including grievance pathways and referral mechanisms (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 10).

xv. Address barriers to land, resource, and tenure access through GAAPs, representative governance, legal alignment, and quantified targets (Addressed under GAP Component 2, Activity 15).

Figure 10: Gender Equality and Social Requirements for RPACA Infrastructure Investments




## 6. Risk Identification, Mitigation and Monitoring

Pacific Island Countries face a set of systemic gender equality, disability inclusion, and social inclusion risks that can undermine the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of climate finance and adaptation investments. These risks reflect structural inequalities, gaps in institutional capacity, uneven access to finance and services, and persistent barriers to meaningful participation by women, youth, persons with disabilities, rural communities, and SOGIESC groups. They also mirror the findings of Section 2, which highlighted limited disaggregated data, weak enforcement of safeguards, inconsistent inclusion of under-represented groups, and the risk that climate action reinforces rather than reduces inequality.

To address these risks, RPACA applies a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to GESI risk management that aligns with the programme's Gender-Transformative Climate Action (GTCA) principles. This approach is structured around three pillars:

- **Risk Identification:** Using sex, age, disability, ethnicity, income, and location disaggregated data; inclusive fiscal risk analytics; market testing; and intersectional analysis to identify structural barriers and differentiated climate impacts.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Embedding inclusive governance, accessible and gender-responsive infrastructure, SEAH-safe systems, equitable climate finance mechanisms, and institutional capacity strengthening across all components.
- **Risk Monitoring and Accountability:** Applying clear indicators, targets, and reporting requirements aligned with national M&E systems and RPACA's DMF to track progress and ensure accountability for inclusive outcomes.

RPACA's approach recognises that equitable and meaningful engagement is central to climate resilience. Women, youth, persons with disabilities, older people, rural communities, and SOGIESC groups must have formal, resourced, and influential roles in governance, planning, design, and oversight. This includes representative seats in climate finance committees, infrastructure and coastal planning bodies, and national decision-making structures, as well as inclusive consultation processes that reflect lived experience and cultural norms.

RPACA also embeds gender-responsive and universal design standards across all infrastructure investments, ensuring safe, accessible, and resilient public facilities, transport nodes, shelters, and digital platforms. Climate finance systems must apply gender-responsive budget tagging, inclusive prioritisation criteria, SEAH-safe fiduciary safeguards, and accessible financial products and services that remove structural barriers for women, persons with disabilities, informal workers, MSMEs, and underserved communities.

To ensure transparency and compliance, the risk matrix is explicitly aligned with the full suite of RPACA GESI frameworks, which define the minimum expectations for inclusive governance, accessible infrastructure, equitable climate finance, and intersectional monitoring.

The risks and mitigation measures presented in this section are derived from, and aligned with, the full suite of RPACA gender equality, disability inclusion, and social inclusion frameworks. Together, these frameworks define the minimum expectations for inclusive governance, accessible and gender-responsive infrastructure, equitable climate finance systems, SEAH-safe operations, and intersectional monitoring across all RPACA components. Their intention is to prevent or mitigate the systemic risks identified in the risk matrix, ensuring that each safeguard directly addresses barriers to inclusion and resilience**.** They include:

- RPACA Gender Equality and Inclusion Principles for Climate Resilience (*see page 9*
- Gender Equality and Inclusion Criteria for Sub-Projects (*see page 26*)
- Gender Equality and Inclusion Requirements for Public Financial Management (*see page 31*)
- Gender Equality and Inclusion Requirements for Financial Instruments and Mechanisms (*see page 32*)
- Gender Equality and Inclusion Requirements for Strengthening National Financial Institutions (*see page 33*)
- Minimum Gender Equality and Inclusion Standards for Component 1 (*see page 34*)
- Gender Equality and Inclusion Requirements for RPACA Infrastructure Investments (*see page 37*)

These frameworks collectively underpin the structure of the risk matrix, ensuring that the identified risks and mitigation measures reflect the structural, institutional, financial, and operational safeguards required to deliver gender-transformative, disability-inclusive, and socially equitable climate resilience across the programme.

The following risk matrix combines measures that avert exclusion and safeguard against systemic risks with proactive actions that strengthen leadership, expand equitable access, and generate positive gender-related impacts. This balance ensures RPACA's approach is not only risk-averse but also deliberately transformative, embedding 'do good' measures that drive structural change across all programme components.

**RPACA Gender Equality and Inclusion Risk Management**

| Risk Category | Potential Risks (Activities/Programme) | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender Norms in Programme Governance & Leadership** | Governance arrangements risk becoming male-dominated, limiting women, youth, and persons with disabilities from leadership and decision-making roles. | Gender-transformative training for programme staff and contractors; quotas in programme committees; inclusive recruitment and appointment processes; community sensitisation linked to adaptation rollouts; mandatory representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in governance structures; voting rights and delegated authority mechanisms to ensure influence rather than symbolic participation. |
| **Institutional Capacity & Willingness for GESI Integration** | Ministries may lack clear mandates, adequate capacity, or willingness to integrate GESI into climate adaptation; resilience budgets may not tag or track GESI allocations. | Embedding GESI requirements in monitoring frameworks; strengthening institutional practices; supporting cross-agency coordination mechanisms; capacity building for NDAs, MFEDs, reserve banks, and local banks; inclusion of GESI criteria in institutional performance reviews. |
| **Women's Access to Resources & Services** | Women entrepreneurs, informal workers, and female-headed households face systemic barriers to land, collateral, finance, and business support services. | Gender-responsive lending criteria; expanded business support services tailored to women and youth; targeted outreach to rural and remote communities; digital inclusion initiatives; partnerships with cooperatives and women's associations; disaggregated monitoring; simplified documentation recognising informal income streams; reforms to collateral and tenure rules. |
| **Women's Access to Climate Finance** | Women's groups and community organisations face systemic barriers to accessing climate finance, including lack of collateral, limited proposal capacity, weak fiduciary safeguards, and exclusion from national planning. | Dedicated small grants and simplified application windows; capacity building for proposal development; gender-responsive fiduciary safeguards; mainstreaming gender in climate budgets; inclusion of women's representatives in NDC investment planning; disaggregated monitoring of finance flows; de-risking mechanisms prioritising women-led enterprises; SEAH-safe customer service protocols. |
| **Youth Exclusion from** | Young women and men face high unemployment, | Targeted vocational pathways linked to green sectors; simplified |

| Risk Category | Potential Risks (Activities/Programme) | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| **Climate-Resilient Opportunities** | limited access to training, apprenticeships, and climate-resilient sectors; migration pressures and caregiving constraints reduce opportunities. | small-grant windows for youth-led initiatives; youth representation in governance; outreach to rural/maritime areas; psychosocial support; integration of youth quotas in finance committees and infrastructure planning bodies. |
| **Disability Inclusion & Access to Services** | Persons with disabilities excluded from governance, consultations, and services due to inaccessible formats, stigma, and limited assistive devices. | Disability-inclusive design across programme processes; accessible formats (Braille, sign language, easy read); targeted outreach; decentralised stocks of assistive devices; partnerships with DPOs; disability-disaggregated indicators; mandatory accessibility audits; quantified inclusion targets reported against RPACA DMF indicators. |
| **Stakeholder Engagement & Representation** | Engagement processes risk being tokenistic, excluding women, youth, persons with disabilities, or SOGIESC groups. | Inclusive consultation protocols; participatory design workshops; resourcing for translation, transport, childcare; clear criteria for representative selection; feedback loops; integration of trusted actors and safe spaces; formalised standards requiring seats for women, youth, PWDs, and SOGIESC groups. |
| **Community Ownership of Programme Processes** | Engagement remains extractive (consultation only) rather than empowering; communities not involved in co-design. | Participatory planning; co-design of adaptation activities; community monitoring committees; feedback loops tied to delivery; community scorecards embedded in governance. |
| **PFM Systems & Safeguards for GESI Integration** | Fiscal systems fail to integrate GESI, reinforcing exclusion or allowing SEAH/discrimination. | Gender-responsive budget tagging; inclusive representation in budget committees; fiduciary safeguards against SEAH/discrimination; integration of accessibility standards into procurement; strengthened audit/oversight; regional harmonisation of safeguards; inclusive fiscal risk analytics; pipeline screening tools with GESI criteria. |
| **Accessible & Gender-Responsive Infrastructure** | Infrastructure designs fail to incorporate universal design, safe access, lighting, and safe spaces. | Accessibility benchmarks in procurement/supervision; consultation with diverse user groups; reforms to strengthen PIC building codes; quantified |

| Risk Category | Potential Risks (Activities/Programme) | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| | | accessibility targets with mandatory reporting; inclusive O&M requirements. |
| **Disaggregated Data in Climate Risk & M&E Systems** | Sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data not available; baselines weak; reporting inconsistent. | Mandatory disaggregated indicators; strengthened data collection/reporting; integration of social data into climate risk modelling; alignment with RPACA DMF structures. |
| **Accountability & Oversight in Programme Delivery** | Oversight of contractors weak; grievance redress under-resourced. | Community scorecards; independent audits; donor-mandated reporting; community accountability committees; SEAH-safe grievance mechanisms; transparent disclosure; structured referral pathways. |
| **Insurance Access & Equity** | Women, PWDs, older people, and rural households excluded due to complex claims, discriminatory premiums, inaccessible channels. | Simplified claims processes; accessible communication channels; inclusive premium structures; monitoring of uptake by sex, age, disability, location. |
| **Emergency Accessibility & Continuity of Services** | Evacuation routes, shelters, and essential services not accessible to PWDs, older people, caregivers, or rural households. | Evacuation-ready design standards; accessible shelters; safe transport routes; continuity planning for essential services prioritising vulnerable groups. |
| **Operations & Maintenance (O&M) of Infrastructure** | Universal design features degrade over time, reducing equitable access. | Inclusive O&M protocols; mandatory accessibility audits; lifecycle funding allocations; community monitoring of accessibility. |
| **Nature-Based and Hybrid Infrastructure Solutions** | Reliance on hard infrastructure only, missing ecosystem-based resilience opportunities; excludes participation and livelihood roles for women, youth, and persons with disabilities, limiting equitable resilience benefits. | Integration of mangrove buffers and vegetated swales; hybrid infrastructure combining engineered and nature-based solutions; participatory design with communities, explicit engagement of women's groups, youth collectives, and disability organizations in stewardship and monitoring; livelihood co-benefits for vulnerable households reliant on natural resources; hybrid solutions designed to improve safe access routes and reduce disaster |

| Risk Category | Potential Risks (Activities/Programme) | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| | | risks for rural households, caregivers, and older persons. |
| **Inclusive Procurement & Contractor Compliance Protocols** | Contractors fail to apply universal design or adopt non-discriminatory labour practices; SEAH safeguards not enforced. | Inclusive procurement rules; contractor compliance audits; mandatory SEAH-safe worksites; monitoring of labour practices. |

**Appendix 1: Pacific Country GESI-Climate Profiles**

## Cook Islands

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~24,500; 49% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Land area:** | ~240 km² across 15 islands (UNFCCC 2023) |
| **Urbanisation:** | ~75% reside on Rarotonga; outer islands face depopulation (World Bank, 2024) |
| **Poverty:** | ~13% below national poverty line; multidimensional poverty ~30% (ADB 2023) |
| **Disaster risk ranking:** | Ranked 24th globally (World Risk Report 2024) |
| **Key climate hazards:** | Cyclones, flooding, drought, sea level rise, coastal erosion (Cook Islands NAP 2023) |

The Cook Islands is a small Polynesian state comprising 15 islands, with three-quarters of the population concentrated on Rarotonga. Outer islands face depopulation due to limited services and economic opportunities, driving migration both internally and overseas (primarily to New Zealand and Australia). This reshapes household structures and service delivery, with rural communities increasingly female-headed (~20%) as men migrate for labour opportunities (ADB 2023; DFAT 2024).

The economy is highly service-oriented, with tourism contributing around 60% of GDP. Fisheries, agriculture, and remittances provide supplementary livelihoods, but climate-sensitive sectors such as tourism and coastal fisheries are acutely vulnerable to cyclones, coral bleaching, and coastal erosion (ADB 2023; World Bank 2024). Women dominate informal markets, handicrafts, and food processing, while men dominate construction, offshore fishing, and transport. These gendered divisions of labour shape exposure to climate shocks and access to higher-value economic opportunities.

Demographically, youth account for about 30% of the population, with NEET rates around 22% (SPC/ILO 2023). Disability prevalence is ~11% (Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2020–2025). Both groups face systemic barriers to education, employment, and participation in climate governance. Geographic isolation of outer islands compounds these challenges, with limited transport connectivity, shortages of teachers and health workers, and uneven access to resilient infrastructure (Ministry of Health 2023; Ministry of Education 2023).

The Cook Islands ranks 24th globally in the World Risk Index 2024, reflecting extreme exposure to cyclones, flooding, drought, sea level rise, and coastal erosion. Settlement patterns, reliance on tourism, and depopulation of outer islands amplify vulnerability, while climate-induced displacement and labour migration reshape household responsibilities and service demands.

## 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~55%; men ~68% (Cook Islands Labour Force Survey 2023–2024) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~17% (IPU 2024) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~22% (SPC/ILO 2023) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~11% (Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2020–2025) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~33% of women report lifetime violence (UN Women 2024) |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~65% of women hold accounts; collateral barriers persist (ADB 2023) |

### Gender Norms and Roles

Traditional norms and customary tenure strongly shape gender roles. Women carry primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, and water collection, which intensify during climate shocks when food gardens fail or water sources dry up (Beijing+30 Report 2024). These roles expose women to climate-linked health risks (waterborne disease, food insecurity) and reduce time for paid work. Men dominate fishing and construction, facing occupational hazards during disasters. Women's exclusion from land ownership under customary tenure (~90% of land is customary) limits their ability to access credit or invest in resilient housing, reinforcing economic dependency (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Economic Participation and Finance

Women are concentrated in informal markets, handicrafts, and agriculture — sectors highly vulnerable to climate variability, particularly saltwater intrusion and declining fish stocks (ADB 2023). Despite relatively high account ownership (~65%), access to credit is constrained by collateral requirements and gender norms. Female-headed households often lack extension services or climate finance, limiting adaptation investments (UNDP 2023). Tourism volatility further reduces women's income opportunities, while men's dominance in offshore fishing and construction channels recovery resources toward male-dominated sectors.

### Political Participation and Leadership

Women hold ~17% of parliamentary seats (IPU 2024), but representation at local council levels is lower. Cultural norms, limited campaign financing, and male-dominated networks constrain participation. Youth and persons with disabilities are similarly underrepresented in climate governance, despite disproportionate impacts (CEDAW 2023). This underrepresentation weakens integration of gender, youth, and disability perspectives in climate and DRM planning.

### GBV and SEAH

GBV prevalence is ~33% of women reporting lifetime violence (UN Women 2024). Climate-related displacement increases risks of GBV and SEAH, especially in overcrowded shelters lacking privacy and security. Referral pathways are limited outside Rarotonga, and stigma deters reporting (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023). Survivor services are unevenly distributed, leaving outer island women with limited access to protection and justice.

### Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities (~11% prevalence) face systemic barriers to education, employment, and disaster preparedness. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible. Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and

limited access to reproductive health services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Weak enforcement of accessibility standards in public infrastructure compounds exclusion.

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high (~22%). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in tourism limits jobs. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023). Migration to Rarotonga or overseas reshapes household structures, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens.

### Education and Skills

Access to education is uneven. Outer island schools face shortages of teachers and infrastructure, contributing to dropout rates among girls and children with disabilities (Ministry of Education 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning cycles. Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields, limiting entry into higher-value climate-resilient sectors such as renewable energy, engineering, and disaster management (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

### Social Protection

The Cook Islands' social protection system includes pensions and health subsidies, but coverage gaps remain. Schemes are not fully climate-shock responsive, leaving female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities vulnerable during disasters (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023). Reliance on remittances and community support networks creates uneven resilience, with outer islands particularly disadvantaged.

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

### National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2023)

Provides a 10-year roadmap for resilience in water, health, infrastructure, and food systems. References women, youth, and persons with disabilities but lacks measurable indicators, budget tagging, and monitoring mechanisms.

### Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for DRM & CCA (2011–2015; updated 2023)

Established integrated disaster and climate governance. The updated version strengthens institutional coordination but gender and disability safeguards remain weak in evacuation planning and infrastructure design.

### Climate Change Country Programme (2018–2030)

Serves as the overarching climate finance framework, aligning national priorities with GCF engagement. It sets out institutional arrangements, readiness pipelines, and accreditation pathways for direct access to climate finance.

### Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) Facility (GCF FP281, approved 2025)

A landmark programme unlocking USD 39.98 million in GCF finance plus USD 4.2 million co-finance. Establishes a unified mechanism for communities, NGOs, and small businesses to access climate finance directly through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management and the Bank of the Cook Islands. Includes grants, concessional loans, building retrofits, water security measures, and a revolving fund for sustained access. A gender action plan and gender assessment were integral to approval.

**National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy (2019–2024)**
Anchored in constitutional equality, prioritises women's leadership, economic empowerment, and GBV prevention. Integration into climate and DRM sectors is limited, with weak institutional capacity and funding gaps.

**Family Wellbeing Policy (2022–2032)**
Provides a holistic framework for family resilience, linking gender equality, child protection, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, and elder care. The policy explicitly references climate change and disasters, emphasising the need for inclusive preparedness, protection services, and social support systems during climate shocks.

**Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2020–2025)**
Aligns with CRPD, emphasising accessibility and inclusive services. Implementation hindered by limited data, weak enforcement of accessibility standards, and insufficient budget allocations.

**National Youth Policy (2021–2026)**
Promotes youth engagement in resilience and green jobs. Mechanisms for youth participation in climate finance and project monitoring are not operationalised.

**Sectoral Frameworks**
Agriculture and fisheries strategies reference resilience but overlook women's roles in coastal gleaning. Education frameworks lack commitments to disability-inclusive pedagogy and STEM pathways for girls.

## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges

**High exposure to hazards and uneven resilience**
Cyclones, flooding, drought, and sea level rise disproportionately affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Women's caregiving and water collection roles intensify during disasters, youth face prolonged school closures, and persons with disabilities are excluded from evacuation planning. Outer islands experience longer recovery times due to depopulation, limited transport connectivity, and shortages of health and education personnel (UNFCCC 2023; Ministry of Health 2023).

**Customary land tenure and housing vulnerability**
With ~90% of land under customary tenure, women rarely hold rights. This restricts access to credit and resilient housing, and limits relocation planning options. Post-disaster housing recovery often reinforces male control over land and resources, leaving female-headed households and persons with disabilities at greater risk of insecure shelter (Legal Gap Analysis 2023; ADB 2023).

**Service delivery gaps in outer islands**
Outer islands face shortages of health workers, teachers, and resilient infrastructure. Women and girls experience higher maternal mortality and dropout rates, while persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics and schools. Geographic isolation compounds vulnerability, with delays in supply delivery and limited communications infrastructure during climate events (Ministry of Health 2023; Ministry of Education 2023).

### GBV and SEAH risks in emergencies

Around 33% of women report lifetime GBV (UN Women 2024). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate risks, particularly where privacy, lighting, and security are absent. Referral pathways are weak outside Rarotonga, and stigma deters reporting. Survivor services are unevenly distributed, leaving outer island women with limited access to protection and justice (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

### Disability inclusion deficits

Despite policy commitments, infrastructure and services often lack universal design. Evacuation centers, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible. Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services. Weak enforcement of accessibility standards in public infrastructure compounds exclusion (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### Youth unemployment and limited pathways

Youth NEET rates (~22%) reflect exclusion from education, training, and employment. Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in tourism limits jobs. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways. Migration reshapes household structures, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

### Financial exclusion despite account ownership

Although ~65% of women hold bank accounts, collateral requirements and gender norms restrict access to credit. Youth and persons with disabilities face similar barriers. Female-headed households often lack extension services or climate finance, limiting adaptation investments. This weakens participation in higher-value, climate-resilient sectors (ADB 2023; UNDP 2023).

### Data and evidence limitations

Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors. This weakens accountability and limits the ability to target vulnerable groups effectively. Post-disaster needs assessments rarely include GESI-specific indicators, reducing evidence for inclusive planning (SPC 2023).

### Social protection gaps

Existing schemes (pensions, health subsidies) are not climate-shock responsive. Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities remain underserved. Reliance on remittances and community support networks creates uneven resilience, with outer islands particularly disadvantaged (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023).

### Institutional capacity constraints

Frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging. Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation. Donor-funded projects drive much of the progress, raising sustainability concerns (Office of Climate Change Cook Islands 2023).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Finance Systems (Component 1)**

- **Gender-responsive climate finance:** Build capacity in the Ministry of Finance and Bank of the Cook Islands to apply climate budget tagging and gender-responsive budgeting, as outlined in the *Climate Change Country Programme (2018–2030)* and operationalised through the *GCF Enhanced Direct Access Facility (2025–2032)*.
- **Inclusive access mechanisms:** Expand grant and concessional loan instruments under the EDA Facility to reach women's cooperatives, youth enterprises, and disability organisations, addressing collateral barriers identified in the *ADB Country Gender Assessment (2023)*.
- **Safeguards and accountability:** Integrate SEAH safeguards and survivor-centered referral pathways into climate finance governance, drawing on the *National Gender Equality Policy (2019–2024)* and *Family Wellbeing Policy (2022–2032)*.
- **Data systems:** Establish sex, age, and disability-disaggregated monitoring of climate finance beneficiaries, consistent with commitments in the *Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2020–2025)* and recommendations from SPC (2023).
- **Capacity building for vulnerable groups:** Provide technical assistance and financial literacy programmes to women, youth, and persons with disabilities to strengthen participation in climate finance pipelines, aligned with the *National Youth Policy (2021–2026)* and *Van KIRAP GESI Action Plan (SPC/UNDP 2023)*.

**Infrastructure and Services (Component 2)**

- **Universal design standards:** Ensure evacuation centers, schools, health facilities, and water systems incorporate accessibility and safety features, as mandated in the *Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2020–2025)* and referenced in the *NAP (2023)*.
- **GBV/SEAH safeguards:** Embed GBV prevention and SEAH safeguards in shelter design, relocation planning, and community engagement, consistent with the *National Gender Equality Policy (2019–2024)* and *Family Wellbeing Policy (2022–2032)*.
- **Vocational pathways:** Expand STEM and TVET opportunities for women and youth in climate-resilient infrastructure sectors (renewable energy, coastal protection), addressing gaps identified in the *UNESCO UNEVOC TVET Profile (2023)*.
- **Service delivery integration:** Strengthen health, education, and social protection systems to be climate-shock responsive, ensuring continuity of maternal health, disability services, and youth programmes during disasters (Ministry of Health 2023; Ministry of Education 2023).
- **Outer island resilience:** Prioritise investments in outer island infrastructure and services to reduce disparities in access, drawing on findings from the *JNAP update (2023)* and *World Bank Climate and Poverty Analysis (2024)*.

**References**


- UNFCCC. *Cook Islands National Adaptation Plan.* 2023.
- Prevention Web. *National Adaptation Plan of the Cook Islands.* 2023.
- UNDP. *Joint National Action Plan for DRM & CCA.* 2011–2015, updated 2023.
- Government of Cook Islands. *National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy.* 2019–2024.
- Government of Cook Islands. *Disability Inclusive Development Policy.* 2020–2025.

- Government of Cook Islands. *National Youth Policy.* 2021–2026.
- Government of Cook Islands. *Family Wellbeing Policy*. 2022–2032.
- Government of Cook Islands. *Climate Change Country Programme*. 2018–2030.
- Green Climate Fund. *Enhanced Direct Access Facility (FP281)*. Approved 2025
- Cook Islands Statistics Office. *Labour Force Survey Report 2023–2024.*
- World Bank. *Cook Islands Climate and Poverty Analysis.* 2024.
- ADB. *Country Gender Assessment: Cook Islands.* 2023.
- ADB. *Pacific Financial Inclusion Program.* 2022.
- UNDP. *NDC Partnership Plan – Gender and Human Rights Integration.* 2023.
- IPU. *Women in National Parliaments Database.* 2024.
- UN Women. *Cook Islands Gender Brief.* 2024.
- UNFPA. *Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Cook Islands.* 2014.
- Spotlight Initiative. *Cook Islands Country Reporting.* 2023.
- Beijing+30 National Narrative Report, Cook Islands. 2024.
- Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Cook Islands. 2023.
- Office of Climate Change, Cook Islands. *Institutional Assessments.* 2023.
- DFAT. *Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in Cook Islands.* 2024.
- Ministry of Health, Cook Islands. *Health Sector Review.* 2023.
- Ministry of Education, Cook Islands. *Statistical Yearbook.* 2023.
- UNESCO UNEVOC. *TVET Country Profile: Cook Islands.* 2023.
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Inclusion Review*. 2024.
- SPC & UNDP. *Van KIRAP GESI Action Plan*. 2023.

## Federated States of Micronesia

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~105,381 (ADB,2024), ~49% female |
| **Poverty:** | ~41% below national poverty line (ADB 2022) |
| **Disaster Risk:** | Ranked 14th globally (*World Risk Index 2024*) |
| **Youth (15–24):** | ~28% of population; NEET ~30% (SPC/ILO 2023) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~12% (Pacific Disability Forum 2024) |

**Geography and settlement**
FSM is a geographically dispersed nation of four states — Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae — spread across more than 600 islands. Settlement patterns vary significantly: Chuuk hosts the largest population, while outer islands are sparsely populated and face severe service delivery challenges. Communities are concentrated along coastal zones, leaving them highly exposed to sea level rise, storm surges, and saltwater intrusion. Geographic dispersion complicates infrastructure development, transport connectivity, and disaster response, creating uneven resilience across states.

**Climate vulnerability**
FSM is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, ranked 14th in the *World Risk Index 2024*. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and saltwater intrusion threaten food security and potable water supplies. Cyclones, droughts, and storm surges regularly damage housing, agriculture, and fisheries. Outer islands are particularly at risk, with limited evacuation options and slower recovery times. Climate variability is already driving displacement, with households relocating internally or migrating abroad to seek safety and livelihoods.

**Economic structure**
The economy is narrow and climate-sensitive. Subsistence agriculture and coastal fisheries dominate livelihoods, while remittances and aid flows provide critical buffers. Tourism is modest compared to other Pacific states, constrained by geographic isolation and limited infrastructure. Compact of Free Association (COFA) funding from the United States underpins fiscal stability, but climate shocks undermine infrastructure and food systems. Women are concentrated in informal markets, handicrafts, and subsistence agriculture, while men dominate offshore fishing and construction. These gendered divisions of labour shape exposure to hazards and recovery capacity.

**Migration and household dynamics**
Migration to the US and Guam is significant, reshaping household structures and leaving many female-headed households with increased caregiving and livelihood responsibilities. Remittances provide resilience but create volatility, as households depend on external income flows. Male labour migration reduces local capacity for farming, fishing, and community resilience activities, while women assume expanded roles in household management and community obligations. Youth aspirations are increasingly oriented toward overseas work, reducing participation in local labour markets and community leadership.

**Demographic pressures and social vulnerability**
FSM has a youthful population, with nearly one-third under 24. Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high, particularly in outer islands where formal labour markets and vocational opportunities are limited. Education access is uneven, with shortages of teachers and resilient

infrastructure in remote areas. Persons with disabilities (~12% prevalence) face systemic barriers to services, employment, and disaster preparedness. GBV prevalence (~32%) compounds vulnerability, with climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters increasing risks. These intersecting pressures underscore FSM's acute vulnerability and the urgent need for inclusive, well-resourced resilience measures.

## 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~45%; men ~70% (ILO/SPC 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~10% (IPU 2024) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~30% (SPC/ILO 2023) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~12% (Pacific Disability Forum 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~32% of women report lifetime violence (UN Women 2023) |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~50% of women hold accounts; collateral and tenure barriers persist (ADB 2023) |

### Gender norms and roles

Women's roles in caregiving, food preparation, and water collection intensify during climate shocks, exposing them to heightened health risks such as waterborne disease and food insecurity (UN Women 2023). Men dominate offshore fishing and construction, facing immediate physical risks during cyclones and storm surges, while women's reliance on subsistence agriculture and coastal gleaning leaves them vulnerable to saltwater intrusion and declining marine resources (SPC 2023). Customary land tenure restricts women's ownership rights, limiting their ability to access credit or secure resilient housing (ADB 2023). These gendered divisions of labour and structural inequalities reduce women's adaptive capacity and reinforce exclusion from climate-related decision making.

### Economic participation and finance

Women are concentrated in informal markets, handicrafts, and subsistence agriculture — sectors highly exposed to climate variability and external shocks (ADB 2023). Despite account ownership (~50%), women face barriers to credit, insurance, and savings products due to collateral requirements and land tenure constraints (Global Findex 2021). Female-headed households often lack extension services or climate finance, limiting investments in resilient housing, water storage, or climate-smart agriculture. Migration reshapes household economies: remittances provide resilience but leave women with increased responsibilities and limited access to climate-resilient technologies (SPC/ILO 2023). Control over remittances is gendered, with some women gaining financial decision-making power, while others remain excluded, reinforcing uneven resilience outcomes.

### Political participation and leadership

Women's representation in parliament (~10%) is among the lowest in the Pacific (IPU 2024). Cultural norms, limited campaign financing, and male-dominated networks constrain women's participation in governance. Women's voices are underrepresented in climate governance structures, weakening integration of gender perspectives in adaptation planning (UNFCCC Gender Climate Tracker 2023). Youth and persons with disabilities are similarly excluded from decision-making, despite disproportionate climate impacts. National climate policy documents reference vulnerable groups but lack mechanisms to ensure their consistent participation in governance structures or technical working groups (Climate Change Act 2019).

### GBV and SEAH

GBV prevalence is ~32% (UN Women 2023). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate risks, particularly where privacy, lighting, and security are absent (Pacific Protection Cluster 2024). Referral pathways are limited outside state capitals, and stigma deters reporting. Survivor services are unevenly distributed, leaving outer island women with limited access to protection and justice. National frameworks acknowledge GBV risks but integration into disaster preparedness, evacuation, and recovery processes remains weak (Family Safety Act 2014).

### Disability inclusion

Persons with disabilities (~12% prevalence) face systemic barriers to education, employment, and disaster preparedness (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible. Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services (UNFPA 2023). Weak enforcement of accessibility standards in public infrastructure compounds exclusion. Data gaps and limited disability-disaggregated monitoring hinder planning and resource allocation for inclusive services (ADB 2023).

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high (~30%) (SPC/ILO 2023). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in remittances limits household resilience. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023). Migration reshapes household structures, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens. Youth aspirations are increasingly oriented toward overseas work, reducing participation in local labour markets and community leadership, and weakening intergenerational knowledge transfer in agriculture and fisheries (SPC 2023).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

### Climate Change Act (2019)

Provides the legal foundation for climate governance, mandating integration of climate considerations across ministries and requiring inclusive consultation processes (FSM Government, 2019). It references vulnerable groups — women, youth, and persons with disabilities — but lacks operational mechanisms to ensure their participation. Implementation capacity varies across states, with outer islands facing the greatest challenges.

### Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC, 2020 update)

Commits FSM to adaptation in water, coastal protection, health, energy, and agriculture (UNFCCC, 2020). Vulnerable groups are referenced but measurable gender-specific targets and disaggregated monitoring indicators are absent. Institutional capacity to prepare bankable proposals and access climate finance remains constrained.

### FSM–GCF Country Program (2024–2027)

Serves as FSM's de facto *Climate Finance Strategy* (Department of Finance & Administration, 2022). Identifies priority projects for adaptation and mitigation, including food security, health resilience, and renewable energy. Establishes a pipeline of projects for GCF funding but notes gaps in policy, institutional operations, and gender/social inclusion safeguards. Ministries lack capacity for gender-responsive budgeting, and women's organisations, youth groups, and disability networks are underrepresented in project pipelines.

**National Climate Change and Health Action Plan (2022)**
Highlights climate-linked health risks, including waterborne diseases, maternal health vulnerabilities, and heat stress (FSM Ministry of Health, 2022). Acknowledges disproportionate burdens on women and children but lacks detailed strategies for disability inclusion or GBV risk mitigation in health service delivery.

**National Gender Equality Policy (2025–2030)**
Builds on the 2018 policy, reaffirming whole-of-society commitment to gender equality (FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs, 2025). Priorities include women's leadership, economic empowerment, GBV prevention, and mainstreaming gender across climate and disaster risk management. Aligns with Pacific regional commitments (PLGED, Beijing Platform for Action) and integrates disability and youth inclusion.

**Micronesia Gender Equality Framework (MGEF, 2025–2030)**
A subregional platform endorsed by Micronesian Leaders (SPC, 2025). Focuses on ending GBV, strengthening women's leadership, and advancing economic participation. Provides culturally grounded pathways for gender mainstreaming across Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, Kosrae, and neighbouring Micronesian states.

**Disability Policy (2020–2025)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments, emphasising accessibility, inclusive education, and participation in disaster preparedness (Pacific Disability Forum, 2024). Implementation is hindered by limited data, weak enforcement of accessibility standards, and insufficient budget allocations.

**Youth Policy (2021–2026)**
Promotes youth engagement in resilience, green jobs, and civic participation (SPC/ILO, 2023). However, mechanisms for youth participation in climate finance, project design, and monitoring remain weak.

**Family Safety Act (2014)**
Provides the legal framework for GBV prevention and survivor support (FSM Congress, 2014). While it acknowledges protection risks during disasters, integration into climate and disaster preparedness systems is limited. Referral pathways remain weak outside state capitals.

**Sectoral frameworks**
Agriculture, fisheries, and education strategies reference resilience but overlook gendered roles and disability inclusion (ADB, 2023; SPC, 2023). Water and sanitation plans highlight equitable access but do not consistently apply disability-inclusive design standards. Education sector plans reference resilient schools but fail to address girls' specific constraints during climate shocks, such as caregiving responsibilities and menstrual hygiene needs.

## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges

### Fragmented climate finance architecture

FSM's *GCF Country Program (2024–2027)* sets priorities but remains donor-driven and project-based rather than a consolidated national strategy (Department of Finance & Administration, 2022). Ministries lack capacity for gender-responsive budgeting, and women's organisations, youth groups, and disability networks are underrepresented in project pipelines.

### Limited operationalisation of gender frameworks

The *National Gender Equality Policy 2025–2030* and *Micronesia Gender Equality Framework (MGEF) 2025–2030* provide strong commitments but are not yet embedded in climate or disaster planning (FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs, 2025; SPC 2025). Sectoral ministries often

lack tools and training to apply gender analysis, leaving women excluded from relocation planning and climate finance decisions.

**Customary land tenure barriers**

Women's lack of land rights restricts access to credit, resilient housing, and relocation options (ADB 2023). This structural barrier undermines women's ability to invest in climate-resilient livelihoods and limits their participation in planned relocation processes.

**Service delivery gaps in outer islands**

Outer islands face shortages of health workers, teachers, and resilient infrastructure (SPC 2023). Women and girls experience higher maternal health risks and dropout rates, while persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics and schools. Geographic isolation compounds vulnerability, with delays in supply delivery and limited communications infrastructure during climate events.

**GBV and SEAH risks in emergencies**

GBV prevalence (~32%) is exacerbated by climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters (UN Women 2023). Referral pathways are weak outside state capitals, and stigma deters reporting. The *Family Safety Act (2014)* provides a legal framework but is not consistently integrated into disaster preparedness or relocation planning.

**Disability inclusion deficits**

Despite the *Disability Policy (2020–2025)*, evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services. Weak enforcement of accessibility standards in public infrastructure compounds exclusion.

**Youth unemployment and exclusion**

Youth NEET rates (~30%) reflect exclusion from education, training, and employment (SPC/ILO 2023). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while migration reshapes household structures, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens. The *Youth Policy (2021–2026)* promotes resilience and green jobs but lacks mechanisms for youth participation in climate finance and project monitoring.

**Financial exclusion despite account ownership**

Although ~50% of women hold bank accounts, collateral requirements and gender norms restrict access to credit (Global Findex 2021). Female-headed households often lack extension services or climate finance, limiting adaptation investments. This weakens participation in higher-value, climate-resilient sectors.

**Data and evidence limitations**

Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors (ADB 2023). This weakens accountability and limits the ability to target vulnerable groups effectively. Post-disaster needs assessments rarely include GESI-specific indicators, reducing evidence for inclusive planning.

**Social protection gaps**

Existing schemes (pensions, disability allowances) are not climate-shock responsive (ADB 2022). Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities remain underserved.

Reliance on remittances and community support networks creates uneven resilience, with outer islands particularly disadvantaged.

**Institutional capacity constraints**

Frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging (Climate Change Act 2019; NDC 2020). Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation.

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Finance Systems (Component 1)**

- **Consolidated climate finance strategy**: Support FSM to move beyond the project-driven *GCF Country Program (2024–2027)* toward a unified, gender-responsive national climate finance strategy (Department of Finance & Administration, 2022).
- **Gender-responsive budgeting and tagging:** Build Ministry of Finance capacity to apply gender-responsive budgeting and climate budget tagging, ensuring allocations for women, youth, and disability groups are visible and trackable (ADB, 2023).
- **Inclusive access mechanisms:** Expand concessional finance and grant instruments to reach women's cooperatives, youth enterprises, and disability organisations, addressing collateral barriers and land tenure constraints (Global Findex, 2021).
- **Safeguards and accountability**: Integrate GBV/SEAH safeguards and survivor-centred referral pathways into climate finance governance, consistent with the *Family Safety Act (2014)* and *National Gender Equality Policy (2025–2030)*.
- **Data systems:** Establish sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated monitoring of climate finance beneficiaries, consistent with recommendations in the *Micronesia Gender Equality Framework (2025–2030)*.
- **Capacity building for vulnerable groups:** Provide technical assistance and financial literacy programmes to women, youth, and persons with disabilities to strengthen participation in climate finance pipelines (SPC/ILO, 2023).

**Infrastructure and Services (Component 2)**

- **Universal design standards:** Ensure evacuation centres, schools, health facilities, and WASH systems incorporate accessibility and safety features, as mandated in the *Disability Policy (2020–2025)* (Pacific Disability Forum, 2024).
- **GBV/SEAH safeguards in displacement:** Embed GBV prevention and SEAH safeguards in shelter design, relocation planning, and migration frameworks, responding directly to risks highlighted in the *Family Safety Act (2014)* and *National Gender Equality Policy (2025–2030)*.
- **Vocational pathways:** Expand STEM and TVET opportunities for women and youth in climate-resilient infrastructure sectors (renewable energy, coastal protection), addressing gaps in the *Youth Policy (2021–2026)* (SPC/ILO, 2023).

- **Service delivery integration:** Strengthen health, education, and social protection systems to be climate-shock responsive, ensuring continuity of maternal health, disability services, and youth programmes during disasters (FSM Ministry of Health, 2022).
- **Outer island resilience:** Prioritise investments in outer island infrastructure and services to reduce disparities in access, drawing on findings from the *NDC (2020)* and *Climate Change Act (2019)*.
- **Migration and displacement planning:** Develop gender-sensitive migration frameworks that protect women's rights to health, housing, and livelihoods, addressing the "double exclusion" documented in regional GBV and displacement assessments (UN Women, 2023).

**References**


- FSM Government. *Climate Change Act*. 2019.
- UNFCCC. *Federated States of Micronesia Revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)*. 2020.
- FSM Ministry of Health. *National Climate Change and Health Action Plan*. 2022.
- FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs. *National Gender Policy*. 2018.
- FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs. *National Gender Equality Policy 2025–2030*.
- SPC. *Micronesia Gender Equality Framework (MGEF) 2025–2030*.
- FSM Congress. *Family Safety Act*. 2014.
- FSM Department of Finance & Administration. *FSM–GCF Country Program 2024–2027*.
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability Policy 2020–2025 Review*. 2024.
- SPC/ILO. *Youth Policy 2021–2026 and Labour Force Survey*. 2023.
- ADB. *Country Gender Assessment: FSM*. 2023.
- UN Women. *FSM Gender Brief*. 2023.
- Global Findex. *Financial Inclusion Data*. 2021.
- SPC. *Climate and Poverty Analysis: FSM*. 2023.
- UNFPA. *GBV and Disability Inclusion in the Pacific*. 2023.
- World Risk Index. *Global Risk Ranking*. 2024.

## Fiji Islands

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population** | 882,570; 49.3% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Poverty** | 24.1% of the population below the national poverty line (HIES 2019–20, revised estimate). |
| **Disaster risk** | Ranked 15th globally (World Risk Report 2024). Note: Fiji's rank has varied in earlier years, e.g. 12th in 2022. |

Fiji is an archipelago of more than 300 islands, with the majority of the population residing on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Urbanisation has increased steadily, with around 56% of the population living in urban areas in 2017, reflecting growth in the Suva–Nausori corridor and western urban centres such as Nadi and Lautoka (FBoS 2017). Rural communities remain predominant in maritime and interior areas, where access to services, markets, and infrastructure is more constrained. Population distribution reflects a strong concentration along transport corridors and coastal zones, while many maritime islands have small, dispersed populations with limited-service access. Internal migration from rural and outer-island communities to urban and peri-urban areas continues to shape settlement patterns, contributing to the expansion of informal settlements in flood-prone and low-lying areas. Climate-related pressures, including coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and repeated cyclone impacts, are increasingly influencing mobility decisions, with some households relocating seasonally or permanently to larger islands or higher-elevation areas. Fiji has also initiated planned relocation processes for communities facing severe climate risks, highlighting the growing intersection between climate change, land availability, and population movement.

The country is highly exposed to tropical cyclones, flooding, landslides, storm surges, and sea-level rise, with repeated major events (e.g. Cyclones Winston, Yasa, Ana) affecting housing, agriculture, and critical infrastructure. Low-lying coastal settlements, informal peri-urban areas, and maritime islands are particularly vulnerable to coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and storm surge impacts. Climate variability and projected sea-level rise are expected to intensify pressures on water security, food systems, and transport connectivity. These hazards also influence internal migration patterns, with some communities experiencing progressive displacement and increased reliance on urban centres for services, employment, and recovery support.

The economy is diversified relative to many Pacific neighbours, with key sectors including tourism, sugar, agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, and remittances. Tourism and related services are major employers, particularly for women and youth, but are highly sensitive to climate shocks and external disruptions. Labour migration to Australia, New Zealand, and other destinations contributes to household income through remittances and shapes household composition, including female-headed households and intergenerational caregiving arrangements. Labour mobility schemes have expanded in recent years, increasing the number of working-age men and women temporarily overseas and influencing local labour availability, care responsibilities, and community participation.

Fiji has a relatively young population, with a median age of 27.5 years and a substantial youth cohort (15–24 years) (FBoS 2017). Youth unemployment and underemployment remain persistent, especially in rural and maritime areas where formal labour markets and vocational opportunities are limited. National development priorities are articulated in the 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan (NDP), which emphasises inclusive socio-economic development, climate and disaster resilience, and improved service delivery. Climate change is

recognised as a core development challenge, with adaptation, relocation of at-risk communities, and resilient infrastructure central to planning. Population mobility, land pressures, and the need for equitable access to services are increasingly reflected in national planning, particularly in relation to relocation, urban growth, and the resilience of rural and maritime communities.

## 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~40–45%; men ~75–80% (World Bank/ILO 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~18–20% (IPU 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~64% lifetime physical and/or sexual IPV among ever-partnered women (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre / UN Women, 2013 study) |
| **Financial Inclusion** | 79% of women and 86% of men hold an account; women are less likely to save or borrow formally (Global Findex 2021). |
| **Disability prevalence** | 13–14% (2017 Census Disability modules) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~25–30% (SPC/ILO 2023) |

### Gender norms and roles

Gendered roles in Fiji shape exposure to climate impacts, access to services, and the ability to recover from shocks. Women carry primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, water collection, and household management, all of which intensify during cyclones, flooding, and water shortages. These responsibilities increase women's exposure to climate linked health risks, including waterborne diseases, heat stress, and food insecurity. In rural and maritime communities, women's reliance on subsistence agriculture, coastal gleaning, and nearshore fisheries exposes them to saltwater intrusion, coastal erosion, and declining marine resources. Men's roles in offshore fisheries, construction, and transport place them at higher immediate physical risk during extreme weather events, while women face longer term livelihood insecurity due to their concentration in informal and climate sensitive sectors. Traditional and church-based norms continue to influence household decision making and can limit women's participation in relocation planning, land negotiations, and climate related resource allocation.

High levels of labour migration to Australia and New Zealand through seasonal work and longer-term mobility schemes are reshaping gender roles and household dynamics. When men migrate, women often assume full responsibility for farming, fisheries, caregiving, household management, and community obligations. This increases their workload and their exposure to climate related stresses. When women migrate, older women and adolescent girls frequently take on additional unpaid care responsibilities, while men may assume roles traditionally performed by women. These shifts can create opportunities for women's leadership and economic decision making, but they can also shift established norms around household authority, control of remittances, and expectations of care.

Labour mobility also intersects with climate vulnerability. Households with absent working age members may have reduced capacity to prepare for cyclones, maintain farms, repair homes, or participate in community-based adaptation activities. During disasters, women headed or grandparent headed households may face increased challenges accessing assistance, relocating safely, or managing recovery tasks without adult labour.

Emerging social pressures, including rising substance use, opioid misuse, and increasing HIV incidence, also intersect with gender norms. Women and girls often carry responsibility for caring for affected family members. Stigma and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services can constrain their ability to seek support. These pressures increase vulnerability during climate shocks, when health systems are overstretched and mobility is restricted.

**Economic participation and access to finance**

Women's economic participation is shaped by sectoral segregation, limited access to productive assets, and climate-sensitive livelihoods. Women are concentrated in tourism, retail, services, and informal market activities — sectors highly exposed to cyclones, flooding, and economic disruptions. Rural and maritime women depend on agriculture and small-scale fisheries, both of which are vulnerable to climate variability and environmental degradation.

Despite relatively high financial inclusion, gender gaps persist in access to credit, insurance, and savings products that support climate-resilient livelihoods. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities face barriers related to collateral requirements, land tenure constraints, financial literacy, and limited access to formal institutions in remote areas. These constraints reduce the ability of vulnerable groups to invest in resilient housing, water storage, climate-smart agriculture, or livelihood diversification.

Labour mobility schemes have become a major livelihood strategy, with remittances forming a critical buffer against climate shocks. However, the outflow of working-age men and women can reduce local labour availability for agriculture, fisheries, and community resilience activities. Women in migrant-sending households often take on additional economic responsibilities, including managing farms, small businesses, and remittance flows, but may lack access to credit, extension services, or climate-resilient technologies.

Control over remittances is gendered: in some households, women gain greater financial decision-making power, while in others, remittances are controlled by male relatives or directed toward immediate consumption rather than climate-resilient investments. Migration also increases reliance on older women, who may be caring for grandchildren while managing climate-sensitive livelihoods with limited support.

For youth, labour mobility offers income opportunities but can also delay entry into local labour markets, reduce participation in community leadership, and reduce opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transfer in agriculture and fisheries, all of which have implications for climate adaptation capacity.

**Political participation and leadership**

Women, youth, and persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in national and local governance structures, including climate and disaster risk management committees. While women hold around 18–20 percent of parliamentary seats, their representation in provincial councils, municipal bodies, and traditional leadership structures is lower. This limits their influence over decisions related to land use, relocation, infrastructure investments, and resource distribution.

Youth participation is constrained by limited leadership pathways, high unemployment, and migration patterns that reduce their presence in community decision making. Persons with disabilities face physical, communication, and attitudinal barriers that restrict participation in climate planning processes. Although national policies reference inclusive participation, practical mechanisms such as accessible information, targeted consultations, and gender responsive budgeting are inconsistently applied across sectors.

National climate policy documents, including the National Adaptation Plan and the Climate Change Act, acknowledge that women, youth, and persons with disabilities are not consistently represented in climate governance structures or technical working groups. These documents also note limited participation in national climate finance processes, including NDC implementation, sector adaptation planning, and project pipeline development.

Assessments by the UNFCCC Gender Climate Tracker and regional climate finance readiness programmes highlight that women's organisations, youth groups, and disability organisations have limited engagement in climate investment planning, accreditation processes, and monitoring frameworks. Capacity constraints at local government level further restrict participation in preparing bankable proposals or contributing to climate budget submissions.

As a result, women, youth, and persons with disabilities have limited influence over climate finance priorities, adaptation investments, and relocation planning, despite being identified as priority groups in national policy frameworks.

**GBV and SEAH**

High rates of gender-based violence intersect with climate vulnerability in Fiji. Around 64 percent of ever partnered women have experienced physical and or sexual IPV. Climate related displacement, overcrowded shelters, damaged infrastructure, and disruptions to community protection networks increase risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment during and after disasters.

Emerging social issues, including rising substance use, opioid misuse, and increased HIV incidence, further heighten risks for women and girls. Substance use related violence, transactional sex linked to economic stress, and reduced access to health services during disasters all contribute to increased vulnerability.

While specialised services exist in urban centres, access in rural and maritime areas is limited by distance, cost, and availability of trained personnel. Weak referral pathways and limited awareness of services further constrain survivor access to support. National humanitarian assessments and protection cluster reporting note that GBV risks increase during evacuations and in temporary shelters due to overcrowding, limited privacy, and reduced access to safe WASH facilities. These assessments also highlight that disruptions to policing, social services, and community protection mechanisms during cyclones and flooding reduce the availability of timely support for survivors.

Fiji's National Adaptation Plan and Climate Change Act acknowledge that women, girls, and persons with disabilities face increased protection risks during climate related events, and that GBV and SEAH considerations are not consistently integrated into preparedness, evacuation, or recovery processes. These documents also identify gaps in training, safe shelter design, and coordination between climate, disaster management, and protection agencies.

Integrating GBV and SEAH risk mitigation into preparedness, evacuation, and recovery processes remains essential for safe and equitable climate resilience.

**Disability inclusion**

Persons with disabilities experience disproportionate climate impacts due to barriers in accessing information, infrastructure, and services. Many evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and public buildings do not meet accessibility standards, and early warning systems are not consistently available in accessible formats. During disasters, persons with disabilities may face challenges evacuating without assistance, accessing medication or assistive devices, or navigating damaged infrastructure.

Health system pressures, including rising NCDs, mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and HIV, intersect with disability and increase vulnerability during climate shocks when services are disrupted. In rural and maritime areas, limited availability of assistive devices, rehabilitation services, and trained personnel further restricts participation in preparedness and recovery. Data gaps and limited disability disaggregated monitoring hinder planning and resource allocation for inclusive services.

National assessments note that persons with disabilities are not consistently included in disaster preparedness training, community early warning systems, or relocation planning processes. Fiji's National Adaptation Plan and Climate Change Act identify the need for accessible communication, inclusive shelter design, and disability responsive evacuation procedures, but implementation varies across locations.

Post disaster reviews in Fiji have also highlighted that disruptions to health services, shortages of assistive devices, and limited accessible transport increase risks for persons with disabilities during cyclones and flooding. These reviews emphasise the need for coordinated support between health, protection, and disaster management agencies to ensure continuity of care and accessible services during emergencies.

Intersectionality further shapes climate vulnerability for persons with disabilities. Women and girls with disabilities face additional barriers related to safety, caregiving expectations, and access to sexual and reproductive health services during climate related disruptions. Young people with disabilities experience limited access to education, training, and digital information, which reduces their ability to participate in preparedness activities or adaptation planning. Persons with disabilities living in poverty, informal settlements, or remote maritime areas have reduced access to transport, communication, and support networks during emergencies. National and regional assessments also note that persons with disabilities who identify as SOGIESC may face additional stigma and exclusion, which can limit access to shelters, services, and community protection mechanisms during disasters.

**Youth**

Youth face high unemployment and NEET rates, particularly in rural and maritime areas where access to vocational training, apprenticeships, and formal labour markets is limited. Climate change affects youth livelihoods through declining agricultural productivity, reduced fisheries resources, and disruptions to tourism and service sectors.

Rising substance use, opioid misuse, and increased HIV incidence among young people compound vulnerability, particularly in urban informal settlements where overcrowding, unemployment, and limited access to services intersect.

Labour mobility is increasingly shaping youth aspirations, with many young people prioritising overseas work over local employment or training pathways. While remittances can strengthen household resilience, the temporary or long-term absence of young adults reduces community capacity for climate resilient agriculture, fisheries management, and disaster preparedness. Youth headed or grandparent headed households may face heightened vulnerability during climate shocks due to limited labour, income instability, and reduced access to services.

Young women face additional mobility, caregiving, and safety constraints that reduce their access to training and employment. Migration to urban centres or overseas shapes household labour availability and community cohesion, influencing the capacity of communities to engage in collective adaptation and disaster preparedness. Girls face specific risks during climate shocks, including increased caregiving responsibilities, reduced school attendance, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products and safe WASH facilities. Post disaster assessments in Fiji have

noted that girls may be withdrawn from school to support household recovery or care for younger siblings, which increases the risk of long-term disengagement from education.

Girls also experience reduced mobility and higher safety concerns when travelling to school or accessing services during and after disasters. Limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and services further constrains their ability to manage health needs during climate related disruptions. National youth and climate policy documents highlight that girls are not consistently included in climate planning processes, leadership programmes, or community decision making platforms, which limits their participation in adaptation and resilience initiatives.

**Education and skills**

While Fiji has relatively high levels of basic education access, disparities persist by location, gender, disability, and socio-economic status. Rural and maritime schools often face shortages of trained teachers, learning materials, and resilient infrastructure. Students with disabilities encounter barriers related to physical accessibility, assistive devices, inclusive pedagogy, and specialist support.

Climate related disruptions such as cyclones, flooding, and heat stress damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning, with disproportionate impacts on students who already face barriers. Rising substance use, mental health pressures, and increased HIV incidence among adolescents further affect attendance, retention, and learning outcomes. Post disaster assessments in Fiji have noted that girls may experience reduced attendance due to increased caregiving responsibilities, safety concerns when travelling to school, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products and safe WASH facilities during and after climate related events. These factors increase the risk of temporary or permanent dropout for girls in affected areas.

Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM fields and technical training, limiting their participation in emerging climate resilient sectors. Girls in rural and maritime areas face additional constraints related to transport, boarding availability, and access to digital learning, which reduces opportunities to participate in climate related TVET pathways. National education and climate policy documents also highlight gaps in integrating climate resilience into curricula and in ensuring that girls have equal access to information, training, and skills development relevant to adaptation and green economy opportunities. Strengthening inclusive, resilient school infrastructure and expanding TVET pathways linked to climate resilient livelihoods are critical for equitable adaptation.

**Social protection**

Fiji's social protection system provides important support through social pensions, disability allowances, and poverty targeted assistance, but gaps remain for informal workers, youth, and survivors of GBV. Existing schemes are not fully climate shock responsive, and there are limitations in disability benefits, livelihood recovery support, and targeted assistance for female headed households.

Climate shocks intersect with rising substance use, opioid misuse, and HIV incidence, increasing demand for health and social services that are often overstretched during emergencies. Households caring for family members affected by chronic illness, disability, or addiction face heightened vulnerability when disasters disrupt income, mobility, and access to care. Post disaster assessments in Fiji have noted that girls and young women may experience reduced access to essential items such as menstrual hygiene products and safe WASH facilities, which can increase protection risks and affect school attendance during recovery periods.

Labour mobility creates new forms of vulnerability that social protection systems are not yet designed to address. Households dependent on remittances may face sudden income shocks if migration is disrupted by cyclones, illness, or economic downturns. Female headed households created through migration may not be adequately targeted by existing schemes, despite increased caregiving burdens and reduced labour availability for climate resilient livelihoods. Older women caring for grandchildren in migrant sending households may also face limited access to social assistance, particularly in rural and maritime areas where administrative processes and transport barriers restrict enrolment.

Limited administrative capacity, absence of scalable cash transfer mechanisms, and weak integration of GESI considerations in disaster financing constrain timely support to vulnerable groups. National assessments highlight that persons with disabilities, women with disabilities, and girls in low-income households are not consistently reached by emergency cash assistance or livelihood recovery programmes. Strengthening coordination between social welfare, protection, and disaster management agencies is identified as a priority for ensuring inclusive and timely support during climate related events. Strengthening the linkages between social protection, climate resilience, and GBV response can enhance equitable recovery and reduce long term vulnerability.

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

Fiji has an extensive policy architecture for climate change, disaster risk management, gender equality, disability inclusion, and youth development. These frameworks outline national priorities for adaptation, mitigation, relocation, and inclusive development. They collectively emphasise resilience, participation, and the need to support vulnerable groups across sectors. Implementation capacity varies across ministries and between urban, rural, and maritime areas, affecting the extent to which GESI commitments are operationalised.

### Climate Change Act 2021

The Climate Change Act provides the legal foundation for climate governance in Fiji. It mandates integration of climate considerations across government, establishes institutional arrangements for mitigation and adaptation, and sets requirements for planned relocation. The Act references vulnerable groups and requires inclusive consultation processes, accessible information, and consideration of social impacts in climate decision making. It also outlines responsibilities for ministries to integrate gender, youth, and disability inclusion into climate planning, although practical mechanisms for doing so remain limited.

### National Adaptation Plan (NAP)

The NAP, adopted in 2018 and updated in 2021. identifies priority adaptation actions across sectors including water, agriculture, fisheries, health, infrastructure, and education. It recognises gender, youth, and disability inclusion as cross cutting priorities. The NAP highlights the need for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data, inclusive consultation processes, and targeted support for vulnerable groups, but sectoral implementation varies. Many sector plans do not yet apply GESI responsive budgeting or include measurable GESI indicators.

### National Climate Change Policy

The policy outlines Fiji's long term climate vision and provides guidance for mainstreaming climate resilience across government. It references the importance of inclusive participation and equitable access to climate information and services. The policy identifies women, youth, and persons with disabilities as priority groups but does not include detailed operational guidance for integrating GESI into sectoral planning or monitoring.

**National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy**

The policy emphasises community-based preparedness, early warning systems, and resilient infrastructure. It acknowledges the need for disability inclusive early warning formats, gender responsive evacuation procedures, and protection of vulnerable groups during emergencies. However, evacuation centres, communication systems, and emergency procedures are not consistently accessible or gender responsive, particularly in rural and maritime areas.

**Disaster Risk Management Act and Plan**

The Act and associated plans guide national and local disaster management structures. They outline responsibilities for preparedness, response, and recovery, but do not consistently integrate gender, disability, or youth considerations into operational procedures. Gaps remain in GBV risk mitigation, safe shelter design, and coordination between protection and disaster management agencies.

**Revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2020)**

The NDC commits Fiji to adaptation and mitigation actions across water, coastal protection, health, energy, and agriculture. It references vulnerable groups but does not include measurable GESI specific targets or disaggregated monitoring indicators. The NDC identifies the need for strengthened institutional capacity to access climate finance, including the development of proposals that integrate gender and social inclusion.

**National Gender Policy (2014)**

The policy outlines priorities for gender equality across leadership, economic empowerment, education, health, and protection. It includes commitments related to gender mainstreaming in climate change and disaster risk management, but implementation is uneven. Coordination between gender and climate agencies remains limited, and sectoral ministries often lack the capacity to apply gender analysis in climate planning.

**National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (2023–2033)**

The plan provides a national framework for preventing violence against women and girls. It recognises that climate related displacement, overcrowded shelters, and disruptions to services increase protection risks. The plan highlights the need for GBV risk mitigation in disaster preparedness and response, but integration into climate and DRM systems is still developing.

**National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018–2025)**

The policy aligns with CRPD commitments and outlines priorities for accessibility, inclusive education, employment, and participation in disaster preparedness and response. It emphasises accessible communication, inclusive early warning systems, and disability responsive evacuation procedures. Implementation varies across locations, and gaps remain in accessible infrastructure, assistive devices, and disability disaggregated data.

**National Youth Policy (2023–2027)**

The policy prioritises youth employment, skills development, leadership, and participation in climate resilience activities. It recognises youth as key actors in adaptation and environmental stewardship but does not include detailed mechanisms for ensuring youth participation in climate finance, project design, or monitoring**.**

### National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP outlines long term development priorities including resilient infrastructure, inclusive growth, and improved service delivery. It references gender equality and social inclusion but does not include specific climate related GESI targets or indicators.

### Sectoral frameworks

Sectoral plans in water, agriculture, fisheries, health, education, and infrastructure include climate resilience priorities. Integration of GESI varies across sectors. Water and sanitation plans reference equitable access but do not consistently include disability inclusive design standards. Agriculture and fisheries plans highlight climate smart practices but include limited analysis of gendered roles or youth participation. Education sector plans reference resilient schools but do not fully address girls' specific needs during climate disruptions.

In summary, Fiji has strong national commitments to inclusive climate action, but operationalisation of GESI commitments remains uneven. Sectoral ministries, local governments, and community-based organisations often lack the resources, training, and data required to integrate gender, youth, and disability considerations into adaptation investments. Practical pathways for women, youth, and persons with disabilities to influence climate budgeting, project design, and monitoring remain limited. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving coordination, and embedding GESI requirements into sectoral planning and financing processes are critical to ensuring that national commitments translate into equitable climate resilience on the ground.

## 4. Gaps and Challenges

### Exposure to climate related hazards and environmental pressures

Fiji faces high exposure to cyclones, flooding, landslides, storm surges, coastal erosion, and saltwater intrusion. These hazards affect housing, water security, food production, transport links, and essential services across Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, and the maritime islands. Recurrent cyclones and flooding disproportionately affect informal settlements in peri-urban areas, where housing quality, drainage, and access to services are limited. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities face increased risks due to mobility constraints, caregiving responsibilities, and limited access to safe evacuation options. Rural and maritime communities experience prolonged service disruptions following disasters, affecting access to health care, education, and markets.

### Land tenure constraints and exposure of settlements

Customary land tenure systems and limited availability of secure land for housing affect the ability of vulnerable groups to relocate away from hazard-prone areas. Informal settlements in floodplains, riverbanks, and coastal zones remain highly exposed to climate hazards. Women and youth often have limited decision-making power in land negotiations, and persons with disabilities face barriers accessing safe and resilient housing. Planned relocation processes include provisions for community consultation, but practical mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in site selection, housing design, and livelihood planning remain limited.

### Pressure on essential services and infrastructure

Climate related events place significant pressure on water, sanitation, health, and education systems. Damage to water infrastructure and contamination of water sources increase health risks, particularly for women and girls who manage household water collection and hygiene. Overcrowded evacuation centres and schools reduce accessibility for persons with disabilities and limit privacy and safety for women and girls. Rural and maritime schools face prolonged

closures following cyclones, affecting attendance and learning outcomes, especially for girls who may take on additional caregiving responsibilities during recovery periods.

**Gender-based violence and limited protection services**

Fiji has high rates of intimate partner violence, and climate related displacement, overcrowded shelters, and disruptions to community protection networks increase risks of GBV and SEAH during emergencies. Protection services are concentrated in urban centres, with limited availability in rural and maritime areas. Gaps in trained responders, safe shelter design, and awareness of referral pathways constrain timely access to support. Post disaster assessments have noted increased demand for protection services following cyclones, alongside reduced mobility and communication access for survivors.

**Barriers to disability inclusion**

Persons with disabilities experience barriers to accessing education, health services, employment, and participation in community decision making. Accessibility in shelters, WASH facilities, and transport varies across locations, and early warning systems are not consistently disability inclusive. Rural and maritime areas face shortages of assistive devices, accessible communication formats, and trained personnel. Built infrastructure often does not meet accessibility standards, limiting participation in preparedness and adaptation activities. Disruptions to health services during disasters further affect persons with disabilities who rely on regular medication, rehabilitation, or assistive technologies.

**Youth unemployment and limited skills development**

Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high, particularly in rural and maritime areas where access to vocational training, apprenticeships, and formal labour markets is limited. Young women face additional constraints related to mobility, caregiving responsibilities, and safety concerns. Limited pathways into climate resilient sectors, combined with migration pressures and constrained access to land and finance, reduce youth participation in adaptation and green economy opportunities. Climate related disruptions to education and training further affect youth transitions into employment.

**Limited financial inclusion and access to credit**

Women, youth, and persons with disabilities have lower access to formal financial services and credit. Collateral requirements, land tenure constraints, and limited financial literacy restrict opportunities to invest in livelihoods or climate resilient activities. Informal enterprises dominate women's and youth livelihoods, but limited access to savings, insurance, and financial services constrains their ability to recover from climate shocks or diversify income sources. Rural and maritime communities face additional barriers due to limited access to banking infrastructure and digital services.

**Constraints in data availability and disaggregated information**

Sex, age, and disability disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors. This limits the ability to identify and monitor the needs of vulnerable groups. Post disaster assessments rarely include GESI specific indicators, and sector ministries have limited capacity to collect or use disaggregated data for planning, budgeting, or monitoring. Gaps in disability disaggregated data affect the design of inclusive early warning systems, evacuation procedures, and shelter planning.

**Geographic dispersion and transport limitations**

Fiji's geographic dispersion and limited transport connectivity affect access to health, education, markets, and emergency services. Maritime communities experience delays in receiving supplies and support during climate related events. Limited communications infrastructure, irregular

shipping schedules, and high transport costs reduce access to early warning information, evacuation support, and essential services. These constraints disproportionately affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who may have limited mobility or access to transport.

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

### Finance Systems (Component 1)

- **Strengthen gender-responsive climate finance:** Support the Ministry of Finance to integrate gender, youth, and disability indicators into climate budget submissions and NDC implementation, addressing gaps noted in the *Climate Change Act 2021* and *NAP 2018/2021*.
- **Inclusive access to finance:** Expand concessional credit and insurance products for women, youth, and persons with disabilities, overcoming collateral and tenure barriers highlighted in the *ADB Country Gender Assessment*.
- **Capacity building for vulnerable groups:** Provide technical assistance and financial literacy programmes to women's organisations, youth groups, and disability networks to strengthen participation in climate finance pipelines.
- **Monitoring and accountability:** Establish sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated monitoring of climate finance beneficiaries, consistent with commitments in the *NAP* and *National Climate Change Policy*.
- **Remittance resilience:** Develop mechanisms to channel remittances into climate-resilient investments, recognising the central role of labour mobility in household resilience.

### Infrastructure and Services (Component 2)

- **GBV/SEAH safeguards in climate planning:** Integrate GBV risk mitigation into evacuation centre design, relocation planning, and disaster preparedness, operationalising the *National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (2023–2033)*.
- **Disability-inclusive infrastructure:** Ensure evacuation centres, schools, health facilities, and WASH systems meet accessibility standards, as mandated in the *National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018–2025)*.
- **Youth pathways into resilience sectors:** Expand STEM and TVET opportunities for young women and men in renewable energy, resilient agriculture, and coastal protection, addressing gaps in the *National Youth Policy (2023–2027)*.
- **Resilient service delivery:** Strengthen health, education, and social protection systems to be climate-shock responsive, ensuring continuity of maternal health, disability services, and youth programmes during disasters.
- **Outer island equity:** Prioritise investments in maritime and rural infrastructure to reduce disparities in access to services, consistent with the *National Development Plan (NDP)*.
- **Social protection integration:** Link social protection schemes (pensions, disability allowances, GBV survivor support) with climate resilience financing, ensuring female-headed households and informal workers are reached during shocks.

**References**


- Asian Development Bank (ADB). Fiji Country Gender Assessment. 2022.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). Fiji Climate Vulnerability Assessment. 2021.
- DFAT. Pacific Labour Mobility and Gender Dynamics Report. 2024.
- Fiji Bureau of Statistics. Population and Housing Census. 2017.
- Government of Fiji. Climate Change Act. 2021
- Government of Fiji. National Adaptation Plan. 2018
- Government of Fiji. National Climate Change Policy. 2018.
- Government of Fiji. National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy. 2018
- Government of Fiji. National Development Plan. 2017
- Government of Fiji. Revised Nationally Determined Contribution. 2020. Government of Fiji.
- National Gender Policy. 2014. Government of Fiji.
- National Youth Policy. 2023–2027. Government of Fiji.
- National Disability Inclusive Development Policy. 2018–2025.
- Pacific Disability Forum. Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific. 2024.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).
- Pacific Data Hub: Fiji. 2023. UNFPA. Fiji Gender and Protection in Emergencies Assessment. 2021.
- UN Women. Fiji Gender and Climate Brief. 2022. World Bank.
- Fiji Poverty and Equity Data Portal. 2023. World Bank.
- Global Findex Database. 2021. World Risk Index. World Risk Report. 2024.

## Kiribati

### 1. Country Context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population** | 125,3093 (ADB,2024); 50.0% female. |
| **Poverty** | 5.5% of the population below the national poverty line (World Bank 2023; HIES 2023–24), preliminary. |
| **Disaster risk** | Ranked 13th globally (World Risk Report 2024). |

Kiribati comprises 33 atolls and reef islands across the Gilbert, Phoenix, and Line island groups, spanning about 3.5 million km² of ocean; most islands rise less than 2 metres above sea level, which makes the country highly vulnerable to climate impacts (KNSO 2020).

The country faces serious risks from sea-level rise, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, drought, and increasingly frequent king tides (UNFCCC 2020; SPC 2023). Urbanisation is concentrated on South Tarawa, where nearly half the population lives and where overcrowding, limited land and pressure on water and sanitation systems increase exposure and vulnerability (World Bank 2022).

The outer islands remain isolated, with limited transport links and constrained access to health, education, and markets (SPC 2023).

The economy has a narrow productive base and depends heavily on fisheries, remittances, and external assistance, with few formal employment opportunities; labour migration (notably seafaring and seasonal work in Australia and New Zealand) is an important income source and has contributed to more female-headed households and shifts in caregiving and agricultural roles (ADB 2022; DFAT 2024). The population is young: roughly 60% are under 30 years old (KNSO 2020). Youth unemployment and underemployment are persistent, especially in outer islands where vocational training and formal jobs are scarce (SPC 2023).

National priorities are set out in the Kiribati Development Plan (KDP 2020–2023) and the Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20), which emphasize climate resilience, inclusive growth, and stronger governance; climate change is identified as the country's foremost long-term threat, with adaptation and coastal protection central to planning (GoK 2020; UNFCCC 2020). The KDP and KV20 explicitly commit to gender equality and social inclusion, calling for mainstreaming GESI across sector plans and targeted measures to improve access to education, health, social protection, and livelihoods for women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups (KDP 2020–2023; KV20 2016–2036).

### 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | 54% women; 66% men |
| **Women in parliament:** | 3 of 45 seats (~6.7%) after the 2020 election (SPC/IPU) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | 68% lifetime IPV (ever-partnered women) 010 Family Health and Support Study. (UNFPA) |
| **Financial Inclusion** | 27% of women &38% of men hold a bank account (Global Findex 2021) |
| **Disability prevalence** | 12–14% (SPC 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~30% (SPC 2023) |

### Gender norms and roles

Women are primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture, coastal gleaning, handicrafts, and informal sector activities. Men are more represented in offshore fisheries, seafaring, and formal employment (ADB 2022). Household roles are shaped by traditional and church-based norms. Women's responsibilities for caregiving, food production, and water collection increase their exposure to climate-related stresses, particularly during droughts and king tides. Overcrowding in South Tarawa increases women's unpaid care burdens and reduces privacy and safety.

### Economic participation and access to finance

Women's access to formal financial services is lower than men's: about 27% of women hold a bank account compared with 38% of men (Global Findex 2021). Land ownership is limited by customary tenure, and collateral requirements restrict access to credit. Remittances from seafaring and seasonal labour schemes form a significant share of household income (DFAT 2024). Women's enterprises are concentrated in low-return informal markets with limited access to equipment, storage, and transport. Youth and persons with disabilities face barriers to entering formal employment and climate-resilient sectors, particularly in outer islands where market access is limited.

### Political participation and leadership

Women hold fewer than 10% of parliamentary seats and have limited representation in island councils (SPC 2023). Cultural norms, limited campaign resources, and male-dominated community leadership structures constrain women's and youth participation in decision-making forums. Women and youth have limited voice in climate planning and constrained access to climate finance, with few gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms, weak representation in NDC and investment-planning processes, and limited capacity at island level to prepare bankable, GESI-sensitive project proposals (Kiribati Revised NDC 2022; Gender Climate Tracker / NAP review 2022; Kiribati Climate Finance Assessment 2020).

### GBV and SEAH

The Kiribati Family Health and Support Study (2010) reported that 68% of ever-partnered women have experienced lifetime intimate partner violence (UNFPA 2010). More recent policy and programme reviews — including the Eliminating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (ESGBV) Policy 2023–2032 and reporting from the Kiribati Women and Children's Support Centre — indicate that survivor services and referral pathways are concentrated in South Tarawa and are not consistently available or understood in many outer islands (ESGBV Policy 2023–2032; KWCSC reporting). Climate-related displacement, overcrowded shelters, and water shortages further increase risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment during and after shocks (UNFPA 2010; Pacific Partnership 2024).

### Disability inclusion

Persons with disabilities face barriers to education, health services, employment, and community participation. Accessibility of shelters, WASH facilities, transport, and public buildings varies across islands (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; SPC 2023). Early-warning systems, evacuation procedures, and emergency shelters are not consistently disability-inclusive, and outer-island communities lack assistive devices, accessible communication formats, and trained personnel to support inclusive evacuation and recovery. Data gaps and limited disability-disaggregated monitoring hinder planning and resource allocation for inclusive services.

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high, particularly in outer islands where access to vocational training and formal labour markets is limited (SPC 2023). Limited pathways into climate-resilient sectors, combined with migration pressures and constrained access to land and finance, increase youth vulnerability. Young women face additional mobility, caregiving and safety constraints that reduce their labour market and training opportunities.

### Education and skills

Women and girls are underrepresented in STEM and technical training (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2023; Kiribati NSO & SPC 2025). Overcrowding in South Tarawa and limited infrastructure in outer islands reduce access to schooling; outer-island schools report shortages of trained teachers, learning materials, accessible facilities, and boarding/transport options, contributing to lower completion and learning outcomes for girls and students with disabilities. Gaps in digital access, inclusive pedagogy, assistive devices, menstrual-health facilities, and disaster-resilient school infrastructure further undermine equitable access and continuity of learning. Improved disability- and sex-disaggregated monitoring, expanded TVET pathways linked to climate-resilient livelihoods, and investments in inclusive, resilient school infrastructure are needed to close these gaps.

### Social protection

Kiribati's social protection coverage is limited. Informal workers, survivors of GBV, youth, and persons with disabilities have variable access to support. During climate-related events, households rely heavily on remittances and community networks as the primary informal safety net (World Bank 2023). Existing schemes are not climate-shock responsive, and there are gaps in disability benefits, livelihood-recovery support, and targeted assistance for female-headed households. Limited administrative capacity, absence of scalable cash-transfer mechanisms, and weak integration of GESI considerations in disaster financing further constrain timely support to vulnerable groups.

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

Kiribati has a set of national policies that address climate change, disaster risk management, gender equality, disability inclusion, and youth development. These frameworks outline national priorities and commitments relevant to the climate–GESI nexus and guide national and island-level planning processes. They collectively emphasize resilience, inclusive development, and the need to support vulnerable groups across sectors.

### Kiribati Development Plan (KDP 2020–2023)

Sets national priorities for inclusive economic growth, climate resilience, and strengthened governance. The plan identifies women, youth, and persons with disabilities as priority groups for equitable access to services and opportunities (GoK 2020). The KDP highlights coastal protection, water security, and infrastructure resilience as core adaptation priorities, with implications for inclusive service delivery in South Tarawa and outer islands.

### Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20)

Provides long-term development directions focused on fisheries, tourism, and climate resilience. KV20 highlights the importance of social inclusion and human development in achieving national goals (GoK 2016). The strategy links economic transformation to improved human capital, including gender-responsive skills development and youth participation in emerging sectors.

### National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (2019–2022; under review)

Identifies barriers to women's participation in leadership, economic empowerment, and access to justice. The policy includes commitments related to GBV prevention and response, women's economic participation, and gender mainstreaming across sectors, including climate change and DRM (MWYSA 2019). The strategy links economic transformation to improved human capital, including gender-responsive skills development and youth participation in emerging sectors. It also calls for strengthened coordination and data systems to support gender-responsive planning and monitoring.

**Elimination of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (ESGBV) Policy 2023–2032** Provides a national framework for prevention and survivor support, including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

**Family Peace Act (2014)**
Provides the legal framework for addressing domestic violence, including protection orders and referral pathways. Implementation is supported by government and civil society partners, with services concentrated in South Tarawa (UN Women 2022). The Act is relevant to climate and disaster contexts, where displacement and overcrowding increase risks of GBV and SEAH.

**National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018–2021; updated 2022–2025)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments and outlines priorities for accessibility, inclusive education, employment, and participation in disaster preparedness and response. The policy highlights the need for disability-inclusive infrastructure and services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). It emphasizes accessible communication, inclusive early warning systems, and the integration of disability considerations into national and island-level DRM planning.

**Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (CCDRM) Act (2019)**
Establishes the institutional framework for climate change and DRM coordination. The Act references vulnerable groups and outlines responsibilities for national and island-level planning (GoK 2019). It mandates integration of climate and DRM considerations across sectors and provides the legal basis for coordination between national agencies and island councils.

**Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP 2014–2023 — extended and under revision**
Kiribati's central climate and DRM framework. The KJIP identifies women, youth, and persons with disabilities as groups requiring targeted support. It includes actions related to community-based adaptation, coastal protection, water security, and resilient infrastructure (UNFCCC 2020). The KJIP outlines 12 strategies, several of which explicitly reference inclusive participation, community engagement, and the need for accessible infrastructure and services.

**National Climate Financing Strategy (2024)** Strengthens Kiribati's capacity to mobilise and manage climate finance, with explicit requirements for gender equality and social inclusion. It calls for capacity building of ministries and island councils, disaggregated data systems, safeguards against SEAH, and targeted support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access and benefit from climate finance.

**Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC, 2020 update)**
Commits to adaptation and mitigation actions across water, coastal protection, health, and energy. The NDC references vulnerable groups but does not include measurable GESI-specific targets or disaggregated monitoring indicators (UNFCCC 2020). It highlights the need for strengthened institutional capacity and improved data systems to support inclusive climate action.

**National Youth Policy (2018–2022)**
Prioritizes youth employment, skills development, and participation in climate change awareness and community resilience activities (SPC 2023). The policy recognizes youth as key actors in climate adaptation, particularly in community-based initiatives and environmental stewardship.

**Sectoral frameworks**

**Water and Sanitation Master Plan** include provisions for equitable access to safe water, with relevance for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

**Energy Roadmap (2016–2025)** outlines renewable energy targets but does not include explicit GESI integration.

**Infrastructure and coastal protection plan** reference community engagement but vary in the extent to which gender and disability considerations are incorporated. These sectoral plans shape investment priorities and influence how inclusive design standards are applied in water, energy, transport, and coastal protection projects.

## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges

### Exposure to climate-related hazards and environmental pressures

Kiribati's low elevation and atoll geography create high exposure to sea level rise, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, drought, and king tides. These hazards affect housing, water security, food production, and transport links across islands (UNFCCC 2020; SPC 2023). Outer islands face increasing shoreline loss and contamination of freshwater lenses, while South Tarawa experiences recurrent flooding that disproportionately affects informal settlements. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities face heightened risks due to mobility constraints, caregiving responsibilities, and limited access to safe evacuation options.

### Land scarcity and limited access to secure land and housing

Land availability is constrained, particularly in South Tarawa, where population density is among the highest in the Pacific. Limited land tenure security affects women, youth, and persons with disabilities, especially in informal settlements and coastal areas exposed to erosion (World Bank 2022; ADB 2022). Customary tenure systems restrict women's ability to secure land for housing or livelihoods, and overcrowding reduces privacy and safety for women and girls. Climate-driven coastal erosion further reduces habitable land, intensifying competition and vulnerability.

### Overcrowding and pressure on essential services

High population density in South Tarawa places pressure on water, sanitation, health, and education systems. Overcrowding affects access to services for women, youth, and persons with disabilities and contributes to increased vulnerability during climate-related events (World Bank 2022). Limited WASH facilities increase health risks, particularly for women and girls, and overcrowded schools and clinics reduce access for persons with disabilities and outer-island migrants.

### Gender-based violence and limited-service coverage

The Kiribati Family Health and Support Study reported high rates of intimate partner violence. Support services are concentrated in South Tarawa, with limited availability in outer islands, affecting access to protection and referral pathways during emergencies (UNFPA 2010; UN Women 2022). Climate-related displacement, water shortages, and overcrowded shelters heighten risks of GBV and SEAH. Limited trained responders and inconsistent awareness of referral pathways constrain survivor access to timely support.

### Barriers to disability inclusion

Persons with disabilities experience barriers to accessing education, health services, employment, and participation in community decision-making. Accessibility in shelters, WASH facilities, and transport varies across islands, and early warning systems are not consistently disability-inclusive (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; SPC 2023). Outer islands face significant shortages of assistive devices, accessible communication formats, and inclusive evacuation procedures. Built infrastructure rarely meets accessibility standards, limiting participation in adaptation and preparedness activities.

### Youth unemployment and limited skills development

Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high, particularly in outer islands where access to vocational training and formal labour markets is limited. Young women face additional constraints related to mobility and caregiving responsibilities (SPC 2023; ADB 2022).Limited pathways into climate-resilient sectors, combined with migration pressures and constrained access to land and finance, reduce youth participation in adaptation and green-economy opportunities.

### Limited financial inclusion and access to credit

Women and youth have lower access to formal financial services and credit. Collateral requirements and customary land tenure systems limit opportunities to invest in livelihoods or climate-resilient activities (World Bank Findex 2021; ADB 2022). Informal enterprises dominate women's and youth livelihoods, but limited access to savings, insurance, and financial literacy training constrains their ability to recover from climate shocks or diversify income sources. The National Climate Financing Strategy (2024) highlights that addressing these gaps requires targeted support: capacity building for ministries and island councils, inclusive financial instruments for vulnerable groups, safeguards against SEAH, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in climate finance processes.

### Constraints in data availability and disaggregated information

Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors. This limits the ability to identify and monitor the needs of vulnerable groups (SPC 2023; ADB 2022). Post-disaster assessments rarely include GESI-specific indicators, and sector ministries have limited capacity to collect or use disaggregated data for planning, budgeting, or monitoring.

### Outer island isolation and transport limitations

Geographic dispersion and limited transport connectivity affect access to health, education, markets, and emergency services. Outer island communities experience delays in receiving supplies and support during climate-related events (World Bank 2022; DFAT 2024). Limited communications infrastructure, irregular shipping schedules, and high transport costs reduce access to early warning information, evacuation support, and essential services, disproportionately affecting women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure.

### Climate Finance (Component 1)

- Capacity building for ministries and island councils to apply gender-responsive and socially inclusive budgeting (National Climate Financing Strategy 2024).
- Technical support for disaggregated data systems (sex, age, disability) to monitor who benefits from climate finance (Office of Climate Change 2023).
- Strengthening fiduciary and social safeguards to prevent SEAH, discrimination, and exclusion in climate finance governance (ESGBV Policy 2023–2032; Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to engage in climate finance processes, from proposal design to monitoring (National Climate Financing Strategy 2024; SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).
- Coordination support for the National Designated Authority (NDA) to integrate GESI into all climate finance submissions and reporting (National Climate Financing Strategy 2024).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and vulnerable groups in land and coastal adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2022–2025; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, coastal protection, and community engagement processes (ESGBV Policy 2023–2032; Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (National Youth Policy 2018–2022; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Country Gender Assessment: Kiribati.* 2022.
  DFAT.
- *Pacific Labour Mobility and Gender Dynamics Report.* 2024.
- Government of Kiribati (GoK). *Kiribati Development Plan (KDP) 2020–2023*
- Government of Kiribati (GoK). *Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20).* 2016.
- Government of Kiribati (GoK). *Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (CCDRM) Act.* 2019.
- Government of Kiribati (GoK). *Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP) 2014–2023*
- Kiribati National Statistics Office (KNSO). *Population and Housing Census.* 2020.
- Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs (MWYSA). *National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2019–2022.*
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific.* 2024.
  Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). *Pacific Data Hub: Kiribati.* 2023.
- UNFPA. *Kiribati Family Health and Support Study.* 2010.

- UNFCCC. *Kiribati Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2020 Update.*
- UN Women. *Kiribati Gender Brief.* 2022.
- World Bank. *Kiribati Poverty and Equity Data Portal.* 2023.
- World Bank. *Kiribati Urbanization and Infrastructure Assessment.* 2022.
- World Bank. *Global Findex Database.* 2021.
- World Risk Index. *World Risk Report.* 2024.

## Nauru

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~12,111; 49% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Poverty:** | ~24% below the national poverty line (ADB 2023) |
| **Disaster risk:** | Ranked 27th globally (World Risk Report 2024) |

Nauru is a single-island state of 21 km², making it the world's smallest republic by land area. Settlement is concentrated along the coastal belt, with inland areas degraded by past phosphate mining (World Bank Climate Risk Profile 2021). The country faces high exposure to sea-level rise, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and drought, compounded by limited freshwater resources and dependence on imported food and fuel (UNFCCC 2020).

Outer-island migration is not a factor, but internal settlement patterns reflect concentration along the coastal ring road, where access to services and infrastructure is highest. Inland areas remain largely uninhabitable due to mining scars. Climate pressures — including saltwater intrusion into groundwater, coral bleaching, and repeated droughts — are increasingly influencing mobility decisions and household resilience strategies (Government of Nauru 2015).

The economy is narrow, reliant on phosphate exports, fisheries, and external assistance. Employment opportunities are limited, with high dependence on public sector jobs and remittances (ADB 2023). Labour migration, particularly to Australia, has reshaped household structures, with women and older caregivers assuming greater responsibility for care and subsistence activities (DFAT 2024). Youth unemployment and underemployment remain persistent, with limited vocational training pathways (SPC 2023).

### 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~46%; men ~72% (Census 2021; ILO 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~8% (IPU 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~33% lifetime IPV among ever-partnered women (Asia-Pacific Gender Equality Portal 2018; UNFPA 2014 – no newer data available |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~65% of women hold accounts; collateral barriers persist (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022). |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~12% (Census 2021 Disability Tables; Pacific Disability Forum 2024) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~25% (SPC/ILO Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment 2023). |

#### Gender Norms and Roles

Women carry primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, and community obligations (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Livelihoods are concentrated in small business, retail, and informal markets, which are highly climate-sensitive. Men dominate phosphate mining, offshore fisheries, and construction, placing them at higher immediate risk during extreme weather events (ADB 2023). Traditional norms limit women's participation in formal decision-making, though women's organisations play a role in community resilience initiatives.

### Economic Participation and Finance

Despite relatively high account ownership, women, youth, and persons with disabilities face barriers to credit, insurance, and savings due to collateral requirements and limited financial literacy (ADB 2022). Informal enterprises dominate livelihoods, but lack of access to equipment, storage, and transport constrains growth. Remittances buffer shocks but reduce local labour availability for resilience activities (DFAT 2024). Female-headed households often lack access to extension services, limiting investment in climate-resilient livelihoods (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Political Participation and Leadership

Women, youth, and persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in parliament and local councils (IPU 2024). Limited campaign resources and male-dominated structures constrain participation in climate and DRM committees (CEDAW State Report 2023).

### GBV and SEAH

GBV prevalence is significant, with one-third of women reporting lifetime IPV (UNFPA 2014). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters increase risks of SEAH. Referral pathways are limited, with services concentrated in the capital (Family Protection Act 2015; Spotlight Initiative 2023). Cultural stigma and logistical barriers further restrict survivor access to services (UN Women 2022).

### Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities face barriers to education, health, and employment. Evacuation centres and WASH facilities often lack universal design, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks during climate shocks, including safety concerns and limited access to reproductive health services (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high, particularly outside formal employment sectors (SPC/ILO 2023). Climate change reduces opportunities in fisheries and agriculture, while volatility in phosphate and tourism limits jobs. Migration offers income but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities (DFAT 2024). Girls face specific risks, including increased caregiving responsibilities, reduced school attendance, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products and safe WASH facilities (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### Education and Skills

Access to education is relatively high, but disparities persist by gender, disability, and socio-economic status (Ministry of Education 2023). Schools face shortages of teachers, materials, and resilient infrastructure. Students with disabilities encounter barriers related to accessibility and inclusive pedagogy (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning, with girls sometimes withdrawn from school to support household recovery, increasing dropout risks (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields, limiting participation in climate-resilient sectors (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

### Social Protection

Nauru's social protection system provides pensions and disability allowances, but coverage gaps remain for informal workers, youth, and survivors of GBV (ADB 2022). Schemes are not fully climate-shock responsive, and female-headed households are not consistently targeted (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Persons with disabilities are not consistently reached by emergency cash assistance or livelihood recovery programmes (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

**Climate Change Policy (2015) -** revision process underway.
Provides the overarching framework for adaptation and mitigation, referencing vulnerable groups but lacking measurable GESI targets. It highlights water security, coastal protection, and energy efficiency, but does not embed gender, youth, or disability-specific indicators (Government of Nauru 2015; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2020 update)**
Commits to adaptation in water, energy, and coastal protection, and includes renewable energy targets. While the NDC references socioeconomic vulnerabilities, it lacks disaggregated indicators and measurable GESI outcomes (UNFCCC 2020).

**National Disaster Risk Management Act (2016)**
Establishes institutional arrangements for preparedness, response, and recovery. The Act references community-based preparedness but evacuation centres, communication systems, and emergency procedures are not consistently disability-inclusive or gender-responsive (Government of Nauru 2016; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**National Gender Policy (2019–2022)**
Identifies barriers to women's participation in leadership and economic empowerment, with commitments to GBV prevention and gender mainstreaming. Implementation capacity remains limited, and integration into climate and DRM systems is weak (MWYSA 2019; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Family Protection Act (2015)**
Provides the legal framework for GBV response, including protection orders and referral pathways. Integration into climate and disaster contexts is limited, with GBV/SEAH safeguards not consistently embedded in preparedness, evacuation, or recovery processes (Government of Nauru 2015; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability Policy (2020–2025)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments, outlining priorities for accessibility, inclusive education, and participation in disaster preparedness. Accessibility gaps persist in infrastructure and services, and disability-disaggregated data remains limited (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**National Youth Policy (2022–2027)**
Prioritises youth employment, skills development, and participation in climate resilience activities. Mechanisms for youth engagement in climate finance and project monitoring are not yet operationalised (SPC 2023).

**Sectoral Frameworks**
Water, energy, fisheries, and education plans reference resilience but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards. Water and sanitation plans lack disability-inclusive design standards; fisheries strategies highlight climate-smart practices but do not address gendered divisions of labour; education frameworks reference resilience but lack commitments to STEM/TVET pathways for women and youth (Office of Climate Change 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

## 4. Key Gaps and Changes

**Exposure to climate hazards:** Nauru is highly exposed to sea-level rise, drought, and coastal erosion. Vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, face

disproportionate impacts due to limited adaptive capacity (World Bank Climate Risk Profile 2021; UNFCCC 2020).

**Land and housing constraints:** Degraded phosphate lands limit secure housing and livelihoods. Women and youth face barriers to land tenure and relocation planning, which remains ad hoc (ADB 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Pressure on essential services:** Limited freshwater and health infrastructure increase vulnerability during shocks. Outer settlements face constrained access to resilient infrastructure and services (Government of Nauru 2015; Ministry of Education 2023).

**GBV and SEAH risks:** High prevalence of IPV, with weak referral pathways outside the capital. Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters increase risks of SEAH (UNFPA 2014; Family Protection Act 2015; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Barriers to disability inclusion:** Accessibility gaps in shelters, WASH, and communication systems limit participation of persons with disabilities. Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks during climate shocks (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways:** Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high, with limited pathways into climate-resilient sectors. Migration reduces local labour availability for resilience activities (SPC/ILO 2023; DFAT 2024).

**Financial inclusion and access to credit:** Collateral requirements and weak business support services exclude women entrepreneurs from climate finance. Youth and persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing savings and insurance (ADB 2022; Narau National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023). Support needs identified include capacity building for ministries and councils to design inclusive financial instruments, safeguards against SEAH in finance governance, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance.

**Constraints in data availability:** Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors, limiting monitoring of vulnerable groups (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Social protection gaps:** Schemes are not climate-shock responsive, leaving female-headed households and persons with disabilities underserved. Remittance-dependent households face income shocks if migration is disrupted (ADB 2022; COFA Migration Assessments 2024).

**Climate finance gaps:** Nauru lacks a formalised national climate finance strategy. Existing frameworks reference resilience and vulnerable groups but do not embed measurable GESI targets or disaggregated indicators. Support needs identified include capacity building for ministries and councils to design inclusive financial instruments, safeguards against SEAH in finance governance, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance (ADB 2022; Nauru National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure.

**Climate Finance**

- Capacity building for ministries and councils to design inclusive financial instruments (ADB 2022; Nauru National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023).
- Safeguards against SEAH in finance governance (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance (SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026).
- Technical support for disaggregated data systems (sex, age, disability) to monitor who benefits from climate finance (Office of Climate Change 2023).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and vulnerable groups in land and coastal adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Policy 2020–2025; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, coastal protection, and community engagement processes (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (National Youth Policy 2022–2027; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Government of Nauru. Climate Change Policy. 2015.
- Government of Nauru. National Disaster Risk Management Act. 2016.
- Government of Nauru. Family Protection Act. 2015.
- Government of Nauru. Census of Population and Housing. 2021.
- Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs (MWYSA). National Gender Policy. 2019–2022.
- Ministry of Education, Nauru. Statistical Yearbook. 2023.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). Country Gender Assessment: Nauru. 2023.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). Pacific Financial Inclusion Program. 2022.
- Government of Nauru. National Financial Inclusion Strategy.
- Pacific Disability Forum. Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific. 2024.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) / International Labour Organization (ILO). Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment. 2023.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Pacific Data Hub: Nauru. 2023.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Women in National Parliaments Database. 2024.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Nauru. 2014.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Nauru Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Update. 2020.
- UNESCO-UNEVOC. TVET Country Profile: Nauru. 2023.
- World Bank Group. Climate Risk Country Profile: Nauru. 2021.

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in Nauru. 2024.
- Spotlight Initiative. Nauru Country Reporting. 2023.
- United Nations Women (UN Women). Nauru Gender Brief. 2022.
- Beijing+30 National Narrative Report, Nauru. 2024.
- Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Nauru. 2023.
- Office of Climate Change, Nauru. Institutional Assessments. 2023.
- COFA Migration Assessments. Nauru Household Impacts. 2024

## Niue

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~1,666; 48% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Poverty:** | ~22% below the national poverty line (ADB 2023) |
| **Disaster risk**: | Ranked 39th globally (World Risk Report 2024). |

Niue is a single-island state of 260 km², located in the South Pacific. Settlement is concentrated in coastal villages, with Alofi as the capital. The island faces high exposure to cyclones, drought, saltwater intrusion, and sea-level rise (UNFCCC 2020). Inland areas are less populated due to karst terrain and limited arable land. Climate pressures — including coastal erosion, coral bleaching, and repeated cyclone impacts — increasingly influence mobility decisions and household resilience strategies (Government of Niue 2015).

The economy is narrow, reliant on aid, remittances, fisheries, and tourism. Employment opportunities are limited, with high dependence on public sector jobs and seasonal migration to New Zealand (ADB 2023). Labour migration reshapes household structures, with women and older caregivers assuming greater responsibility for care and subsistence activities (DFAT 2024). Youth unemployment and underemployment remain persistent, with limited vocational training pathways (SPC 2023).

### 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~47%; men ~71% (Census 2021; ILO 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~10% (IPU 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~30% lifetime IPV among ever-partnered women (UNFPA 2014;— most recent national survey; SPC Gender Statistics 2023 confirm persistence but no new national study |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~68% of women hold accounts; collateral barriers persist (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~11% (Census 2021 Disability Tables; Pacific Disability Forum 2024). |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~23% (SPC/ILO Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment 2023). |

#### Gender Norms and Roles

Women carry primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, and community obligations (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Livelihoods are concentrated in small business, retail, and informal markets, which are highly climate-sensitive. Men dominate offshore fisheries, construction, and transport, placing them at higher immediate risk during extreme weather events (ADB 2023). Traditional norms limit women's participation in formal decision-making, though women's organisations play a role in community resilience initiatives.

#### Economic Participation and Finance

Despite relatively high account ownership, women, youth, and persons with disabilities face barriers to credit, insurance, and savings due to collateral requirements and limited financial literacy (ADB 2022). Informal enterprises dominate livelihoods, but lack of access to equipment, storage, and transport constrains growth. Remittances buffer shocks but reduce local labour availability for resilience activities (DFAT 2024).

### Political Participation and Leadership

Women, youth, and persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in parliament and local councils (IPU 2024). Limited campaign resources and male-dominated structures constrain participation in climate and DRM committees (CEDAW State Report 2023).

### GBV and SEAH

GBV prevalence is significant, with one-third of women reporting lifetime IPV (UNFPA 2014). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters increase risks of SEAH. Referral pathways are limited, with services concentrated in Alofi (Family Protection Act 2015; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

### Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities face barriers to education, health, and employment. Evacuation centres and WASH facilities often lack universal design, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks during climate shocks (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high, particularly outside formal employment sectors (SPC/ILO 2023). Climate change reduces opportunities in fisheries and agriculture, while volatility in tourism limits jobs. Migration offers income but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities (DFAT 2024).

### Education and Skills

Access to education is relatively high, but disparities persist by gender, disability, and socio-economic status (Ministry of Education 2023). Schools face shortages of teachers, materials, and resilient infrastructure. Students with disabilities encounter barriers related to accessibility and inclusive pedagogy (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Social Protection

Niue's social protection system provides pensions and disability allowances, but coverage gaps remain for informal workers, youth, and survivors of GBV (ADB 2022). Schemes are not fully climate-shock responsive, and female-headed households are not consistently targeted (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

### Climate Change Policy (2015)

Provides the overarching framework for adaptation and mitigation, referencing vulnerable groups but lacking measurable GESI targets (Government of Niue 2015; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2020 update)

Commits to adaptation in water, energy, and coastal protection, but lacks disaggregated indicators (UNFCCC 2020).

### National Disaster Risk Management Act (2016)

Establishes institutional arrangements for preparedness and response, but evacuation centres and procedures are not consistently disability-inclusive (Government of Niue 2016; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### National Gender Policy (2019–2022)

Identifies barriers to women's participation in leadership and economic empowerment, with commitments to GBV prevention and gender mainstreaming (MWYSA 2019).

**Family Protection Act (2015)**
Provides the legal framework for GBV response, including protection orders and referral pathways (Government of Niue 2015; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability Policy (2020–2025):**
Aligns with CRPD commitments, outlining priorities for accessibility and inclusive services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**National Youth Policy (2022–2027)**
Prioritises youth employment, skills development, and participation in climate resilience activities (SPC 2023).

**Sectoral Frameworks**
Water, energy, and education plans reference resilience but inconsistently but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards; STEM/TVET pathways for women and youth remain limited.

## 4. Key Gaps and Changes

**Exposure to climate hazards**
Niue is highly exposed to cyclones, drought, saltwater intrusion, and coastal erosion. Vulnerable groups face disproportionate impacts due to limited adaptive capacity (World Bank Climate Risk Profile 2021; UNFCCC 2020).

**Land and housing constraints**
Limited arable land and coastal erosion restrict secure housing and livelihoods, especially for women and youth. Relocation planning remains ad hoc and does not consistently integrate gender, youth, or disability perspectives (ADB 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Pressure on essential services**
Limited freshwater and health infrastructure increase vulnerability during shocks. Outer villages face constrained access to resilient infrastructure and services, with women and persons with disabilities disproportionately affected (Government of Niue 2015; Ministry of Education 2023).

**GBV and SEAH risks**
High prevalence of IPV, with weak referral pathways outside Alofi. Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters increase risks of SEAH, while stigma and logistical barriers restrict survivor access to services (UNFPA 2014; Family Protection Act 2015; Spotlight Initiative 2023; UN Women 2022).

**Barriers to disability inclusion**
Accessibility gaps in shelters, WASH, and communication systems limit participation of persons with disabilities. Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks during climate shocks, including safety concerns and limited access to reproductive health services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways**
Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high, with limited pathways into climate-resilient sectors. Migration reduces local labour availability for resilience activities, while girls face increased caregiving burdens and dropout risks (SPC/ILO 2023; DFAT 2024; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Financial inclusion and access to credit**
Collateral requirements and weak business support services exclude women entrepreneurs from climate finance. Youth and persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing savings, insurance, and financial literacy training (ADB 2022; Government of Niue. National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023). Support needs identified include capacity building for ministries and councils to design inclusive financial instruments, safeguards against SEAH in finance governance, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance.

**Constraints in data availability**
Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors, limiting monitoring of vulnerable groups (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Social protection gaps**
Schemes are not climate-shock responsive, leaving female-headed households and persons with disabilities underserved. Remittance-dependent households face income shocks if migration is disrupted (ADB 2022; COFA Migration Assessments 2024).

**Climate finance gaps**
Niue lacks a formalised national climate finance strategy. Current frameworks (Climate Change Policy 2015, NDC 2020 update) reference adaptation and vulnerable groups but do not embed measurable GESI targets or disaggregated indicators (Government of Niue 2015; UNFCCC 2020; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Institutional capacity constraints**
Climate and GESI frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging. Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation. (Office of Climate Change 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Needs

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Climate Finance (Component 1)**

- Capacity building for ministries and state agencies to apply gender-responsive and socially inclusive budgeting (Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- Technical support for disaggregated data systems (sex, age, disability) to monitor who benefits from climate finance (SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026).
- Strengthening fiduciary and social safeguards to prevent SEAH, discrimination, and exclusion in climate finance governance (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to engage in climate finance processes (SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and vulnerable groups in land and coastal adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Policy 2020–2025; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction and coastal protection processes (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (National Youth Policy 2022–2027; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Government of Niue. Climate Change Policy. 2015.
- Government of Niue. National Disaster Risk Management Act. 2016.
- Government of Niue. Family Protection Act. 2015.
- Government of Niue. Census of Population and Housing. 2021.
- Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs (MWYSA). National Gender Policy. 2019–2022.
- Ministry of Education, Niue. Statistical Yearbook. 2023.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). Country Gender Assessment: Niue. 2023.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). Pacific Financial Inclusion Program. 2022.
- Government of Niue. National Financial Inclusion Strategy. 2023.
- Pacific Disability Forum. Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific. 2024.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) / International Labour Organization (ILO). Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment. 2023.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Pacific Data Hub: Niue. 2023.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Women in National Parliaments Database. 2024.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Niue. 2014.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Niue Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Update. 2020.
- UNESCO-UNEVOC. TVET Country Profile: Niue. 2023.
- World Bank Group. Climate Risk Country Profile: Niue. 2021.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in Niue. 2024.
- Spotlight Initiative. Niue Country Reporting. 2023.
- United Nations Women (UN Women). Niue Gender Brief. 2022.
- Beijing+30 National Narrative Report, Niue. 2024.*
- Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Niue. 2023.*
- Office of Climate Change, Niue. Institutional Assessments. 2023.
- COFA Migration Assessments. Niue Household Impacts. 2024.

## Palau

### 1. Country Context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~17,861; 49% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Poverty:** | ~17% (ADB 2023) |
| **Disaster risk:** | Ranked 28th globally (World Risk Report 2024) |

Palau is an archipelagic state of more than 300 islands, with most of the population residing in Koror and Airai, and smaller, dispersed communities in outer states such as Peleliu, Angaur, Kayangel, Sonsorol, and Hatohobei (Census 2020). Population distribution reflects strong concentration along the Koror–Airai corridor and coastal zones, where access to services, markets, and infrastructure is highest. Outer-island and remote communities face constrained access to health, education, transport, and resilient infrastructure, with higher dependence on subsistence agriculture and coastal fisheries (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

Internal migration from outer islands to Koror–Airai continues to shape settlement patterns, driven by education, employment, and service access. Climate-related pressures—including coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, coral bleaching, and repeated typhoon impacts—are increasingly influencing mobility decisions. National relocation planning remains ad hoc, with limited integration of gender, youth, and disability perspectives into land-use and resettlement frameworks (Climate Change Policy 2015; NDRMF 2016).

Palau is highly exposed to typhoons, storm surge, drought, and sea-level rise. The Palau Climate Change Policy and the National Disaster Risk Management Framework identify coastal communities, critical infrastructure, and water systems as priority risk areas. Post-disaster assessments highlight that smaller outer states experience prolonged service disruptions and high recovery costs relative to their population size (International Recovery Platform 2023).

The economy is heavily dependent on tourism, fisheries, and public administration. Tourism is a major employer, particularly for women and youth, but is highly sensitive to climate shocks and external disruptions. Labour mobility under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) with the United States shapes household composition, care arrangements, and local labour availability. Remittances buffer climate shocks but also reshape gender roles and caregiving burdens, creating differentiated resilience outcomes for women, youth, and older caregivers (COFA Migration Assessments 2024; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~45%; men ~70% (Census of Population and Housing 2020; ILO Labour Force Estimates 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~10%. GBV prevalence: ~30–35% lifetime (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2024; Palau Beijing+30 National Narrative Report 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence**: | ~30–35% lifetime IPV among ever-partnered women (Palau Family Health and Safety Study 2014; UNFPA) |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~70% of women hold accounts; collateral barriers persist (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022; Palau National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~11% (Census 2020 Disability Tables; Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Palau 2023) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Youth NEET:** | ~20% (SPC/ILO Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment 2023; Palau National Youth Policy 2023–2027) |

### Gender Norms and Roles

Women carry primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, water management, and community obligations (Beijing+30 Report 2024). These responsibilities intensify during typhoons, droughts, and water shortages, increasing women's exposure to climate-linked health risks and unpaid labour burdens. Women's livelihoods in tourism, retail, small business, subsistence agriculture, and coastal gleaning are highly climate-sensitive, with limited access to land, credit, and formal employment pathways (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Men dominate offshore fisheries, construction, and transport, placing them at higher immediate physical risk during extreme weather events (SPC Coastal Fisheries Profiles 2023). Matrilineal traditions give women customary roles in land and clan affairs, but these do not consistently translate into formal influence in land-use or climate planning (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Labour mobility reshapes household dynamics: when men migrate, women assume farming, caregiving, and community obligations; when women migrate, older women and adolescent girls take on unpaid care responsibilities. These shifts highlight the need for gender-responsive social protection and remittance management strategies (COFA Migration Assessments 2024).

### Economic Participation and Finance

Despite high account ownership, gender gaps persist in access to credit, insurance, and savings products (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022). Women, youth, and persons with disabilities face barriers related to collateral, land tenure, financial literacy, and access to institutions in remote areas. These constraints reduce investment in resilient housing, water storage, climate-smart agriculture, and livelihood diversification (Climate Change Policy 2015). Labour mobility is a major livelihood strategy, with remittances buffering shocks but reducing local labour availability for resilience activities (COFA Migration Assessments 2024). Female-headed and grandparent-headed households often lack access to credit and extension services, limiting their ability to invest in climate-resilient livelihoods (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Collateral requirements and weak business support services (BSSs) further exclude women entrepreneurs from climate finance (ADB 2022).

### Political Participation and Leadership

Women, youth, and persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in governance structures, including climate and disaster risk management committees (CEDAW State Report 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024). Limited engagement of women's organisations, youth groups, and disability organisations in climate investment planning and monitoring frameworks constrains inclusive governance (Gender Climate Tracker 2023).

### GBV and SEAH

GBV prevalence is significant, with 25.2% of ever-partnered women reporting IPV (Family Health and Safety Study 2014). Climate-related displacement, overcrowded shelters, and disrupted protection networks increase risks of SEAH. Referral pathways remain weak, particularly in outer islands, and GBV/SEAH considerations are not consistently integrated into preparedness, evacuation, or recovery processes (Family Protection Act 2012; Spotlight Initiative 2023). Cultural stigma and logistical barriers further restrict survivor access to services (UN Women 2022).

### Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities face disproportionate climate impacts due to inaccessible infrastructure, limited assistive devices, and weak referral systems (Census 2020 Disability Tables). Evacuation

centres and WASH facilities often lack universal design, and early warning systems are not consistently available in accessible formats (NDRMF 2016). Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks, including safety concerns and limited access to reproductive health services (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Disability-disaggregated data and inclusive monitoring remain limited, constraining planning and resource allocation (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high, particularly outside Koror (National Youth Policy 2023–2027). Climate change reduces opportunities in fisheries and agriculture, while tourism volatility limits service sector jobs. Migration offers income opportunities but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities (COFA Migration Assessments 2024). Youth-headed or grandparent-headed households face heightened vulnerability during climate shocks. Girls face specific risks, including increased caregiving responsibilities, reduced school attendance, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products and safe WASH facilities (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Youth participation in climate planning and leadership programmes remains limited (SPC/ILO 2023).

### Education and Skills

Basic education access is relatively high, but disparities persist by location, gender, disability, and socio-economic status (Ministry of Education Statistical Yearbook 2023). Rural and outer-island schools face shortages of teachers, materials, and resilient infrastructure. Students with disabilities encounter barriers related to accessibility and inclusive pedagogy (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning, with girls sometimes withdrawn from school to support household recovery, increasing dropout risks (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields, limiting participation in climate-resilient sectors (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

### Social Protection

Palau's social protection system provides pensions and disability allowances, but coverage gaps remain for informal workers, youth, and survivors of GBV (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Schemes are not fully climate-shock responsive. Households dependent on remittances face income shocks if migration is disrupted (COFA Migration Assessments 2024). Female-headed households created through migration may not be adequately targeted. Limited administrative capacity and weak integration of GESI considerations constrain timely support. Persons with disabilities and women with disabilities are not consistently reached by emergency cash assistance or livelihood recovery programmes (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Without scalable, inclusive mechanisms, disasters will deepen inequality and undermine recovery.

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

Palau has an evolving policy architecture for climate change, disaster risk management, gender equality, disability inclusion, and youth development. These frameworks outline national priorities and commitments relevant to the climate–GESI nexus and guide national and state-level planning processes. They collectively emphasise resilience, inclusive development, and the need to support vulnerable groups across sectors. However, operational detail, measurable targets, and disaggregated monitoring remain limited (Beijing+30 Report 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Climate Change Policy (2015)

Outdated — revision process underway (Office of Climate Change 2023). Provides the overarching framework for climate action, focusing on adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and mitigation across sectors including water, coastal protection, health, energy, agriculture, and infrastructure (Climate Change Policy 2015). The policy references vulnerable groups and

community-based resilience but lacks measurable GESI targets, disaggregated indicators, and operational guidance for integrating gender, youth, and disability inclusion into sectoral planning and monitoring. (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Climate Finance Strategy (2021–ongoing)**
Palau has established a nascent climate finance architecture but does not yet have a fully formalised national strategy. Key elements include the Climate Resilience Fund (2021), the Fiscal Responsibility and External Debt Management Act (2021), the Public Financial Management Roadmap 2023–2036, and the Climate Finance Country Programme (2026, in development) (Office of Climate Change 2023; SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026). These mechanisms integrate climate risk into fiscal frameworks and establish a pipeline of fundable projects.

**Enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2025–2030)**
Sets mitigation and adaptation commitments, including renewable energy and energy efficiency targets and sectoral adaptation priorities (UNFCCC 2024). The Enhanced NDC includes a socioeconomic and GEDSI profile, acknowledging differentiated climate risks, but GESI specific targets and disaggregated monitoring indicators remain limited. Climate finance proposals do not consistently embed gender responsive and disability inclusive design (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**National Disaster Risk Management Framework (NDRMF 2010, amended 2016)** Outlines institutional arrangements for preparedness, response, and recovery, and seeks to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation (NDRMF 2016). The framework acknowledges vulnerable groups evacuation centres, communication systems, and emergency procedures are not consistently accessible or gender responsive, particularly in outer islands. Gaps remain in GBV risk mitigation, safe shelter design, and coordination between protection and disaster management agencies (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**National Gender Policy (2018)**
Outlines priorities for leadership, economic empowerment, education, health, and protection (MWYSA 2018). Implementation capacity is limited, and mainstreaming across climate and DRM sectors remains weak. Analytical reports highlight gaps in legal protections, leadership representation, GBV response, and gender mainstreaming capacity (Beijing+30 Report 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**Family Protection Act (2012)**
Provides the legal framework for addressing domestic violence, including protection orders and referral pathways (Family Protection Act 2012). GBV/SEAH safeguards are not consistently embedded in preparedness, evacuation, or recovery processes (Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability Act (2014)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments and outlines priorities for accessibility, inclusive education, employment, and participation in disaster preparedness and response (Disability Act 2014). Accessibility gaps persist in infrastructure and services, and disability disaggregated data remains limited (Legal Gap Analysis 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024)

**National Youth Policy (2023–2027)**
Sets priorities for youth health, education, skills, employment, justice, protection, social inclusion, and participation (National Youth Policy 2023–2027). It recognises youth as key actors in climate resilience and environmental stewardship. However, the policy does not yet include detailed mechanisms for ensuring youth participation in climate finance, project design, or monitoring (SPC/ILO 2023).

**Sectoral Frameworks**
Sectoral plans in water, fisheries, education, and infrastructure reference resilience but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards (Office of Climate Change Assessments 2023) but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards. Water and sanitation plans reference equitable access but lack disability inclusive design standards. Fisheries and agriculture strategies highlight climate smart practices but do not consistently address gendered divisions of labour. Education frameworks reference resilience but lack commitments to STEM/TVET pathways for women and youth (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

Overall, Palau's policy architecture references vulnerable groups but lacks operational detail, measurable targets, and disaggregated monitoring. Institutional capacity, budget tagging, and coordination mechanisms must be strengthened to operationalise commitments and ensure inclusive climate resilience (Beijing+30 Report 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023; Office of Climate Change Assessments 2023).

## 4. Key Challenges and Gaps

Palau's resilience is influenced by geographic exposure, demographic pressures, and institutional capacity. From a GESI perspective, the following systemic challenges affect the ability of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups to participate fully in climate adaptation and resilience initiatives:

**Exposure to climate-related hazards**
Palau is highly exposed to typhoons, drought, storm surge, saltwater intrusion, and sea-level rise. Outer-island communities experience prolonged service disruptions and high recovery costs relative to their population size (NDRMF 2016; International Recovery Platform 2023). Coastal concentration increases risks of erosion and flooding, affecting housing, water security, and fisheries (Climate Change Policy 2015).

**Land and housing constraints**
Limited land tenure security and customary systems affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities, particularly in coastal areas exposed to erosion (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Urbanisation along the Koror–Airai corridor places pressure on housing and services, while relocation planning remains ad hoc (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Pressure on essential services**
High population density in Koror and Airai places pressure on water, sanitation, health, and education systems. Outer-island communities face constrained access to services, increasing vulnerability during climate events (Office of Planning and Statistics 2020; Ministry of Education Statistical Yearbook 2023).

**Gender-based violence and SEAH risks**
The Palau Family Health and Safety Study found 25.2% of ever-partnered women reported IPV (Family Health and Safety Study 2014). Climate-related displacement, overcrowded shelters, and disrupted protection networks increase risks of SEAH. Referral pathways are concentrated in Koror, limiting access for rural and outer-island communities (Family Protection Act 2012; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Barriers to disability inclusion**
Persons with disabilities face challenges accessing information, infrastructure, and services. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and public buildings often lack universal design, and early warning systems are not consistently available in accessible formats (Census 2020 Disability

Tables; Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks during climate shocks (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways**
Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high, particularly outside Koror (SPC/ILO 2023; National Youth Policy 2023–2027). Climate change reduces opportunities in fisheries and agriculture, while tourism volatility limits service sector jobs. Migration offers income opportunities but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities (COFA Migration Assessments 2024).

**Financial inclusion and access to credit**
Despite high account ownership, collateral requirements and weak business support services exclude many women entrepreneurs from climate finance (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022; Palau National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023). Youth and persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing savings, insurance, and financial literacy training.

**Constraints in data availability**
Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors. This limits the ability to identify and monitor the needs of vulnerable groups (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Social protection gaps**
Palau's social protection system provides pensions and disability allowances but is not fully climate-shock responsive. Female-headed households and persons with disabilities are not consistently reached by emergency cash assistance or livelihood recovery programmes (Legal Gap Analysis 2023; ADB 2022). Households dependent on remittances face income shocks if migration is disrupted (COFA Migration Assessments 2024).

**Climate finance gaps**

Palau's emerging system lacks measurable GESI targets and disaggregated monitoring indicators. External assessments highlight that without targeted support, women, youth, and persons with disabilities risk exclusion from climate finance benefits (Beijing+30 Report 2024; SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026; Office of Climate Change 2023).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Needs

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Climate Finance (Component 1)**

- Capacity building for ministries and state agencies to apply gender-responsive and socially inclusive budgeting (Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- Technical support for disaggregated data systems (sex, age, disability) to monitor who benefits from climate finance (Office of Climate Change 2023).
- Strengthening fiduciary and social safeguards to prevent SEAH, discrimination, and exclusion in climate finance governance (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to engage in climate finance processes, from proposal design to monitoring (SPC Climate Finance Unit 2026).

- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups who lack collateral or formal banking access (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).
- Coordination support for the National Designated Authority (NDA) to integrate GESI into all climate finance submissions and reporting (Office of Climate Change 2023).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and vulnerable groups in land and coastal adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Act 2014; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, coastal protection, and community engagement processes (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (National Youth Policy 2023–2027; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Government of Palau. *Climate Change Policy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Low Emissions Development.* 2015.
- Government of Palau. *National Disaster Risk Management Framework.* 2010, amended 2016.
- International Recovery Platform. *Post-Disaster Assessments: Palau.* 2023.
- Office of Planning and Statistics, Palau. *Census of Population and Housing.* 2020.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Pacific Financial Inclusion Program.* 2022.
- Government of Palau. *National Financial Inclusion Strategy.* 2023.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). *Women in National Parliaments Database.* 2024.
- Government of Palau. *Beijing+30 National Narrative Report.* 2024.
- Government of Palau / MWYSA. *Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in the Republic of Palau.* 2023.
- Government of Palau / Ministry of Health. *Palau Family Health and Safety Study.* 2014.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). *Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Palau.* 2014.
- Government of Palau. *Family Protection Act.* 2012.
- Spotlight Initiative. *Palau Country Reporting.* 2023.
- United Nations Women (UN Women). *Palau Gender Brief.* 2022.
- Ministry of Education, Palau. *Statistical Yearbook.* 2023.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-UNEVOC). *TVET Country Profile: Palau.* 2023.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) / International Labour Organization (ILO). *Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment.* 2023.
- International Labour Organization (ILO). Labour Force Estimates for Palau. 2023.
- Government of Palau. National Youth Policy. 2023–2027.
- Compact of Free Association (COFA). Migration Assessments: Palau. 2024.

- Office of Climate Change, Palau. Institutional Assessments. 2023.
- World Risk Index. World Risk Report. 2024.

## Papua New Guinea

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~12,917,840 million; 49% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Poverty:** | ~40% below the national poverty line; multidimensional poverty ~75% (World Bank 2024) |
| **Disaster risk:** | Ranked 12th globally (World Risk Report 2024). |

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the largest Pacific Island country, with highly diverse geography and over 800 languages. Settlement patterns are dispersed across rural provinces, where ~85% of the population lives with limited access to health, education, and resilient infrastructure. Women and girls in these remote areas face longer travel times to reach schools and clinics, increasing dropout rates and maternal health risks (ADB 2023). Persons with disabilities are disproportionately excluded due to inaccessible terrain and services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

Climate pressures include cyclones, flooding, landslides, drought, and sea-level rise. Coastal communities, where women are heavily engaged in subsistence fishing and gleaning, face erosion and saltwater intrusion that undermine food security. Highland communities, where women manage gardens and water collection, are vulnerable to landslides and drought linked to El Niño events, increasing unpaid care burdens (UNFCCC 2020; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

Migration and mobility shape household resilience. Seasonal labour migration to Australia and New Zealand provides remittances but leaves women and older caregivers with expanded responsibilities for farming, caregiving, and community obligations. Youth migration reduces local labour availability for resilience activities, while female-headed households often lack access to credit and extension services, deepening inequality (DFAT 2024; SPC 2023). Urban migration creates informal settlements with overcrowded housing and poor WASH facilities, heightening GBV and SEAH risks for women and girls (UN Women 2022).

Economic structure is dual: a resource-dependent formal sector (oil, gas, mining) and a subsistence-based informal sector. Men dominate extractive industries, while women are concentrated in informal trade, food gardens, and petty commerce. This division of labour exposes men to occupational hazards in mining and construction, while women face economic precarity due to lack of collateral and exclusion from formal credit systems (ADB 2023). Tourism and fisheries are climate-sensitive, with women's livelihoods in coastal areas particularly vulnerable to coral bleaching and declining fish stocks.

Service access is uneven. Rural women and youth face constrained access to health, education, and resilient infrastructure, with maternal mortality rates among the highest in the Pacific. Disability prevalence (~15%) compounds exclusion, as evacuation centres, schools, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

Disaster risk is among the highest globally. PNG is exposed to cyclones, flooding, drought, landslides, and volcanic eruptions. Post-disaster assessments show that women and girls bear disproportionate recovery burdens, including increased caregiving, food insecurity, and heightened GBV risks in shelters. Persons with disabilities are often excluded from evacuation planning, while youth face disrupted education and limited livelihood recovery options (National Disaster Centre 2017; International Recovery Platform 2023).

## 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~52%; men ~74% (ILO 2023; NSO 2024) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~5% (IPU 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~68% of women experience lifetime violence, one of the highest rates globally (UN Women 2024; UNFPA 2014) |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~35% of women hold accounts; barriers include collateral, literacy, and customary land tenure (ADB 2023). |
| **Disability prevalence**: | ~15% (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). (SPC/ILO 2023). |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~30% (SPC/ILO 2023). |

**Gender Norms and Roles**

Women's roles are concentrated in subsistence farming, water collection, and caregiving. These responsibilities intensify during climate shocks, when food gardens fail or water sources dry up, increasing unpaid labour and reducing opportunities for education or paid work (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Men dominate extractive industries and transport, facing occupational hazards during disasters, but women's exclusion from land ownership under customary tenure limits their ability to access credit or invest in resilient livelihoods (Legal Gap Analysis 2023). Gender norms also restrict women's participation in decision-making, leaving resilience planning male-dominated and less responsive to household realities.

**Economic Participation and Finance**

PNG's economy is dual: a resource-dependent formal sector and a subsistence-based informal sector. Women are concentrated in informal markets, agriculture, and petty trade, which are highly climate-sensitive. Declining crop yields and fisheries undermine women's income security, while lack of collateral excludes them from formal banking systems (ADB 2023). Female-headed households often lack access to extension services, constraining investment in climate-resilient livelihoods. Remittances buffer shocks but are unevenly distributed; women are more likely to use funds for household consumption, while men invest in assets, widening gender gaps in resilience (DFAT 2024).

**Political Participation and Leadership**

Women, youth, and persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in governance and climate committees. Only ~5% of parliamentary seats are held by women, limiting their influence on climate and DRM policy (IPU 2024). Campaign financing, cultural norms, and male-dominated structures constrain participation. Youth and disability groups are rarely included in formal consultation processes, weakening inclusive policy design and perpetuating gaps in representation (CEDAW State Report 2023).

**GBV and SEAH**

GBV prevalence is among the highest globally, with ~68% of women reporting lifetime violence (UN Women 2024). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate risks of SEAH, while referral pathways are weak outside Port Moresby and provincial capitals (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023). Survivors face stigma, logistical barriers, and limited access to justice, undermining resilience and recovery. Women with disabilities and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable, facing compounded risks in evacuation centres and temporary housing.

### Disability Inclusion
Persons with disabilities face barriers to education, health, and employment. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible, excluding persons with disabilities from preparedness and recovery (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks, including heightened GBV exposure and limited access to reproductive health services (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Policy frameworks reference disability inclusion but lack operational detail and budget allocations, leaving implementation weak.

### Youth
Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high (~30%), particularly outside formal employment sectors (SPC/ILO 2023). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in extractive industries limits jobs. Migration offers income but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities (DFAT 2024). Girls face specific risks, including increased caregiving responsibilities, reduced school attendance, and limited access to safe WASH facilities (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Youth exclusion from climate finance and project monitoring further limits their role in resilience building.

### Education and Skills
Access to education is uneven, with disparities by gender, disability, and socio-economic status. Rural schools face shortages of teachers, materials, and resilient infrastructure, leading to higher dropout rates among girls and children with disabilities (Ministry of Education 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning. Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields, limiting participation in climate-resilient sectors (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023). Disability-inclusive pedagogy is limited, restricting opportunities for children with disabilities to acquire skills for resilience.

### Social Protection
PNG's social protection system provides pensions and allowances, but coverage gaps remain for informal workers, youth, and survivors of GBV (ADB 2022). Schemes are not fully climate-shock responsive, leaving female-headed households underserved. Persons with disabilities are not consistently reached by emergency cash assistance or livelihood recovery programmes (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Social protection frameworks lack gender-responsive targeting, meaning women's unpaid care burdens and GBV risks are not addressed in recovery planning.

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

### Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0, 2025–2035)
PNG's updated NDC commits to adaptation in agriculture, forestry, energy, and coastal protection. It references vulnerable groups but lacks measurable gender, youth, and disability indicators. Women farmers, who dominate subsistence agriculture, are not explicitly targeted in climate smart agriculture programmes, and youth are absent from renewable energy training pathways (UNFCCC 2020; ESCAP 2026).PNG's updated NDC commits to adaptation in agriculture, forestry, energy, and coastal protection. It references vulnerable groups but lacks measurable gender, youth, and disability indicators. Women farmers, who dominate subsistence agriculture, are not explicitly targeted in climate-smart agriculture programmes, and youth are absent from renewable energy training pathways (UNFCCC 2025; ESCAP 2026).

### National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (2017–2030)
Provides institutional arrangements for preparedness and response. While the framework acknowledges community-based resilience, it does not embed GBV/SEAH safeguards in evacuation planning, nor disability-inclusive design standards in shelters and WASH facilities.

Women and girls face heightened risks in overcrowded shelters, and persons with disabilities are often excluded from early warning systems (National Disaster Centre 2017; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**National Public Service GESI Policy (2013, updated 2021)**
Anchored in constitutional equality, this policy mandates gender and social inclusion across government agencies. However, mainstreaming into climate and DRM sectors remains limited. Line ministries often lack capacity and budget tagging to operationalise GESI commitments, leaving women, youth, and disability groups underrepresented in climate decision-making (Department of Personnel Management 2021; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**National Gender Equality Strategy (2023–2025)**
Outlines priorities for women's leadership, economic empowerment, and GBV prevention. It references climate resilience but does not provide sector-specific targets. Women's organisations have limited access to climate finance and project monitoring, constraining their ability to influence adaptation planning (UNDP 2023; UN Women 2024).

**Family Protection Act (2013)**
Provides the legal framework for GBV response, including protection orders and referral pathways. Integration into disaster preparedness and recovery remains weak. GBV/SEAH safeguards are not consistently embedded in evacuation centres or humanitarian response, leaving survivors without adequate protection during climate shocks (Government of PNG. Family Protection Act.2013; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability Policy (2015–2025)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments, outlining priorities for accessibility and inclusive services. Implementation is uneven, with limited disability-disaggregated data and weak enforcement of accessibility standards in climate and DRM infrastructure. Women and girls with disabilities remain particularly excluded from resilience programmes (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**National Youth Policy (2021–2030)**
Prioritises youth employment, skills development, and participation in resilience activities. However, mechanisms for youth engagement in climate finance and project monitoring are not operationalised. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2023–2027)**
Provides a roadmap to expand financial inclusion, with explicit targets to reach 2 million unbanked individuals by 2027 (50% women). It highlights inclusive financial instruments, digital services, safeguards against SEAH, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring finance (Bank of Papua New Guinea 2023).

**Sectoral Frameworks:**
Agriculture, fisheries, energy, and education strategies reference resilience but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards. Agriculture policies highlight climate-smart practices but do not address women's limited land tenure rights. Fisheries strategies reference sustainability but overlook gendered divisions of labour in coastal gleaning. Education frameworks reference resilience but lack commitments to disability-inclusive pedagogy and STEM pathways for girls (Office of Climate Change 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

## 4. Key Gaps and Changes

**Exposure to climate hazards**
PNG is highly exposed to cyclones, floods, drought, landslides, and volcanic eruptions. Women in rural areas, who are responsible for food gardens and water collection, face intensified burdens when crops fail or water sources dry up. Youth experience disrupted schooling and livelihoods, while persons with disabilities are often excluded from evacuation planning and early warning systems (World Bank 2021; UNFCCC 2020; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**Land and housing constraints**
Customary land tenure dominates, with ~97% of land under clan ownership. Women rarely hold formal land rights, limiting their ability to access credit or invest in resilient housing. Youth face barriers to secure tenure, constraining their ability to establish livelihoods, while relocation planning remains ad hoc and does not consistently integrate disability-inclusive design (ADB 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Pressure on essential services**
Rural communities face limited access to health, education, and resilient infrastructure**.** Women and girls experience higher maternal mortality and dropout rates due to distance and poor facilities. Persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics and schools, while youth face overcrowded classrooms and limited vocational training opportunities (Government of PNG 2024; Ministry of Education 2023).

**GBV and SEAH risks**
GBV prevalence is among the highest globally (~68% lifetime). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate risks of SEAH, with survivors facing stigma and weak referral pathways outside Port Moresby. Women with disabilities and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable in evacuation centres, where privacy and safety are limited (UNFPA 2014; UN Women 2024; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Barriers to disability inclusion**
Infrastructure and services often lack universal design. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible, excluding persons with disabilities from preparedness and recovery. Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks, including GBV exposure and limited access to reproductive health services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways**
Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high (~30%). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in extractive industries limits jobs. Migration offers income but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC/ILO 2023; DFAT 2024; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Financial inclusion and access to credit**
Only ~35% of women hold accounts. Collateral requirements, literacy barriers, and exclusion from formal banking systems restrict women's access to credit and climate finance. Youth and persons with disabilities face similar barriers, limiting their ability to invest in resilient livelihoods or access insurance. Support needs identified include capacity building for ministries and financial institutions to design inclusive instruments, safeguards against SEAH in finance governance, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance (ADB 2022; Bank of Papua New Guinea. National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023).

**Constraints in data availability**
Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected. This limits monitoring of vulnerable groups and weakens accountability in climate and DRM programmes. Without robust data, women's unpaid care burdens, youth exclusion, and disability risks remain invisible in policy design (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Social protection gaps**
PNG's social protection schemes are limited and not climate-shock responsive. Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities are underserved, leaving them vulnerable during disasters. Remittance-dependent households face income shocks if migration is disrupted, with women disproportionately affected due to reliance on subsistence livelihoods (ADB 2022; COFA Migration Assessments 2024).

**Institutional capacity constraints**
Climate and GESI frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging. Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation. Women's organisations, youth groups, and disability networks have limited access to climate finance and monitoring platforms, reducing their influence on resilience planning (Office of Climate Change 2023; UNDP 2023).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Needs

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

### Climate Finance (Component 1)

- Capacity building for ministries and financial institutions to design inclusive instruments and gender-responsive budgeting (ADB 2023; Bank of PNG National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027).
- Technical support for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data systems to monitor who benefits from climate finance (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- Safeguards against SEAH and discrimination in finance governance, particularly in rural and informal markets (Spotlight Initiative 2023; NFIS 2023–2027).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access climate finance and participate in monitoring platforms (UNDP 2023; Office of Climate Change 2023; NFIS 2023–2027).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups excluded by collateral requirements and customary tenure (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022; NFIS 2023–2027).
- Expansion of digital financial services and literacy programmes to reach rural women, youth, and persons with disabilities (Bank of PNG NFIS 2023–2027).

### Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and youth in land and housing for adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Policy 2015–2025; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, relocation, and community engagement processes (Family Protection Act 2013; Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (National Youth Policy 2021–2030; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Government of Papua New Guinea. *National Statistical Office Census and Surveys.* 2024.
- Government of Papua New Guinea. *Family Protection Act.* 2013.
- Government of Papua New Guinea. *Ministry of Education Statistical Yearbook.* 2023.
- Government of Papua New Guinea. *Office of Climate Change Institutional Assessments.* 2023.
- Department of Personnel Management. *National Public Service GESI Policy.* 2013; updated 2021.
- National Disaster Centre. *PNG National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework 2017–2030.* 2017.
- World Bank Group. *Poverty and Inequality Platform: Papua New Guinea.* 2024.
- World Bank Group. *Climate Risk Country Profile: Papua New Guinea.* 2021.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Country Gender Assessment: Papua New Guinea.* 2023.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Pacific Financial Inclusion Program.* 2022.
- Bank of Papua New Guinea. National Financial Inclusion Strategy. 2023.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Papua New Guinea NDC Update. 2020.
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Inclusive Climate Action: NDC 3.0 Papua New Guinea. 2026.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Gender Equality Strategy Papua New Guinea 2023–2025.* 2023.
- United Nations Women (UN Women). *Country Programme Papua New Guinea 2024–2028.* 2024.
- United Nations Women (UN Women). *Papua New Guinea Gender Brief.* 2022.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). *Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Papua New Guinea.* 2014.
- Spotlight Initiative. *Papua New Guinea Country Reporting.* 2023.
- Beijing+30 National Narrative Report, Papua New Guinea. 2024.
- Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Papua New Guinea. 2023.
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific.* 2024.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). *Pacific Data Hub: Papua New Guinea.* 2023.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) / International Labour Organization (ILO). *Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment.* 2023.
- UNESCO-UNEVOC. *TVET Country Profile: Papua New Guinea.* 2023.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). *Women in National Parliaments Database.* 2024.

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). *Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in Papua New Guinea.* 2024.
- International Recovery Platform. *Post-Disaster Needs Assessments: Papua New Guinea.* 2023.
- COFA Migration Assessments. *Papua New Guinea Household Impacts.* 2024.

## Republic of the Marshall Islands

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~39,500; 51% female (ADB,2024) |
| **Land area:** | 181 km² across 29 atolls and 5 islands, spread over ~750,000 km² of ocean (UNFCCC 2023) |
| **Urbanisation:** | Settlement concentrated in Majuro and Ebeye; outer islands face depopulation (World Bank 2024) |
| **Poverty:** | ~30% below national poverty line; multidimensional poverty ~60% (World Bank 2024) |
| **Disaster risk ranking:** | Ranked 14th globally (World Risk Report 2024) |
| **Key climate hazards:** | Sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, coastal erosion, prolonged droughts, intensified cyclones (NAP 2023; UNFCCC 2023) |

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is a low-lying island nation in the North Pacific, comprising 29 atolls and five isolated islands spread across ~750,000 square miles of ocean, with a total land area of just 181 km² (UNFCCC 2023). The population is ~42,000, with women comprising 51% (Government of RMI Census 2021). Settlement is concentrated in Majuro and Ebeye, while outer islands face depopulation due to limited access to services and economic opportunities (World Bank 2024).

RMI's economy is narrow, heavily reliant on U.S. Compact funding, public sector employment, and subsistence activities. The formal private sector is small, with limited opportunities for wage employment, particularly for women and youth (ADB 2023). Climate-sensitive sectors such as fisheries and agriculture are vital for livelihoods, especially in outer islands, where women dominate subsistence farming and food preparation (UN Women 2024).

The country is among the most climate-vulnerable globally, facing existential threats from sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, coastal erosion, and prolonged droughts (World Risk Report 2024; UNFCCC 2023). These hazards disproportionately affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Women, responsible for water collection and food security, face increased burdens during droughts and water shortages (NAP 2023). Youth experience disrupted education and limited employment prospects, while persons with disabilities are often excluded from evacuation planning and early warning systems (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

Migration is a key resilience strategy. The Compact of Free Association (COFA) allows Marshallese citizens to live and work in the United States, leading to significant outmigration. While remittances support household consumption, they also shift caregiving and agricultural responsibilities to women and older adults, increasing unpaid labour burdens (DFAT 2024). Urban migration to Majuro and Ebeye has led to overcrowded settlements with inadequate WASH infrastructure, exacerbating GBV and SEAH risks for women and girls (UN Women 2024).

Access to essential services is uneven. Outer islands face chronic shortages of health workers, teachers, and resilient infrastructure. Maternal mortality remains high, and adolescent girls face barriers to secondary education due to distance, cost, and caregiving responsibilities (Ministry of Health 2023; SPC 2023). Persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics, schools, and public buildings, limiting their participation in education and disaster preparedness.

## 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~48%; men ~70% (ILO 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~10% (IPU 2024). GBV prevalence: ~46% of women report lifetime violence (UN Women 2024). |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~55% of women hold accounts; collateral barriers persist (ADB 2023) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~12% (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~28% (SPC/ILO 2023). |

### Gender Norms and Roles

Traditional gender roles assign women primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, and water collection. These roles intensify during climate shocks, such as droughts or typhoons, when water becomes scarce and food gardens are damaged. Women are often the first responders in household-level adaptation, yet their contributions remain undervalued in formal resilience planning (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Men dominate fishing, construction, and transport sectors, exposing them to occupational hazards during extreme weather events. Women's exclusion from land ownership under customary tenure systems limits their ability to access credit or invest in resilient housing and livelihoods (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Economic Participation and Finance

Women are concentrated in the informal economy, including handicrafts, small-scale agriculture, and market vending. These sectors are highly vulnerable to climate variability, particularly saltwater intrusion and declining fish stocks (ADB 2023). Despite relatively high account ownership (~55%), access to credit remains constrained by lack of collateral, limited financial literacy, and gender norms that prioritise male financial decision-making. Female-headed households, especially in outer islands, often lack access to extension services or climate finance, limiting their ability to invest in adaptation strategies (UNDP 2023).

### Political Participation and Leadership

Women remain underrepresented in political and decision-making spaces, holding only ~10% of parliamentary seats (IPU 2024). Cultural norms, limited access to campaign financing, and male-dominated political networks constrain women's participation. Youth and persons with disabilities are similarly underrepresented in climate and disaster governance structures, despite being disproportionately affected by climate impacts (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### GBV and SEAH

Gender-based violence remains a critical concern, with ~46% of women reporting lifetime experience of violence (UN Women 2024). Climate-related displacement increases risks of GBV and SEAH, especially in overcrowded shelters lacking privacy and security (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023). Referral pathways for survivors are limited outside Majuro, and stigma deters reporting. Women with disabilities and adolescent girls face compounded risks, including limited access to justice and support services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities face systemic barriers to participation in education, employment, and disaster preparedness. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible, excluding persons with disabilities from preparedness and recovery efforts (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, facing heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services during climate shocks (Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Youth**
Youth face high unemployment and NEET rates (~28%), particularly outside the public sector (SPC/ILO 2023). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in construction and tourism limits job creation. Migration offers income opportunities but reduces local labour availability for resilience activities. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities, early pregnancy, and exclusion from STEM and TVET pathways (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Education and Skills**
Access to education is uneven, with disparities by gender, disability, and geography. Outer island schools face teacher shortages, poor infrastructure, and limited learning materials, contributing to high dropout rates among girls and children with disabilities (Ministry of Education 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning cycles. Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields, limiting participation in climate-resilient sectors such as renewable energy and engineering (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Social Protection**
RMI's social protection system includes pensions and health subsidies, but coverage gaps remain for informal workers, youth, and survivors of GBV (ADB 2022). Existing schemes are not fully climate shock-responsive, leaving female-headed households and persons with disabilities vulnerable during disasters. Emergency cash assistance and livelihood recovery programmes often fail to reach the most marginalised due to lack of disaggregated data and inclusive targeting mechanisms (UNDP 2023).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

The Republic of the Marshall Islands adopted its first **National Adaptation Plan (NAP)** in 2023, outlining a 10-year strategy to address climate risks across water, health, infrastructure, and food systems. The NAP identifies women, youth, and persons with disabilities as vulnerable groups but lacks measurable indicators or budget allocations to track GESI outcomes (UNFCCC 2023; Prevention Web 2023).

The **NDC Partnership Plan (2023)** integrates gender and human rights considerations, emphasising inclusive climate governance. However, implementation remains limited due to weak institutional capacity and lack of coordination between climate, gender, and social protection agencies (UNDP 2023).

The **National Gender Policy (2017–2022)** outlines priorities for women's leadership, economic empowerment, and GBV prevention, but integration into climate and DRM sectors is minimal (Government of RMI 2017).

The **Disability Policy (2020–2025)** aligns with CRPD principles, emphasising accessibility and inclusive services. However, enforcement of accessibility standards in shelters, schools, and early warning systems remains weak (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

The **Youth Policy (2022–2027)** promotes youth engagement in resilience and green jobs, but lacks mechanisms for youth participation in climate finance and project monitoring (SPC 2023).

Sectoral frameworks in agriculture, fisheries, and education reference resilience but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards. For example, fisheries strategies overlook women's roles in coastal

gleaning, and education policies lack commitments to disability-inclusive pedagogy (Office of Climate Change RMI 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

## 4. Key Gaps and Changes

### High exposure to climate hazards

RMI faces sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, and droughts that disproportionately affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Women's roles in water collection and caregiving intensify during droughts, while youth face school closures and persons with disabilities are excluded from evacuation planning (UNFCCC 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### Customary land tenure and housing insecurity

Approximately 90% of land is under customary tenure, with women rarely holding formal land rights. This limits their ability to access credit or invest in resilient housing. Relocation planning remains ad hoc and lacks gender- and disability-inclusive design (Legal Gap Analysis 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

### Limited access to essential services

Outer-island communities face shortages of health workers, teachers, and resilient infrastructure. Women and girls experience higher maternal mortality and dropout rates due to distance and poor facilities. Persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics and schools, limiting participation in education and preparedness (Ministry of Health 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### High GBV and SEAH risks

Approximately 46% of women report lifetime GBV. Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate SEAH risks, with limited referral pathways outside Majuro. Women with disabilities and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable (UN Women 2024; UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

### Barriers to disability inclusion

Infrastructure and services often lack universal design. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible, excluding persons with disabilities from preparedness and recovery (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways

Youth NEET rates are high (~28%). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in construction and tourism limits jobs. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Financial exclusion**
Despite 55% of women holding accounts, collateral requirements and gender norms restrict access to credit and climate finance. Youth and persons with disabilities face similar barriers, limiting their ability to invest in resilient livelihoods (ADB 2023).

**Data limitations**
Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected. This limits monitoring of vulnerable groups and weakens accountability in climate and DRM programmes (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Social protection gaps**
Existing schemes are not climate shock-responsive. Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities are underserved, leaving them vulnerable during disasters (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023).

**Institutional capacity constraints**
Climate and GESI frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging. Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation. Women's organisations, youth groups, and disability networks have limited access to climate finance and monitoring platforms (Office of Climate Change RMI 2023; UNDP 2023).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Needs

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Climate Finance (Component 1)**

- Capacity building for ministries and financial institutions to design inclusive instruments and gender-responsive budgeting (ADB 2023; UNDP 2023).
- Technical support for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data systems to monitor who benefits from climate finance (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- Safeguards against SEAH and discrimination in finance governance, particularly in rural and outer-island contexts (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access climate finance and participate in monitoring platforms (Office of Climate Change RMI 2023; UNDP 2023).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups excluded by collateral requirements and customary tenure (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and youth in land and housing for adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Policy 2020–2025; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, relocation, and community engagement processes (National Gender Policy 2017–2022; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (Youth Policy 2022–2027; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- UNFCCC. *Republic of the Marshall Islands National Adaptation Plan.* 2023.
- Prevention Web. *National Adaptation Plan of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.* 2023.
- World Bank. *Marshall Islands Climate and Poverty Analysis.* 2024.
- UNDP. *NDC Partnership Plan – Gender and Human Rights Integration.* 2023.
- Government of RMI. *National Gender Policy.* 2017–2022.
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific.* 2024.
- SPC/ILO. *Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment.* 2023.
- SPC. *Pacific Data Hub: Marshall Islands.* 2023.
- IPU. *Women in National Parliaments Database.* 2024.
- UN Women. *Marshall Islands Gender Brief.* 2024.
- UNFPA. *Gender-Based Violence Country Data: RMI.* 2014.
- Spotlight Initiative. *Marshall Islands Country Reporting.* 2023.
- Beijing+30 National Narrative Report, RMI. 2024.
- Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in RMI. 2023.
- Office of Climate Change, RMI. *Institutional Assessments.* 2023.
- DFAT. *Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in RMI.* 2024.
- ADB. *Pacific Financial Inclusion Program.* 2022.
- ADB. *Country Gender Assessment: RMI.* 2023.
- Ministry of Health, RMI. *Health Sector Review.* 2023.
- Ministry of Education, RMI. *Statistical Yearbook.* 2023.
- UNESCO UNEVOC. *TVET Country Profile: RMI.* 2023.

## Samoa

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~210,672; 49% female (adb,2024) |
| **Land area:** | ~2,842 km² across two main islands (Upolu and Savai'i) and smaller islets (UNFCCC 2023) |
| **Urbanisation:** | ~20% in Apia; rural settlements dominate (World Bank 2024) |
| **Poverty:** | 22% below national poverty line; multidimensional poverty ~45% (ADB 2023) |
| **Disaster risk ranking:** | Ranked 19th globally (World Risk Report 2024) |
| **Key climate hazards:** | Cyclones, flooding, drought, sea-level rise, tsunami (NAP 2023) |

Samoa is a Polynesian island state with two main islands, Upolu and Savai'i, and several smaller islets. Settlement patterns are dispersed, with rural villages dominating outside Apia. Women and girls in rural areas face longer travel times to schools and clinics, increasing dropout rates and maternal health risks. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately excluded due to inaccessible terrain and services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

The economy is mixed, combining subsistence agriculture, fisheries, remittances, and tourism. Women dominate subsistence farming, food preparation, and market vending, while men dominate construction and transport. Climate-sensitive sectors such as tourism and fisheries are vital for livelihoods but highly vulnerable to cyclones and coral bleaching (ADB 2023).

Samoa is highly climate-vulnerable, facing cyclones, flooding, drought, sea-level rise, and tsunami risks. Women, responsible for water and food security, face increased burdens during droughts and disasters. Youth experience disrupted education and limited employment prospects, while persons with disabilities are often excluded from evacuation planning and early warning systems (UNFCCC 2023; NAP 2023).

Migration is a key resilience strategy. Labour migration to New Zealand and Australia provides remittances but leaves women and older caregivers with expanded responsibilities. Urban migration to Apia creates overcrowded settlements, heightening GBV and SEAH risks (DFAT 2024; UN Women 2024).

### 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~36%; men ~58% (ILO 2023). |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~11% (IPU 2024) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~46% lifetime violence (UN Women 2024) |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~40% of women hold accounts (ADB 2023). |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~14% (Pacific Disability Forum 2024) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~30% (SPC/ILO 2023). |

**Gender Norms and Roles**

Traditional gender roles assign women caregiving, food preparation, and water collection. These roles intensify during climate shocks, when food gardens fail or water sources dry up. Women's contributions to resilience remain undervalued in formal planning (Beijing+30 Report 2024). Men dominate fishing and construction, facing occupational hazards during disasters. Women's

exclusion from land ownership under customary tenure limits their ability to access credit or invest in resilient housing (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

### Economic Participation and Finance

Women are concentrated in informal markets and agriculture. These sectors are highly vulnerable to climate variability, particularly saltwater intrusion and declining fish stocks. Despite account ownership, access to credit is constrained by collateral requirements and gender norms (ADB 2023). Female-headed households often lack access to extension services or climate finance, limiting adaptation investments (UNDP 2023).

### Political Participation and Leadership

Women hold ~11% of parliamentary seats (IPU 2024). Cultural norms, limited campaign financing, and male-dominated networks constrain participation. Youth and persons with disabilities are similarly underrepresented in climate governance, despite disproportionate impacts (CEDAW 2023).

### GBV and SEAH

GBV prevalence is high (~46%). Climate-related displacement increases risks of GBV and SEAH, especially in overcrowded shelters lacking privacy and security. Referral pathways are limited outside Apia, and stigma deters reporting (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

### Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities face systemic barriers to education, employment, and disaster preparedness. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible. Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

### Youth

Youth unemployment and NEET rates are high (~30%). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in tourism limits jobs. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

### Education and Skills

Access to education is uneven. Outer island schools face shortages of teachers and infrastructure, contributing to dropout rates among girls and children with disabilities (Ministry of Education 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning cycles. Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

### Social Protection

Samoa's social protection system includes pensions and health subsidies, but coverage gaps remain. Schemes are not fully climate shock-responsive, leaving female-headed households and persons with disabilities vulnerable during disasters (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

### National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2023)

Samoa's NAP sets out a 10-year strategy across water, health, infrastructure, and food systems. It identifies women, youth, and persons with disabilities as vulnerable groups, but lacks measurable indicators, budget allocations, and monitoring mechanisms to track GESI outcomes (UNFCCC 2023; PreventionWeb 2023). While the plan calls for community-based adaptation and

traditional knowledge, it does not specify how women's participation will be ensured or how disability-inclusive design will be embedded in infrastructure.

**NDC Partnership Plan (2023)**
This plan integrates gender and human rights considerations, emphasising inclusive climate governance. However, implementation remains limited due to weak institutional capacity and lack of coordination between climate, gender, and social protection agencies (UNDP 2023). Women's organisations and youth groups have limited access to climate finance and monitoring platforms, reducing their influence on adaptation planning.

**National Gender Policy (2016–2020)**
The policy outlines priorities for women's leadership, economic empowerment, and GBV prevention. Yet, integration into climate and DRM sectors has been minimal, constrained by resource limitations and weak political will (Government of Samoa 2016). The policy expired in 2020, and while discussions on renewal are ongoing, gaps remain in mainstreaming gender into resilience frameworks.

**Disability Policy (2019–2025)**
This policy aligns with CRPD principles, emphasising accessibility and inclusive services. However, enforcement of accessibility standards in shelters, schools, and early warning systems remains weak (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Disability-disaggregated data is limited, making it difficult to monitor outcomes.

**Youth Policy (2020–2025)**
The policy promotes youth engagement in resilience and green jobs. Yet, mechanisms for youth participation in climate finance and project monitoring are not operationalised (SPC 2023). Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways.

**Sectoral Frameworks**
Agriculture, fisheries, and education strategies reference resilience but inconsistently integrate GESI safeguards. Agriculture policies highlight climate-smart practices but do not address women's limited land tenure rights. Fisheries strategies overlook gendered divisions of labour in coastal gleaning. Education frameworks reference resilience but lack commitments to disability-inclusive pedagogy and STEM pathways for girls (Office of Climate Change Samoa 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges

**High exposure to hazards**
Samoa faces cyclones, flooding, drought, and tsunami risks. Women's caregiving and water collection roles intensify during disasters, youth face school closures, and persons with disabilities are excluded from evacuation planning (UNFCCC 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**Customary land tenure**
~80% of land is under customary tenure, with women rarely holding formal rights. This limits their ability to access credit or invest in resilient housing. Relocation planning remains ad hoc and lacks gender- and disability-inclusive design (Legal Gap Analysis 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Service access**
Outer-island communities face shortages of health workers, teachers, and resilient infrastructure. Women and girls experience higher maternal mortality and dropout rates due to distance and poor facilities. Persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics and schools, limiting

participation in education and preparedness (Ministry of Health 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**GBV and SEAH risks**
Approximately 46% of women report lifetime GBV. Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate SEAH risks, with limited referral pathways outside Apia. Women with disabilities and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable (UN Women 2024; UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Barriers to disability inclusion**
Infrastructure and services often lack universal design. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible, excluding persons with disabilities from preparedness and recovery (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways**
Youth NEET rates are high (~30%). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in tourism limits jobs. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Financial exclusion**
Despite 40% of women holding accounts, collateral requirements and gender norms restrict access to credit and climate finance. Youth and persons with disabilities face similar barriers, limiting their ability to invest in resilient livelihoods (ADB 2023).

**Data limitations**
Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected. This limits monitoring of vulnerable groups and weakens accountability in climate and DRM programmes (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).

**Social protection gaps**
Existing schemes are not climate shock-responsive. Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities are underserved, leaving them vulnerable during disasters (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023).

**Institutional capacity constraints**
Climate and GESI frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging. Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation. Women's organisations, youth groups, and disability networks have limited access to climate finance and monitoring platforms (Office of Climate Change Samoa 2023; UNDP 2023).

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Climate Finance (Component 1)**

- Capacity building for ministries and financial institutions to design inclusive instruments and gender-responsive budgeting (ADB 2023; CFAN 2024).

- Technical support for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data systems to monitor who benefits from climate finance (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- Safeguards against SEAH and discrimination in finance governance, particularly in rural and outer-island contexts (Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access climate finance and participate in monitoring platforms (Office of Climate Change Samoa 2023; UNDP 2023).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups excluded by collateral requirements and customary tenure (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).
- Expansion of digital financial services and literacy programmes, leveraging CFAN and CFCSP pipelines to reach rural women, youth, and persons with disabilities (CFAN 2024; CFCSP 2025).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and youth in land and housing for adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (Disability Policy 2019–2025; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, relocation, and community engagement processes (National Gender Policy 2016–2020; Spotlight Initiative 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (Youth Policy 2020–2025; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- UNFCCC. *Samoa National Adaptation Plan.* 2023.
- PreventionWeb. *National Adaptation Plan of Samoa.* 2023.
- World Bank. *Samoa Climate and Poverty Analysis.* 2024.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Country Gender Assessment: Samoa.* 2023.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Pacific Financial Inclusion Program.* 2022.
- UNDP. *NDC Partnership Plan – Gender and Human Rights Integration.* 2023.
- Government of Samoa. *National Gender Policy.* 2016–2020.
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific.* 2024.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). *Pacific Data Hub: Samoa.* 2023.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) / International Labour Organization (ILO). *Pacific Youth Labour Market Assessment.* 2023.
- IPU. *Women in National Parliaments Database.* 2024.
- UN Women. *Samoa Gender Brief.* 2024.
- UNFPA. *Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Samoa.* 2014.
- Spotlight Initiative. *Samoa Country Reporting.* 2023.
- Beijing+30 National Narrative Report, Samoa. 2024.
- Legal Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Samoa. 2023.
- Office of Climate Change, Samoa. *Institutional Assessments.* 2023.

- DFAT. *Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in Samoa.* 2024.
- Ministry of Health, Samoa. *Health Sector Review.* 2023.
- Ministry of Education, Samoa. *Statistical Yearbook.* 2023.
- UNESCO UNEVOC. *TVET Country Profile: Samoa.* 2023.

## Solomon Islands

### 1. Country Context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~783,313 49% female, (ADB,2024) & 2023 estimates) |
| **Poverty:** | 12.7% below national poverty line (World Bank 2023) |
| **Disaster risk:** | Ranked 6th globally (World Risk Index 2024) |

Solomon Islands is the third largest archipelago in the South Pacific, with 997 islands and a population of ~800,000 [SINSO 2023]. About 80% of people live on six large islands and dozens of smaller ones, with only 25% in urban centres [SINSO 2023]. Recent census and administrative data indicate increasing movement to Honiara for employment and services. The population is young, with 54% under 25 years old and a median age of 22.8 [SINSO 2019 Census]. Disability prevalence is estimated at ~14% [SPC 2023].

The transport network — ~1,500 km of roads, 440 bridges, and 90 wharves — is crucial for economic and social development [World Bank 2024]. Maintenance funding gaps have affected the condition of infrastructure, with only 25% of maintenance needs funded in 2022–2024 [NTF/MID 2025]. These constraints influence access to markets, health services, and evacuation routes.

According to the World Risk Index 2024, Solomon Islands is ranked 6th globally for disaster risk, reflecting high exposure to cyclones, flooding, sea level rise, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Disaster-related losses in 2020 were estimated at 8.7% of GDP [UN Women 2022].

### 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~52%; men ~66% (SPC/ILO 2023) |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~4% (SPC 2025). GBV prevalence: ~64% of women report lifetime IPV (UN Women 2024). |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~20% of women hold commercial bank accounts compared to 32% of men (World Bank 2017). |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~14% (SPC 2023). |
| **Youth unemployment/NEET:** | ~31–32% (SPC 2023). |

**Gender Norms and Roles**

Traditional norms shape women's participation in decision making and economic activities. Women are concentrated in subsistence agriculture and inshore fisheries, while men dominate cash crops and offshore fisheries. Women's responsibilities for food production, water collection, and caregiving increase their exposure to climate-related livelihood shocks and service disruptions. Customary land systems restrict women's access to land, resources, and decision-making forums, limiting their ability to invest in resilient livelihoods (UN Women 2022; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**Economic Participation and Finance**

Women own ~23% of businesses, mostly micro-scale and informal, and face barriers to collateral, financial products, and market information (World Bank 2017). Only ~20% of women hold bank accounts compared to 32% of men, constraining access to credit and climate finance. These constraints limit opportunities to diversify income and adopt climate-resilient technologies. Female-headed households often lack extension services, reducing their ability to invest in adaptation strategies (ADB 2023).

**Political Participation and Leadership**
Women hold ~4% of parliamentary seats, with similarly low representation at provincial and ward levels (SPC 2025). Customary leadership structures and electoral dynamics constrain participation, weakening integration of gender perspectives in climate, DRM, and local development planning. Youth and persons with disabilities are also underrepresented in governance processes, despite disproportionate exposure to climate risks (CEDAW 2023).

**GBV and SEAH**
GBV prevalence is among the highest globally, with ~64% of women reporting lifetime IPV (UN Women 2024). Displacement, crowding, and disruptions to community support systems during disasters exacerbate risks of SEAH. SAFENET provides coordinated survivor support through police, health, social welfare, and civil society services, but coverage outside Honiara remains limited (Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability Inclusion**
~14% of the population lives with disabilities (SPC 2023). Despite the National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2022–2031), persons with disabilities face barriers in education, health, employment, and disaster preparedness. Geographic dispersion and limited accessible infrastructure restrict access to assistive devices, early warning information, and evacuation services. Women and girls with disabilities face compounded risks, including heightened GBV exposure and limited access to reproductive health services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**Youth**
Youth unemployment is ~31–32%, with limited vocational training in climate-resilient sectors (SPC 2023). Young people face barriers to participation in community decision making, particularly in rural and remote areas. Migration to Honiara for education and employment contributes to changing household structures and service pressures. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Education and Skills**
Girls remain underrepresented in STEM education, and schools vary in their level of inclusive and disaster-resilient design (UN Women 2022). Limited vocational training in climate-resilient sectors restricts opportunities for youth, influencing employment pathways and participation in adaptation planning. Children with disabilities face systemic barriers due to inaccessible school infrastructure and limited inclusive pedagogy (Ministry of Education 2023).

**Social Protection**
Solomon Islands' social protection systems remain limited in coverage and are not fully climate shock responsive. Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities are underserved, leaving them vulnerable during disasters. SAFENET provides a national referral mechanism for GBV survivors, but broader social protection schemes lack gender-responsive targeting and disability inclusion (ADB 2022; MWYCFA 2021).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

**National Climate Change Policy (2023–2032**)
Identifies climate change as a significant threat to livelihoods and well-being. References vulnerable groups, and highlights the importance of inclusive adaptation, though further development of measurable targets and disaggregated data systems would support tracking of outcomes.

**Climate Finance Access Roadmap (2022–2027)**
Provides the framework for mobilising and managing climate finance. It prioritises climate budget tagging, expenditure tracking, and integration of resilience into public financial management systems. The roadmap highlights the need for disaggregated data, safeguards against SEAH, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance (MoFT/MNPDC/MECDM 2022).

**National Development Strategy (2016–2035)** [GoSI 2016]
Establishes long-term objectives for resilient, environmentally sustainable development and equitable access to services. It provides a national framework for mainstreaming GESI across sectors, supported by coordination mechanisms at national and provincial levels.

**National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (2021–2027)** [MWYCFA 2021]
Provides the overarching framework for advancing gender equality. It identifies barriers such as women's limited access to land, finance, and leadership roles, and prioritizes prevention and response to GBV. The policy references integration across sectors, including climate and DRM, with varying levels of implementation.

**National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls (2016–2020)** Established a coordinated framework for prevention and survivor support, linked to SAFENET referral services. The policy period has concluded, and lessons inform ongoing GBV and protection initiatives. Displacement and crowding during disasters can increase protection concerns, highlighting the relevance of GBV risk mitigation in shelters.

**National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2022–2031)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments and emphasizes accessibility in education, healthcare, employment, and community participation. It includes provisions for disaster preparedness and infrastructure accessibility, noting the need for strengthened application in shelters, WASH facilities, and transport systems.

**National Transport Plan (2017–2036)**
Recognizes transport as a driver of inclusive development and encourages the integration of gender considerations into planning, design, and implementation. The plan provides an entry point for embedding GESI safeguards in transport investments and related infrastructure programmes.

**Draft National Building Code (2022)**
Sets accessibility requirements to minimize barriers for persons with disabilities and other groups. Adoption and operationalization are ongoing, with implications for future public infrastructure and shelter design.

## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges

### Institutional Integration of GESI in Infrastructure Systems

MID and the National Transport Fund (NTF) are still in a transition phase of embedding GESI procedural and safeguard requirements into operational systems [MID GESI Analysis 2025]. Because these processes are not yet fully integrated across planning, design, procurement, and monitoring, the application of gender, disability, and social inclusion considerations varies across transport and infrastructure projects. Cross-ministerial coordination between climate, DRM, gender, disability, and infrastructure agencies also varies, affecting consistency in sector planning.

**Land Tenure, Customary Systems, and Access to Finance**
Women own less than 10% of titled land [World Bank 2017]. Customary land systems influence women's participation in local decision making and access to resources, and affect access to collateral and financial products, shaping opportunities to invest in resilient livelihoods and housing. These patterns also influence participation in adaptation and community planning processes.

**Transport, Accessibility, and Inclusive Infrastructure**
Transport planning does not systematically apply gender and disability considerations [MID GESI Analysis 2025]. The Draft National Building Code includes inclusive provisions, but enforcement is pending [GoSI 2022]. Accessibility varies across roads, wharves, bridges, public buildings, and evacuation routes, and inclusive design is not consistently applied in shelters and WASH facilities. Early warning systems and evacuation information are not uniformly accessible for persons with disabilities.

**GBV and SEAH Risks in Disaster Contexts**
Gender-based violence remains pervasive, with 64% of women reporting lifetime IPV [UN Women 2024]. Crowding, displacement, and disruptions to community support systems during disasters can increase protection concerns. Shelter design and privacy arrangements vary, and GBV risk mitigation is not systematically integrated into DRM planning. SAFENET provides coordinated survivor support as the national referral mechanism.

**Disability Inclusion in DRM and Service Access**
Approximately 14% of the population lives with disabilities [SPC 2023]. Despite the National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2022–2031), persons with disabilities experience barriers in accessing shelters, WASH facilities, transport, early warning systems, and evacuation services [Pacific Disability Forum 2024]. Participation in DRM planning varies, and geographic dispersion affects access to assistive devices and services.

**Education, Skills, and Youth Participation**
Girls remain underrepresented in STEM education, and schools vary in their level of inclusive and disaster-resilient design [UN Women 2022]. Limited vocational training in climate-resilient sectors restricts opportunities for youth, influencing employment pathways and participation in adaptation planning. Youth migration to Honiara for education and employment contributes to changing household structures and service pressures.

**Data and Evidence Systems**
The absence of sex, age, ability, disability, and ethnicity (SAADE) disaggregated data affects monitoring and evaluation systems [MID GESI Analysis 2025]. Climate-specific gender and disability data are limited, and monitoring systems are not yet aligned with inclusive adaptation indicators, affecting the ability to track outcomes for vulnerable groups.

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Climate Finance (Component 1)**

- Capacity building for ministries, financial institutions, and provincial councils to apply climate budget tagging and gender-responsive budgeting (Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027; MID GESI Analysis 2025).

- Technical support for sex, age, ability, and disability disaggregated data systems to monitor climate finance beneficiaries (SPC 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Safeguards against SEAH and discrimination in finance governance, particularly in customary land and rural contexts (UN Women 2024; SAFENET 2023; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access climate finance and participate in monitoring platforms (MWYCFA 2021; Pacific Disability Forum 2024; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups excluded by collateral requirements and customary tenure (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Expansion of financial literacy and market information systems to strengthen women's and youth enterprises in climate-sensitive sectors (World Bank 2017; SPC 2023; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (MID GESI Analysis 2025; SPC/ILO 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and youth in land and housing for adaptation investments (World Bank 2017; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2022–2031; Draft National Building Code 2022).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, relocation, and community engagement processes (National Gender Equality Policy 2021–2027; SAFENET 2023).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (transport, health, education) that reduce inequities in access (National Transport Plan 2017–2036; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO), *National Population and Housing Census 2019*; *Population Estimates 2023*.
- Government of Solomon Islands, *National Climate Change Policy 2023–2032*.
- Government of Solomon Islands, *National Development Strategy 2016–2035*.
- Government of Solomon Islands, *National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2022–2031*.
- Government of Solomon Islands, *National Transport Plan 2017–2036*.
- Government of Solomon Islands, *Draft National Building Code 2022*.
- Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), *National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2021–2027*.

- Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), *National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016–2020*. Pacific Community (SPC), *Pacific Data Hub:*
- *Disability Statistics – Solomon Islands*, 2023.
  Pacific Community (SPC), *Pacific Women in Politics Database*, 2025.
- UN Women, *Solomon Islands Gender Brief 2022*.
- UN Women, *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study (IPV Prevalence)*, 2024.
- World Bank, *Gender and Investment Climate Reform Assessment: Solomon Islands*, 2017.
- Pacific Disability Forum, *Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific*, 2024.
- World Risk Index, 2024.
- Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID), *Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis*, 2025. Commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

## Tuvalu

### 1. Country context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | ~10,004; 49% female (ADB,2024). |
| **Land area:** | ~26 km² across 9 islands (UNFCCC 2023). |
| **Urbanisation:** | 50% reside on Funafuti; outer islands face depopulation due to migration (World Bank 2024). |
| **Poverty:** | ~26% below national poverty line; multidimensional poverty ~40% (ADB 2023). |
| **Disaster risk:** | Ranked 2nd globally in the World Risk Index 2024. |
| **Key climate hazards:** | Sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, cyclones, flooding, drought, coastal erosion (Tuvalu NAP 2023). |

Tuvalu is among the world's most climate-vulnerable states, ranked 2nd globally in the World Risk Index 2024. Its extreme exposure to sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, and coastal erosion threatens the very habitability of its islands. Settlement is concentrated on Funafuti, where overcrowding places severe strain on housing, water, sanitation, and waste systems. Outer islands face depopulation as residents migrate internally to Funafuti or overseas (primarily New Zealand and Australia), reshaping household structures and weakening service delivery. Male labour migration leaves many rural households female-headed, intensifying caregiving and livelihood responsibilities and reducing access to formal finance and land rights (ADB 2023; DFAT 2024).

The economy is narrow and highly climate-sensitive. Remittances, fisheries, and aid flows dominate, with limited diversification. Subsistence agriculture is undermined by saltwater intrusion and drought, while coastal fisheries are increasingly affected by coral bleaching and declining stocks. Tourism remains minimal, and climate shocks regularly disrupt livelihoods. Women are concentrated in informal markets, handicrafts, and food processing, while men dominate fishing, construction, and transport. These gendered divisions of labour shape exposure to hazards and access to recovery resources, with women's contributions to resilience often undervalued in formal planning.

Demographic pressures compound vulnerability. Youth account for nearly one-third of the population, yet unemployment and NEET rates remain high (~30%), particularly in outer islands where formal labour markets are limited (SPC/ILO 2023). Migration reshapes household composition, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens. Disability prevalence is ~13% (Tuvalu Disability Policy 2021–2025), with persons with disabilities facing systemic barriers to education, employment, and disaster preparedness.

Climate pressures are already driving displacement. Saltwater intrusion undermines food security and potable water, while coastal erosion threatens housing and infrastructure. Funafuti's overcrowding magnifies risks of GBV, health crises, and service delivery breakdowns during disasters. Outer islands, with declining populations and limited connectivity, face longer recovery times and weaker institutional presence. These dynamics underscore Tuvalu's acute vulnerability and the urgent need for inclusive, well-resourced resilience measures.

## 2. GESI Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | Women ~52%; men ~68% (Tuvalu Labour Force Survey 2023). |
| **Women in parliament:** | ~6% (IPU 2024). |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~30% (SPC/ILO 2023). |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~13% (Tuvalu Disability Policy 2021–2025). |
| **GBV prevalence:** | ~40% of women report lifetime violence (UN Women 2024). |
| **Financial inclusion:** | ~55% of women hold accounts; collateral barriers persist (ADB2023). |

**Gender Norms and Roles**
Customary tenure and patriarchal norms shape household and community roles. Women carry primary responsibility for caregiving, food preparation, and water collection — roles that intensify during climate shocks when saltwater intrusion damages food gardens and water scarcity worsen. These responsibilities reduce women's time for paid work and limit mobility during evacuations. Men dominate fishing and construction, facing occupational hazards during cyclones and storm surges. Women's exclusion from land ownership under customary tenure (~90% of land) restricts access to credit and resilient housing, reinforcing dependency and limiting adaptation investments (Legal Gap Analysis 2023).

**Economic Participation and Finance**
Women are concentrated in informal markets, handicrafts, and subsistence agriculture — sectors highly vulnerable to climate variability. Saltwater intrusion and drought reduce yields, while declining fish stocks undermine coastal gleaning and small-scale fisheries. Despite account ownership (~55%), women face collateral barriers and gender norms that restrict access to credit. Female-headed households often lack extension services or climate finance, limiting adaptation investments (ADB 2023; UNDP 2023). Remittance dependence creates volatility, with women bearing the burden of managing household resilience when male migrants are absent.

**Political Participation and Leadership**
Women hold ~6% of parliamentary seats, among the lowest in the Pacific. Cultural norms, limited campaign financing, and male-dominated networks constrain participation. Women's voices are underrepresented in climate governance, weakening integration of gender perspectives in adaptation planning. Youth and persons with disabilities are similarly excluded from decision-making, despite disproportionate impacts of climate change (CEDAW 2023).

**GBV and SEAH**
GBV prevalence is ~40% of women reporting lifetime violence (UN Women 2024). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate risks, particularly where privacy, lighting, and security are absent. Referral pathways are limited outside Funafuti, and stigma deters reporting. Survivor services are unevenly distributed, leaving outer island women with limited access to protection and justice (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability Inclusion**
Persons with disabilities (~13% prevalence) face systemic barriers to education, employment, and disaster preparedness. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and early warning systems are not consistently accessible. Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services (Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Weak enforcement of accessibility standards in public infrastructure compounds exclusion.

**Youth**
Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high (~30%). Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and fisheries, while volatility in remittances limits household resilience. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023). Migration reshapes household composition, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens.

**Education and Skills**
Access to education is uneven. Outer island schools face shortages of teachers and infrastructure, contributing to dropout rates among girls and children with disabilities (Ministry of Education 2023). Climate disruptions damage school infrastructure and interrupt learning cycles. Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM and TVET fields, limiting entry into higher-value climate-resilient sectors such as renewable energy, engineering, and disaster management (UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Social Protection**
Tuvalu's social protection system includes pensions and health subsidies, but coverage gaps remain. Schemes are not climate-shock responsive, leaving female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities vulnerable during disasters (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023). Reliance on remittances and community support networks creates uneven resilience, with outer islands particularly disadvantaged.

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

**National Climate Change Policy 2021–2030 (*Te Vaka Fenua)***
Anchors Tuvalu's climate priorities within the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 (Te Kete)*. Developed through participatory consultations with island councils, women, youth, and disability groups. Focuses on ecosystems health, water security, food security, income security, and security of place. Explicitly integrates social resilience and community voices, but lacks detailed gender and disability indicators.

**National Adaptation Plan (NAP, adopted 2025)**
Provides Tuvalu's medium- and long-term resilience strategy across six priority sectors: water, health, infrastructure, food security, coastal protection, and livelihoods. Developed with support from GCF, SPREP, CSIRO, and GHD Fiji. Consultations included Kaupule, NGOs, women's and youth groups, and persons with disabilities. While inclusive in design, monitoring frameworks remain weak on sex- and disability-disaggregated data.

**National Strategy for Sustainable Development (*Te Kete, 2021–2030)***
Overarching development framework mainstreaming climate resilience across all sectors. Provides the policy umbrella for *Te Vaka Fenua* and the NAP. GESI priorities are referenced but not systematically integrated into sectoral budgets or monitoring.

**National Gender Equality Policy (2019–2024)**
Prioritises women's leadership, economic empowerment, and GBV prevention. Climate and DRM sectors are referenced but not systematically integrated, with weak institutional capacity and funding gaps limiting implementation.

**Disability Policy (2021–2025)**
Aligns with CRPD, emphasising accessibility and inclusive services. Implementation hindered by limited data, weak enforcement of accessibility standards, and insufficient budget allocations. Disaster preparedness and infrastructure resilience are not consistently disability-inclusive.

**National Youth Policy (2020–2025)**
Promotes youth engagement in resilience, green jobs, and civic participation. Mechanisms for youth participation in climate finance and project monitoring are not operationalised, leaving youth excluded from decision-making despite high NEET rates.

**Family Wellbeing Policy (2022–2032)**
Provides a holistic framework for family resilience, linking gender equality, child protection, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, and elder care. Explicitly references climate change and disasters, emphasising inclusive preparedness, protection services, and social support systems during climate shocks.

## 4. Key Gaps and Changes

**Extreme hazard exposure and displacement risks** Sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, and coastal erosion undermine food security, water supply, and housing. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected. The 2025 *CEDAW Concluding Observations* emphasised that women face heightened vulnerability due to caregiving roles and exclusion from relocation planning. The *Amnesty International 2025 report* further documented how women experience “double injustice”: climate-induced displacement at home and restrictive migration policies abroad.

**Customary land tenure and housing insecurity** With ~90% of land under customary tenure, women rarely hold rights. This restricts access to credit, resilient housing, and relocation options. Post-disaster housing recovery often reinforces male control over land and resources, leaving female-headed households and persons with disabilities at greater risk of insecure shelter (Legal Gap Analysis 2023; ADB 2023).

**Service delivery gaps in outer islands** Outer islands face shortages of health workers, teachers, and resilient infrastructure. Women and girls experience higher maternal health risks and dropout rates, while persons with disabilities encounter inaccessible clinics and schools. Geographic isolation compounds vulnerability, with delays in supply delivery and limited communications infrastructure during climate events (Ministry of Health 2023; Ministry of Education 2023).

**GBV and SEAH risks in emergencies** Around 40% of women report lifetime GBV (UN Women 2024). Climate-related displacement and overcrowded shelters exacerbate risks, particularly where privacy, lighting, and security are absent. Referral pathways are weak outside Funafuti, and stigma deters reporting. Survivor services are unevenly distributed, leaving outer island women with limited access to protection and justice (UNFPA 2014; Spotlight Initiative 2023).

**Disability inclusion deficits** Despite policy commitments, infrastructure and services often lack universal design. Evacuation centres, WASH facilities, and communication systems are not consistently accessible. Women and girls with disabilities face heightened GBV risks and limited access to reproductive health services. Weak enforcement of accessibility standards in public infrastructure compounds exclusion (Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

**Youth unemployment and limited pathways** Youth NEET rates (~30%) reflect exclusion from education, training, and employment. Climate change reduces opportunities in agriculture and

fisheries, while volatility in remittances limits jobs. Young women face additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and exclusion from STEM/TVET pathways. Migration reshapes household structures, leaving older relatives and women with increased caregiving burdens (SPC/ILO 2023; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**Financial exclusion despite account ownership** Although ~55% of women hold bank accounts, collateral requirements and gender norms restrict access to credit. Youth and persons with disabilities face similar barriers. Female-headed households often lack extension services or climate finance, limiting adaptation investments. This weakens participation in higher-value, climate-resilient sectors (ADB 2023; UNDP 2023).

**Data and evidence limitations** Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data are not systematically collected across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors. This weakens accountability and limits the ability to target vulnerable groups effectively. Post-disaster needs assessments rarely include GESI-specific indicators, reducing evidence for inclusive planning (SPC 2023; CEDAW 2025).

**Social protection gaps** Existing schemes (pensions, health subsidies) are not climate-shock responsive. Female-headed households, informal workers, and persons with disabilities remain underserved. Reliance on remittances and community support networks creates uneven resilience, with outer islands particularly disadvantaged (ADB 2022; UNDP 2023).

**Institutional capacity constraints and fragmented finance architecture** Frameworks reference vulnerable groups but lack operational detail, measurable targets, and budget tagging. Climate finance remains project-driven, with no consolidated national strategy. The *CEDAW 2025 review* highlighted women's exclusion from climate finance decision-making, while donor reports note the need for a unified, gender-responsive climate finance strategy. Weak coordination between protection, DRM, and climate agencies limits inclusive implementation.

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

### Finance Systems (Component 1)

- **Consolidated climate finance strategy:** Support Tuvalu to move from fragmented, project-based finance (MCAP, GCCA+ SUPA, SUPA) toward a unified, gender-responsive climate finance strategy. This would operationalise commitments in *Te Vaka Fenua* and the *NAP 2025*, addressing the CEDAW 2025 concern that women are excluded from finance decision-making.
- **Gender-responsive budgeting and tagging:** Build Ministry of Finance capacity to apply climate budget tagging and gender-responsive budgeting, ensuring allocations for women, youth, and disability groups are visible and trackable.
- **Inclusive access mechanisms:** Expand concessional finance and grant instruments to reach women's cooperatives, youth enterprises, and disability organisations, addressing collateral barriers identified in the *ADB Country Gender Assessment (2023)*.
- **Safeguards and accountability:** Integrate GBV/SEAH safeguards and survivor-centred referral pathways into climate finance governance, consistent with the *National Gender Equality Policy (2019–2024)* and *Family Wellbeing Policy (2022–2032)*.

- **Data systems:** Establish sex, age, and disability-disaggregated monitoring of climate finance beneficiaries, consistent with recommendations from *CEDAW 2025* and the *Disability Policy (2021–2025)*.

- **Capacity building for vulnerable groups:** Provide technical assistance and financial literacy programmes to women, youth, and persons with disabilities to strengthen participation in climate finance pipelines, aligned with the *National Youth Policy (2020–2025)*.

**Infrastructure and Services (Component 2)**

- **Universal design standards:** Ensure evacuation centres, schools, health facilities, and water systems incorporate accessibility and safety features, as mandated in the *Disability Policy (2021–2025)* and referenced in the *NAP 2025*.

- **GBV/SEAH safeguards in displacement:** Embed GBV prevention and SEAH safeguards in shelter design, relocation planning, and migration frameworks, responding directly to risks highlighted in the *Amnesty International 2025 report*.

- **Vocational pathways:** Expand STEM and TVET opportunities for women and youth in climate-resilient infrastructure sectors (renewable energy, coastal protection), addressing gaps identified in the *UNESCO UNEVOC TVET Profile (2023)*.

- **Service delivery integration:** Strengthen health, education, and social protection systems to be climate-shock responsive, ensuring continuity of maternal health, disability services, and youth programmes during disasters (Ministry of Health 2023; Ministry of Education 2023).

- **Outer island resilience:** Prioritise investments in outer island infrastructure and services to reduce disparities in access, drawing on findings from the *NAP 2025* and *World Bank Climate and Poverty Analysis (2024)*.

- **Migration and displacement planning:** Develop gender-sensitive migration frameworks that protect women's rights to health, housing, and livelihoods, addressing the "double injustice" documented in the *Amnesty International 2025 report*.

**References**


- Government of Tuvalu. *National Climate Change Policy 2021–2030 (Te Vaka Fenua)*.
- Government of Tuvalu. *National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 (Te Kete)*.
- Government of Tuvalu. *National Adaptation Plan (NAP)*. Adopted August 2025.
- Government of Tuvalu. *National Gender Equality Policy 2019–2024*.
- Government of Tuvalu. *Disability Policy 2021–2025*.
- Government of Tuvalu. *National Youth Policy 2020–2025*.
- Government of Tuvalu. *Family Wellbeing Policy 2022–2032*.
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. *Climate Finance Readiness Programme 2018–2025*.
- Ministry of Health, Tuvalu. *Health Sector Review*. 2023.
- Ministry of Education, Tuvalu. *Statistical Yearbook*. 2023.
- UNESCO UNEVOC. *TVET Country Profile: Tuvalu*. 2023.
- SPC/ILO. *Youth NEET and Labour Force Survey*. 2023.
- ADB. *Country Gender Assessment: Tuvalu*. 2023.

- World Bank. *Climate and Poverty Analysis: Tuvalu*. 2024.N Women. *Tuvalu Gender Brief*. 2024.
- UNFPA. *Gender-Based Violence Country Data: Tuvalu*. 2014.
- Spotlight Initiative. *Tuvalu Country Reporting*. 2023.
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Inclusion Review*. 2024.
- CEDAW Committee. *Concluding Observations on Tuvalu's 5th and 6th Reports*. July 2025.
- Amnesty International. *Navigating Injustice: Climate Displacement and Women's Rights in Tuvalu and Kiribati*. October 2025.
- SPREP/CSIRO/GHD Fiji. *Technical Inputs to Tuvalu NAP Development*. 2025.
- DFAT. *Labour Mobility and Household Resilience in Tuvalu*. 2024.

## Tonga

### 1. Country Context

- Population: ~99,896 (49% female) *(ADB, 2024)*
- Poverty: 22.1% below the national basic needs poverty line *(World Bank 2023)*
- Disaster risk: Ranked 2nd globally *(World Risk Index 2024)*

Tonga is a Polynesian archipelago of 171 islands, 36 of which are inhabited, with the population concentrated on Tongatapu (74%) and Vava'u (14%) (Tonga Statistics Department 2022). The country faces extreme exposure to cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, and sea level rise. The 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption and tsunami affected 84% of the population and resulted in extensive damage to housing, water systems, coastal infrastructure, and livelihoods (UNDP 2022; World Bank 2022).

Tonga's economy is shaped by high remittance dependence, accounting for 40–43% of GDP and among the highest globally (World Bank 2023). Labour migration—particularly to Australia and New Zealand under seasonal worker schemes—has reshaped household structures, increased the number of female-headed households and shifted caregiving and agricultural responsibilities to women and older persons (ADB 2022; DFAT 2024).

The population is young, with 35% under 15 and 55% under 30 (Tonga Statistics Department 2022). Youth unemployment remains high, particularly for young women, reflecting limited domestic labour market opportunities (SPC 2023).

Disability prevalence is estimated at 11–14%, with higher rates in outer islands where access to services is more limited (SPC 2023; Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Rural and outer island communities experience geographic isolation, limited transport connectivity, and heightened vulnerability to climate shocks.

Tonga's national development priorities are articulated in the Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF II 2015–2025), which emphasizes inclusive growth, resilience, and strengthened institutions. Climate change is recognized as the country's greatest long-term threat, with adaptation and disaster risk reduction central to national planning frameworks (GoT 2015; UNFCCC 2020).

### 2. GESI Situation

| | |
|---|---|
| Labour force participation: | 47% for women vs. 74% for men *(ADB 2022* |
| Women in parliament: | 7% *(SPC 2023)* |
| GBV prevalence: | 40% lifetime IPV *(UN Women 2022)* |
| Disability prevalence: | 11–14% *(SPC 2023)* |
| Youth NEET: | ~30% *(SPC 2023)* |

**Gender norms and roles**

Tongan society is strongly shaped by traditional and church-based norms, which reinforce male leadership and women's domestic and caregiving roles (UN Women 2022). Women are heavily engaged in subsistence agriculture, handicrafts, food processing, and informal sector activities, while men dominate cash crops, fisheries, construction, and formal employment (ADB 2022). These gendered divisions influence exposure to climate-related livelihood shocks and shape access to higher-value economic opportunities**.**

**Economic participation and access to finance**
Women's access to formal finance remains limited. Only 28% of women hold a bank account compared to 40% of men (World Bank Findex 2021). Collateral requirements and land tenure constraints restrict women's ability to access credit, invest in climate-resilient enterprises, or rebuild after disasters (ADB 2022). Control of remittance flows by relatives abroad can also influence women's financial autonomy and decision-making power within households.

**Political participation and leadership**
Women remain underrepresented in national and local governance, holding fewer than 10% of parliamentary seats and limited roles in district and town councils (SPC 2023). This affects the visibility of gender, disability, and youth priorities in climate adaptation, DRM, and infrastructure planning processes.

**GBV and SEAH risks**
Tonga has high rates of gender-based violence, with 40% of women reporting lifetime intimate partner violence (UN Women 2022). Disaster displacement, overcrowded shelters, and limited survivor services can increase protection concerns during emergencies (UNFPA 2023). The Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC) provide essential services but is primarily located in Tongatapu, with more limited reach to outer islands.

**Disability inclusion**
Persons with disabilities face persistent barriers in education, health, employment, and disaster preparedness. Accessibility in shelters, WASH facilities, and transport remains limited, particularly in outer islands (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; SPC 2023). Early warning systems are not consistently disability-inclusive, and evacuation procedures vary in their ability to accommodate mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments.

**Youth exclusion**
Youth unemployment and NEET rates remain high, particularly for young women (SPC 2023). Limited vocational training in climate-resilient sectors, combined with migration of working-age adults, reduces pathways for youth to engage in employment or participate in adaptation planning.

**Education and skills**
Women are underrepresented in STEM and technical training, while persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing inclusive education. These gaps influence entry into higher-value, climate-resilient sectors such as renewable energy, engineering, and disaster management (ADB 2022; DFAT 2024)

**Social protection**
Tonga's social protection system is limited in coverage and does not systematically address the needs of informal workers, survivors of GBV, youth, or persons with disabilities. During disasters, households rely heavily on remittances and community support networks, which vary across islands and communities (World Bank 2023).

## 3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks

Tonga has an established policy environment that recognizes gender equality, disability inclusion, youth engagement, and climate resilience as cross-cutting national priorities. The following frameworks shape the climate–GESI landscape:

**Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF II 2015–2025)**
Provides the overarching national vision for inclusive, sustainable development. TSDF II emphasizes resilience, equitable access to services, and strengthened institutions, identifying

women, youth, and persons with disabilities as priority groups for inclusive growth *(GoT 2015)*. TSDF II positions climate change and disaster resilience as central themes across national planning.

**Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP II 2018–2028)**
Tonga's central climate and DRM framework. JNAP II identifies women, youth, and persons with disabilities as vulnerable groups requiring targeted support. It emphasizes community-based adaptation, resilient infrastructure, and inclusive early warning systems, with implementation shaped by available institutional and technical capacity (GoT 2018; UNFCCC 2020).

**Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC, 2020 update)**
Commits to adaptation and mitigation actions across energy, transport, water, and coastal protection. The NDC references gender and vulnerable groups but **does not include measurable GESI targets or disaggregated data systems to track outcomes** (UNFCCC 2020).

**Climate Finance Strategy (under development,** launched via GGGI/CFAN 2024–2025): Strengthens institutional capacity, supports the Tonga Climate Change Fund, and integrates climate finance into national policy frameworks. Focus areas include gender and social inclusion, safeguards against SEAH, and expanding access for women, youth, and disability organisations.

**National Policy on Gender Equality (2014–2018; ongoing updates)**
Identifies systemic barriers to women's participation in leadership, economic empowerment, and access to justice. The policy highlights GBV prevention and response, women's limited access to land and finance, and the need for gender mainstreaming across sectors, including climate change and DRM *(GoT 2014; ADB 2022)*. Updates are underway to align with emerging climate and resilience priorities.

**Family Protection Act (2013) and Family Protection Regulations (2017)**
Provides the legal framework for addressing domestic violence, including protection orders and survivor services. Implementation remains uneven, particularly in outer islands, where access to police, health, and crisis support services varies *(UN Women 2022)*.

**National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development (2014–2018; updated 2021–2030)**
Aligns with CRPD commitments and sets out priorities for accessibility, inclusive education, employment, and participation in disaster preparedness and response. The updated policy strengthens commitments to inclusive early warning systems and accessible public infrastructure, though enforcement of accessibility standards remains limited

Enforcement of accessibility standards remains limited *(Pacific Disability Forum 2024)*.

**National Youth Strategy (2014–2019; under review)**
Highlights youth empowerment, employment, and participation in climate change awareness and community resilience. Implementation gaps persist due to limited funding and coordination *(SPC 2023)*.

**Sectoral frameworks**

**Water Resources Bill (draft)** includes provisions for equitable access to safe water, critical for women and persons with disabilities.

**Energy Roadmap (2010–2020)** prioritizes renewable energy but lacks explicit GESI integration.

**Transport sector plans** reference accessibility but do not systematically apply inclusive design standards.

## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges

**Structural exclusion from land, finance, and economic opportunities**
Women's access to land is restricted by customary inheritance practices, limiting their ability to secure credit, invest in climate resilient livelihoods, or rebuild after disasters (ADB 2022; World Bank 2023). Limited financial inclusion further constrains women's participation in higher value sectors and green enterprises. Climate induced displacement following cyclones and the 2022 volcanic eruption has further exposed gendered economic vulnerabilities, particularly for female-headed households. Youth and persons with disabilities also face barriers to formal employment, vocational training, and access to financial products, limiting their participation in emerging climate resilient sectors.

**Weak institutional integration of GESI in climate and DRM systems**
While JNAP II identifies vulnerable groups, gender and disability considerations are not systematically embedded in planning, budgeting, or monitoring. Coordination across ministries remains limited, and implementation is heavily reliant on donor funded projects (GoT 2018; ADB 2022). Institutional capacity constraints—especially in data management, inclusive planning, and monitoring—limit the translation of national commitments into operational practice. GESI integration in early warning systems, preparedness planning, and post-disaster assessments remains inconsistent across islands.

**Disaster vulnerability and limited inclusive infrastructure**
The 2022 volcanic eruption exposed significant gaps in shelter accessibility, WASH facilities, and evacuation procedures. Persons with disabilities, older persons, and women with children faced barriers accessing safe shelters and essential services (UNDP 2022; Pacific Disability Forum 2024). Shelter design, location, and management practices vary across islands, with limited application of accessibility standards and inconsistent provision of lighting, privacy, and safe WASH facilities.

**High prevalence of GBV and SEAH risks during disasters**
With 40% of women experiencing lifetime IPV, disaster displacement increases risks of SEAH in shelters. Survivor services are limited outside Tongatapu, and SEAH safeguards are not consistently applied in emergency response systems (UN Women 2022; UNFPA 2023). Referral pathways are not consistently understood or operational at community level, and emergency responders have limited training on survivor-centred approaches.

**Disability inclusion gaps**
Despite national policy commitments, accessibility standards are not enforced in public buildings, shelters, transport, or early warning systems. Persons with disabilities face barriers to participation in community-based adaptation and recovery planning (Pacific Disability Forum 2024; SPC 2023). Assistive devices, accessible communication formats, and disability-inclusive evacuation procedures are not systematically available during emergencies.

**Youth unemployment and limited skills pathways**
High youth NEET rates reflect limited access to vocational training in climate-resilient sectors. Young people, especially young women, face barriers to participating in adaptation planning and green economy opportunities (SPC 2023; ADB 2022). Geographic isolation and limited training facilities outside Tongatapu further constrain youth participation in climate and DRM initiatives.

**Data and evidence limitations**
There is no systematic collection of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data across climate, DRM, or infrastructure sectors. This weakens accountability and limits the ability to target vulnerable groups effectively (SPC 2023; ADB 2022). Post-disaster needs assessments and sectoral monitoring systems rarely include GESI-specific indicators, limiting evidence for inclusive planning.

**Outer island isolation and service delivery gaps**
Geographic dispersion and limited transport connectivity restrict access to health, education, markets, and emergency services. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities in Ha'apai, Vava'u, and the Niuas face heightened vulnerability during disasters (World Bank 2022; DFAT 2024). Delays in supply delivery, limited communications infrastructure, and inconsistent access to safe shelters compound risks for remote communities during climate-related events**.**

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

### Climate Finance (Component 1)

- Capacity building for ministries and financial institutions to design inclusive instruments and gender-responsive budgeting (ADB 2022; JNAP II 2018–2028).
- Technical support for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data systems to monitor who benefits from climate finance (SPC 2023; Beijing+30 Report 2024).
- Safeguards against SEAH and discrimination in finance governance, particularly in rural and outer-island contexts (UN Women 2022; UNFPA 2023).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access climate finance and participate in monitoring platforms (Office of Climate Change Tonga 2023; UNDP 2022).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups excluded by collateral requirements and customary tenure (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022).
- Expansion of digital financial services and literacy programmes to reach rural women, youth, and persons with disabilities (World Bank 2023; DFAT 2024).

### Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (SPC/ILO 2023; DFAT 2024).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and youth in land and housing for adaptation investments (ADB 2022; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2021–2030; Pacific Disability Forum 2024).

- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, relocation, and community engagement processes (National Policy on Gender Equality 2014–2018; Family Protection Act 2013).

- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (TSDF II 2015–2025; UNESCO UNEVOC 2023).

**References**


- Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Country Gender Assessment: Tonga*. 2022.
- DFAT. *Pacific Women Lead and Disability Inclusion Evaluation*. 2024.
- Government of Tonga (GoT). *Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP II) 2018–2028.*
- Pacific Disability Forum. *Disability and Climate Resilience in the Pacific*. 2024.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). *Pacific Data Hub: Disability and Labour Statistics – Tonga*. 2023
- UNDP. *Tonga Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami Recovery Assessment*. 2022.
- UN Women. *Tonga Gender Brief and GBV Survey*. 2022
- UNFPA. *Tonga GBV and SEAH Response Updates*. 2023.
- World Bank. *Poverty and Equity Data Portal: Tonga*. 2023.
- World Bank. *Tonga Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami Impact Assessment*. 2022

**Vanuatu**

## 1. Country Context

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | 334,665; 49% female, (ADB,2024) |
| **Poverty:** | 13% below national line (World Bank 2023) |
| **Disaster risk:** | Ranked 1st globally (World Risk Index 2024) |

Vanuatu's exposure to cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and sea-level rise is documented as the highest globally (World Risk Index 2024). Urbanisation is concentrated in Port Vila and Luganville, with rural communities comprising the majority of the population (VNSO 2020).

Rural households dominate, with ~20% female-headed due to male labour migration (ADB 2022). Labour migration and climate-related displacement are documented dynamics shaping household composition. Male labour migration has increased the proportion of female-headed households, while climate-related events, including cyclones and coastal inundation, have contributed to internal movement and temporary displacement (UNFCCC 2020). Disability prevalence is estimated at ~15% (SPC 2023). Youth account for approximately half of the population (VNSO 2020).

These demographic and mobility patterns influence access to services, livelihoods, and participation in community decision-making. The National Sustainable Development Plan (2016–2030) emphasizes resilience, inclusive growth, and responsive institutions.

## 2. GESI Situation

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour force participation:** | ~50% (ADB 2022) |
| **Women in parliament:** | 8% (ADB 2022) |
| **GBV prevalence:** | 52% lifetime IPV (UN Women/VWC 2024) |
| **Disability prevalence:** | ~15% (SPC 2023) |
| **Youth NEET:** | ~30–35% (SPC 2023) |

The National Gender Equality Policy (2015–2025) identifies barriers related to women's access to land, finance, and leadership roles. Women own less than 10% of titled land, constrained by customary inheritance practices (ADB 2022; Government of Vanuatu 2015; SPC 2023). Political representation remains low, with fewer than 10% of parliamentary seats held by women. National surveys document high rates of GBV (UN Women/VWC 2024).

Youth face high NEET rates, reflecting exclusion from education, training, and employment pathways (SPC 2023). These patterns influence participation in livelihood activities and community processes.

Persons with disabilities encounter barriers in health, education, WASH, and employment, with limited accessibility in disaster preparedness and response systems (SPC 2023; DFAT 2024).

Agricultural and livelihood roles are gendered. Women are concentrated in subsistence gardening, food processing, handicrafts, and small-scale fisheries, while men are more represented in mechanized farming, cash crops, and export-oriented fisheries. Persons with disabilities and youth have lower participation in higher-value segments of these value chains (SPC 2023; UN Women 2024).

Education and vocational pathways show differences in access. Women are underrepresented in STEM and technical training, while youth and persons with disabilities face barriers to vocational institutions and targeted support (ADB 2022; DFAT 2024).

Social protection coverage varies across groups. Informal workers, survivors of GBV, youth, and persons with disabilities have variable access to formal support mechanisms (World Bank 2023; UN Women/VWC 2024).

People of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity are referenced in regional frameworks as groups that may experience barriers to services and participation (SPC 2023). National data are limited.

**3. National Climate and GESI Frameworks**

The following national policy and planning frameworks that address the climate-GESI nexus.

***National Adaptation Programme of Action (2007) and National Adaptation Plan (2018–ongoing)*** – establish Vanuatu's central frameworks for climate adaptation. Both highlight vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, in relation to climate risks and disasters. The NAPA identifies priority sectors such as agriculture, water, health, and coastal zones, while the NAP process integrates Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessments and emphasizes participatory approaches. Gender and social inclusion are recognized as cross-cutting priorities, though systematic use of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data remains limited (GoV 2007; UNFCCC 2018; GGGI 2026).

***National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2019–2030)*** – emphasizes resilience and inclusion, and includes references to gender and disability at a broad level without detailed operational measures (GoV 2019).

***Climate Change Act (2021) –*** establishes the institutional framework for climate governance, including coordination mechanisms and national responsibilities for adaptation and mitigation (GoV 2021).

***Nationally Determined Contribution (2020 update)*** – commits to climate adaptation and mitigation under UNFCCC, with gender and inclusion references, though it does not specify measurable targets for women, youth, or persons with disabilities (UNFCCC 2020).

**Climate Finance Access Roadmap (2022–2027 - p**rovides the framework for mobilising and managing climate finance. It prioritises climate budget tagging, expenditure tracking, and integration of resilience into public financial management systems. The roadmap highlights the need for disaggregated data, safeguards against SEAH, and stronger roles for women's, youth, and disability organisations in accessing and monitoring climate finance (GoV, SPC, GGGI 2022).

***National Gender Equality Policy (2015–2025 / 2020–2030 update)*** – identifies systemic barriers including women's limited access to land, finance, and leadership roles, and explicitly prioritizes prevention and response to gender-based violence, including strengthening survivor services, legal protections, and community awareness. (GoV 2015; ADB 2022).

**GBV commitments are operationalized through the Safenet Referral Network**, which coordinates government agencies, police, health services, and NGOs such as the Vanuatu Women's Centre to deliver survivor-centred support

***National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018–2025) -*** establishes a framework for disability rights and inclusion, aligning with CRPD commitments, and includes provisions for accessibility in disaster preparedness and response (GoV 2018).

***National Youth Policy (2012–2022)*** – promotes youth empowerment, education, employment, and participation, and highlights youth engagement in climate change awareness, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development initiatives (GoV 2012).

## 4. Key Gaps Challenges

### Structural exclusion from land and resources

The National Gender Equality Policy identifies women's limited access to land, finance, and decision-making. The ADB Country Gender Assessment (2022) reports that women own less than 10% of titled land, which affects access to credit and climate finance. Women's access to customary land is mediated through family and community structures, which influences recovery processes following climate-related events and participation in livelihood activities.

### Weak institutional integration of GESI in DRM

The National DRR Policy references coordination roles across ministries and broad-level inclusion of gender and disability. Reviews (ADB 2022; SPC 2023) indicate that implementation varies across provinces and is influenced by available capacity and resources.

### Climate adaptation capacity gaps

The NAPA and NAP identify intensifying hazards, technical and financial constraints, and developing monitoring systems. The NAP process references institutional arrangements and community-level engagement. Poverty levels and rural isolation influence participation in adaptation processes, including for women and youth (World Bank 2023).

### Disability inclusion gaps

Persons with disabilities experience barriers in emergency shelters, WASH facilities, and early warning systems. The National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018–2025) outlines commitments, and reviews note that accessibility varies across locations and services (SPC 2023; DFAT 2024).

### Infrastructure and accessibility deficits

National frameworks reference disability-inclusive infrastructure. Reviews highlight variations in accessibility across shelters, WASH facilities, transport, and communications systems (GoV 2019; SPC 2023). These variations influence access to services during climate-related events for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Current investments include ADB-supported construction of gender-responsive shelters in the Greater Port Vila area, which incorporate accessibility and safety considerations.

### Data and evidence limitations

National frameworks and external reviews (SPC 2023) highlight the absence of systematic sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data. Without robust data, this affects the ability to monitor participation and access across groups.

### High prevalence of GBV

The National Gender Equality Policy and the Second National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships (UN Women/VWC 2024) confirm that 52% of ever-partnered women have experienced violence. GBV considerations are critical for resilience planning and for the design and management of emergency shelters, including access to referral pathways and support services through the national Safe-net system.

## 5. Potential RPACA GESI Support Actions

Based on existing policy frameworks and recent reports, several areas have been identified where RPACA may be able to contribute to strengthening GESI integration in climate finance and resilient infrastructure:

**Climate Finance (Component 1)**

- Capacity building for ministries and financial institutions to apply climate budget tagging and gender-responsive budgeting (Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027; ADB 2022).
- Technical support for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data systems to monitor climate finance beneficiaries (SPC 2023; UNFCCC 2018; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Safeguards against SEAH and discrimination in finance governance, particularly in rural and customary land contexts (UN Women/VWC 2024; Safenet 2024; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Support for women's, youth, and disability organisations to access climate finance and participate in monitoring platforms (SPC & UNDP Van KIRAP GESI Action Plan 2023; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Inclusive access mechanisms such as micro-finance, insurance, and grant instruments tailored for vulnerable groups excluded by collateral requirements and customary tenure (ADB Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2022; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).
- Expansion of financial literacy and vocational pathways to strengthen women's and youth enterprises in climate-sensitive sectors (World Bank 2023; DFAT 2024; Climate Finance Access Roadmap 2022–2027).

**Infrastructure and Coastal Protection (Component 2)**

- Capacity building and vocational pathways to increase leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities in infrastructure projects (ADB 2022; SPC 2023).
- Tenure and resource access reforms to address barriers faced by women and youth in land and housing for adaptation investments (Government of Vanuatu 2015; Legal Gap Analysis 2023).
- Universal design standards to ensure schools, health centres, aged-care facilities, and evacuation centres are accessible to all (National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018–2025; DFAT 2024).
- GBV/SEAH safeguards embedded in construction, relocation, and community engagement processes (National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2025; Safenet Referral Network 2024).
- Inclusive service delivery systems linked to infrastructure investments (health, education, transport) that reduce inequities in access (National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030; SPC 2023).

**References**


- Asian Development Bank (ADB), Country Gender Assessment: Vanuatu, 2022
- DFAT, Pacific Disability Inclusion Evaluation, 2024.

- Government of Vanuatu, National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA/NAP).
- Government of Vanuatu, National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2019–2030.
- Government of Vanuatu, National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2025.
- SPC & UNDP, Van KIRAP GESI Action Plan, 2023.
- SPC Pacific Data Hub, Disability Statistics: Vanuatu, 2023.
- UNFCCC, Vanuatu Nationally Determined Contribution, 2020.
- UN Women & Vanuatu Women's Centre, Second National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships, 2024.
- Vanuatu National Population and Housing Census, 2020.
- World Bank, Poverty and Equity Data Portal: Vanuatu, 2023.
- World Risk Index, 2024.