

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND CLIMATE FINANCE: ENGAGING IN PROCESSES AND ACCESSING RESOURCES



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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank	GCF	Green Climate Fund
AE	Accredited Entity	GEF	Global Environment Facility
AF	Adaptation Fund	IAP	Integrated Approach Pilot
CIF	Climate Investment Funds	IFC	International Finance Corporation
CSO	Civil Society Organization	IFI	International Financial Institution
CTF	Clean Technology Fund	LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
DAE	Direct Access Entity	MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
DGM	Dedicated Grant Mechanism (for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities)	NDA	National Designated Authority
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	NIE	National Implementing Entity
EDA	Enhanced Direct Access	PPCR	Pilot Program for Climate Resilience
FIP	Forest Investment Program	SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
		SREP	Scaling-Up Renewable Energy in Low-Income Countries Program
		UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Background

Climate change and gender are inextricably linked because the socialization of gender roles results in adaptive and mitigative capabilities that are also gendered. The global framework for action on climate change, including but not limited to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has recognized that to be effective and truly transformative, climate action must respect and promote gender equality and women's rights. This advancement of gender equality requires climate finance architecture that is gender-responsive and inclusive of the individuals and organizations that have knowledge about gender and are working toward gender equality.

While frameworks and policies now exist that articulate gender considerations and uphold stakeholder engagement in climate financing for all four of the main public climate finance mechanisms—the Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds (CIF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Global Environment Facility (GEF)—each varies in their mode of operation and implementation. Moreover, the engagement and participation of grassroots women, women's organizations and gender experts in climate finance processes—from design to decision-making, implementation to monitoring—remains limited. This in turn limits the depth, breadth and efficiency of climate initiatives by hindering the integration of local knowledge, context and opportunities in climate change solutions, as well as inhibiting advances in human rights and gender equality.

Mandated into the guiding documentation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), designed to be the largest funder of climate mitigation and adaptation projects in the world, was a requirement that all climate finance projects pursue a gender-sensitive and country driven approach. Further GCF decisions and other financing mechanisms have promoted the assurance of inclusive decision-making processes via the participation of affected communities, including women. Many groups and advocates have demanded that all climate finance mechanisms, and increasingly the GCF, also ensure mechanisms for local access, pointing for example to the success of Small Grants Projects under the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

In principle, as the first climate fund that mandated gender considerations from its outset, the GCF could be a champion of transformative projects on climate change that fully engage women's groups and local actors. In practice, shifting financing systems and structures to enable these projects and participation is much more challenging. With few projects approved, relative to the other funds, and fewer already receiving funding, it is early and therefore difficult to measure how and if GCF flows are reaching local levels, and particularly, local women. These questions also persist among other climate funds that have embedded gender equality in policy and practice as the mechanisms evolved, but where outcomes and impact remain uncertain and/or under-reported.

Trends are already starting to emerge in the project approval process of the GCF that demonstrate the relevance of gender issues is not well understood by many practitioners involved in climate change investments and financing mechanisms. Beyond structural barriers to local access, prevailing approaches to reducing emissions continue to prioritize scientific and technological measures, often at the expense of social and behavioral considerations. Most of the funds still prize large-scale energy infrastructure and industrial efficiency programs, often seen as mitigation projects with little connection to gender equality or other social issues. Similarly, funded adaptation projects prioritize retrofitting infrastructure deemed to be at risk from climate change over the adaptation needs of people and communities.

AIM OF THIS REPORT

This report examines the theoretical and practical experiences of access, participation, and power for women's organizations seeking to engage with international climate funds, and then identifies ways various actors can work to re-orient climate finance pathways to provide more efficient support and solutions toward gender-responsive climate action.

As the major climate funds undergo various stages of internal evaluation, opportunities for restructuring and increasing engagement of organizations advocating for

inclusive and transformative practices, such as women’s organizations, feminist advocates, and gender-related groups, may be possible. In this regard, this report aims to lay out:

1. **State of play on gender integration across the four main international public climate funds;**
2. **Experiences, challenges and opportunities for engagement for women and feminist organizations; and**
3. **Potential pathways for increasing engagement of these organizations in these funds.**

With a focus on engagement pathways, this report does not aim to provide a full analysis or evaluation of the quality or impact of gender-mainstreaming efforts across the funds’ portfolios. The systemic challenges of catalysing gender-responsive programming at scale in climate finance are better studied elsewhere, though certainly cited by many interviewees as a starting point as they grappled with the political and structural realities of how this state of affairs could be influenced by the meaningful inclusion of women’s organizations.

Overview

CLIMATE FINANCE ARCHITECTURE

Climate finance is a broad, overarching term that can encompass public, private, and philanthropic flows of funds toward climate change actions, as well as the systems that structure the ways these funds are distributed. This report focuses primarily on public sector finance through multilateral channels, with a particular focus on four major international public climate funds: the Adaptation Fund (AF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The AF, CIF, GCF, and GEF are four of the largest public sector financing institutions for climate action. The AF, GCF, and GEF are all formally part of the financial mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while the CIF sits outside of the Convention and is administered by the World Bank. An overview of funding disbursed on climate change projects as of March 2019 by each fund is available in Table 1.

There are additional international funds that also specifically fund projects aimed at addressing climate change. These funds all fit into a climate finance “architecture” but vary in the way they are governed and the issues they prioritize for funding. For a general overview and snapshot of the global architecture of climate finance, please see Annex I to link to a map developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) which demonstrates the breadth of financing mechanisms, but note the four funds reviewed in this report are the major public financing mechanisms for climate change.⁸

The AF, CIF, GCF, and GEF are all multilateral mechanisms, or initiatives that do not rely on a single country and have distributed governance. This multilateral structure is considered to encourage recipient-country ownership and national governments’ autonomy in project decision-making. Recently, these funds have taken further steps to increase the visibility and participation of civil society, creating a role for non-governmental stakeholders through stakeholder observation and/or engagement policies and recommendations.

TABLE 1: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE GCF, GEF, AF, AND CIF AS OF MARCH 2019

FUND	TOTAL FUNDING*	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROJECTS FUNDED	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES COVERED	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
Adaptation Fund ¹	564 million USD contributions ²	84	64, and 2 regional	6 million
Climate Investment Funds ³	8.13 billion USD pledged ⁴	300+	72	45 million
Green Climate Fund ⁵	10.3 billion USD pledged	102	97	276 million
Global Environment Facility (Climate Change Focus Area) ^{6**}	4.87 billion USD approved	1,370	130+	27 million+

*This does not include co-financing.

**These project numbers capture projects with a “completed” or “project approved” status and climate change as their sole focus area. While multiple and cross-cutting solutions and benefits can and should be pursued and realized, inclusion of these projects may have distorted the weight given to climate change within the GEF. The 130 countries and 27 million beneficiaries is likely an undercount in comparison to the projects, as it reflects results at the end of GEF-6: <https://www.thegef.org/topics/climate-change>

GENDER IN CLIMATE FINANCE: PROGRESS IN POLICY, LIMITATIONS IN PRACTICE

Public multilateral climate funds, including the AF, CIF, GCF, and GEF, have continued to increase gender mainstreaming in recent years through policy implementation and/or practice.⁹ By December 2018, each of these funds had an explicit gender policy and/or gender action plan, a gender specialist focused on the implementation of the policy and/or action plan, and increasing accountability mechanisms integrating gender equality principles. The internal policies of all these mechanisms also articulate gender considerations that uphold principles of stakeholder inclusion. These

financing mechanisms have undertaken various efforts towards advancing inclusion, with different approaches to enhance the engagement of women and gender-related groups, especially as momentum increases for a gender-responsive approach in the international and national climate agendas.

While efforts aim to provide space for women's organizations and gender-related groups to engage with the funds as stakeholders, mechanisms have yet to demonstrate significant enhanced engagement and sustainable participation at the grassroots level from women's organizations, advocate groups, or individuals. The burden is often still on the women's organizations to adapt to and meet the demands and structures of the financing mechanisms, rather than vice versa. Especially given increasing knowledge on the advantages of diverse inclusion and engagement, establishing and sustaining structures that facilitate the engagement of women's organizations, feminist advocates and gender-related groups is a key opportunity for enacting comprehensive interventions to achieve transformative climate action and solutions.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN CLIMATE FINANCE

Evidence suggests that the inclusion of women improves the effectiveness and efficiency of technical assistance and development funding,¹⁰ provides social justice^{11,12,13,14} alleviates poverty and increases global sustainability,^{15,16} and improves impact of disbursed climate finance.^{17,18,19} Beyond these outcomes,

implementing gender-responsive climate finance, including via the effective engagement of women and gender-related groups, is in line with the human rights obligations of multiple covenants and related multilateral processes, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and mandates under the UNFCCC²⁰ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, while the amount of funds flowing directly to women's organizations within public climate finance has not been aggregated, an investigation into philanthropic giving found that in 2014, less than 3% of environmental funding was slated toward women's environmental activism.²¹ Despite limited resources, women's organizations have been leaders in designing and implementing climate solutions directly as well as ensuring gender is well-integrated into climate mitigation and adaptation policies and programs.

The role women's organizations have been able to play historically, though, has been restricted, and nowhere near the scale necessary due to the limited financial flows, awareness-raising and capacity-building channeled toward them. Capacity to engage directly with the funds, and even to engage indirectly, often requires political connections and the basic technical skill to demonstrate one's expertise and ability to contribute to substantive climate action and results, requiring monetary resources. Multinational, higher-capacity institutions that do take the lead in obtaining funding and implementing projects are often not linked to local expertise or knowledge on gender dynamics. Linking this knowledge could strengthen and enrich climate projects from design stages to monitoring and reporting.

Receiving direct access to climate finance would enable expansion and add depth to the work already being done on-the-ground to enhance gender equality. The opportunity for groups and organizations to apply their gender expertise to additional and larger projects across climate-relevant sectors is also invaluable to advancing an effective approach to gender-just climate action, prompting systemic change in addressing climate issues.

Exploring Engagement in Climate Finance Mechanisms

Women's organizations, feminist advocates, and gender-related groups seeking to engage with climate finance may consider the different constellations of opportunities within each fund. Understanding the frameworks and policies of each fund is a critical first step, as it enables insight on particular entry points for enhancing gender responsiveness, civil society engagement, and the potential access of smaller, grassroots organizations to mobilize their knowledge and skills toward transformative systemic change.

Of course, while this publication and others provide basic primers on these funds and the opportunities they may offer, deeper exploration often requires time and resources to ensure working with, or within, a financing mechanism is a good fit for the organization. Therefore, capacity considerations must guide decisions to engage. This section is intended to provide information for women's organizations so they can play a more active role in engaging and participating in climate financing, as an integral partner at all stages of project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

ADAPTATION FUND



ADAPTATION FUND

In 2001, the Adaptation Fund (AF) was established under the Kyoto Protocol to "reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change, including variability at the local and national levels." The Fund is financed by a two percent share of proceeds of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) issued under the Protocol's **Clean Development Mechanism** projects—its main source of funds – but also receives voluntary contributions from government and private donors.²²

The fund is set up to provide direct access for countries to the funds without the involvement of multilateral agencies such as development banks or UN agencies. Countries can access funding through AF-accredited Implementing Entities, which can be national, regional, or multilateral, that propose projects to receive the available funds, and implement climate action.

The fund is managed by the AF Board, which meets twice a year. Since operationalization in 2007, the AF has allocated about 564 million USD to climate adaptation activities supporting 84 concrete adaptation projects and benefitting 6 million direct beneficiaries.²³ As of January 1, 2019, the AF started serving the Paris Agreement, in line with the newly approved **5-year Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2022**, based on pillars of Action, Innovation, and Knowledge and Sharing.

THE ADAPTATION FUND AND GENDER

While not part of its originating governance framework, the AF now has a gender policy and action plan that guides its work. Prior to 2011, proposals included gender analyses of varying strength, partially due to a lack of criteria for conducting the analysis. In 2013, however, a new **Environmental and Social Policy** was put in place, emphasizing the Fund's support in project design, with a specific principle (of 15) on "gender equity and women's empowerment." The AF also established readiness grants for implementing entities to provide **technical assistance to build their capacity on gender**, particularly to support gender integration in proposal design and development.

This Environmental and Social Policy led to the Gender Policy and multi-year Action Plan, adopted in 2016, which builds upon and was influenced by the existing gender policies and action plans of other climate finance mechanisms. The **Action Plan** lists as one of its key objectives: "to consult with affected women and men actively, taking into account their experiences, capabilities and knowledge throughout Fund processes."²⁴ One of its main principles also includes knowledge generation and communication, explicitly stating that the Fund will "seek periodic feedback from stakeholders and partners on the implementation of the Fund's gender policy, including possible future improvements."²⁵ The plan also mandates the Secretariat to establish a roster of gender expert consultants. This roster could provide opportunities for women's regional organizations to participate in the Fund's financed projects/programmes contributing to gender considerations throughout the project lifecycle. As of February 2019, the Secretariat is working to identify other organizations to develop and host the roster for broader use across climate finance mechanisms.

The **Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy** was created to provide Implementing Entities with practical guidance on how to achieve and assess compliance with the AF Gender Policy throughout the project cycle. One concrete recommendation on how Implementing Entities can ensure “gender-responsive participation and consultation” is:

Make a targeted effort to include national women’s machineries in consultation efforts...This includes also women’s networks and gender and women’s rights advocacy organizations from civil society or academia on the national and local level. Local women’s cooperatives and many community-based organizations, which are often run by women and target services to women and their families, should also be included.²⁶

This noted recommendation is recognized as a strength in guidance for Implementing Entities. Women’s organizations can take this guidance to AF Implementing Entities in their country to promote the machinery (and women’s organizations) and their inclusion as stakeholders throughout all stages of the project/ programme cycle.

The AF’s Medium-Term Strategy, approved in 2017, includes gender as a cross-cutting theme, and builds on the policy, to also include new gender-related funding windows. AF has also developed a dedicated Knowledge and Learning thematic webpage on Gender with materials available on the AF Gender Policy and programming, sharing guidance and experience in project implementation.

Adaptation Fund Key Resources

[Operational Policies and Guidelines for Parties to Access Resources from the Adaptation Fund](#)

[Instructions For Preparing A Request For Project Or Programme Funding From the Adaptation Fund](#)

[Third Review of the Adaptation Fund, UNFCCC](#)

[Knowledge and Learning: Gender](#)
(dedicated AF resource webpage)

[Guidance Document For Implementing Entities On Compliance With The Adaptation Fund Gender Policy](#)

PATHWAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Become an Implementing Entity

National Implementing Entities (NIEs) go through an accreditation process that does not include social standards, only strict legal and fiduciary standards. Once accreditation is complete, NIEs can submit proposals for projects and programs. These NIEs are not expected to work through MDBs or other multilateral implementing entities, and are provided with full responsibility over project management, monitoring and reporting.

The AF facilitates short approval times. When NIEs submit proposals for small-size projects, or projects less than 1 million USD, the approval process is one step. When projects are considered more “regular” size, they undergo a one or two-step approval process. Details can be found in the Fund’s **Operational Policies and Guidelines for Parties to Access Resources from the Adaptation Fund**. This simple process makes it easier for women’s organizations to potentially access funding from the AF, granted they can meet the NIE legal and fiduciary requirements.

Technical Assistance Grants

After reviewing the **technical assistance grant opportunities** for the current year, communicate with your NIE about this process. A list of NIEs can be found on the [website](#).

Support NIEs through the Readiness Program

Another opportunity for women’s organizations is to provide technical assistance through the AF’s Readiness Program, where a capacity-building component has a specific focus on gender mainstreaming. The AF invites NIEs previously awarded small capacity-building grants on environmental and social risk mitigation to apply for technical assistance to “facilitate gender mainstreaming and the updating of their existing policies and procedures in line with the Fund’s Gender Policy (GP).”²⁷ Women’s organizations should connect with NIEs to ensure this opportunity to build NIE gender capacity is recognized and leveraged where desired.

Become Recognized as Consultants

The newly mandated roster of gender consultants presents

a key opportunity to support mainstreaming gender across the AF, but particularly supporting activities within approved projects. The AF is working to have the roster hosted through an AF partner organization.

CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS (CIF)



Established in 2008, the CIF is administered by the World Bank. Currently, the CIF provides 72 countries with resources funded by 14 contributor countries. A total of 8.3 billion USD has been pledged directly to the CIF,²⁸ and all of its allocated funds are managed by five multilateral development banks (MDBs), which work as CIF implementing entities

Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries Program (SREP), and the Forest Investment Program (FIP).

Under the CIF, countries must first apply to become a “pilot country” of one of the four programs, and once approved, each country must develop an investment plan (IP) for that program. Development of an IP is a process often involving many rounds of consultations with different types of stakeholders to determine the investment details and explicitly stating expected contributions from the CIF and other sources. The IPs must be approved by the CIF Trust Fund Committee before countries work with the MDBs to develop projects for funding.

CLEAN TECHNOLOGY FUND (CTF)	PILOT PROGRAM FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE (PPCR)
The 5.4 billion USD Clean Technology Fund (CTF) provides middle-income countries with highly concessional resources to scale up the demonstration, deployment, and transfer of low carbon technologies in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport.	The 1.2 billion USD Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) is helping developing countries integrate climate resilience into development planning and offers additional funding to support public and private sector investments for implementation.
SCALING UP RENEWABLE ENERGY IN LOW INCOME COUNTRIES PROGRAM (SREP)	FOREST INVESTMENT PROGRAM (FIP)
The 780 million USD Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries Program (SREP) is helping to deploy renewable energy solutions for increased energy access and economic growth in the world’s poorest countries.	The 775 million USD Forest Investment Program (FIP) supports efforts of developing countries to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and promote sustainable forest management that leads to emissions’ reductions and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+).

of the approved projects. The CIF was originally created to trigger investments at scale in both developing and middle-income countries, specifically empowering “climate-smart growth and transformation.”²⁹ Working across sectors including energy, climate resilience, transport and forestry sectors, the CIF functions on a co-financing structure and therefore anticipates that its portfolio of over 300 projects has generated an additional 58 billion USD in co-financing.³⁰

The CIF is comprised of two funds, the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF), with four programs: the Clean Technology Fund (solely under the CTF), and under the SCF, the Pilot

THE CIF AND GENDER

The CIF did not include any mandates for gender considerations at its inception. Following an Environment, Social and Gender Assessment in 2011, and a CIF Gender Review in 2013, the CIF concluded that gender mainstreaming was a driver for, and essential to, efficient implementation of CIF investments. These reviews encouraged the CIF to enhance its commitment to improving the inclusion of gender issues in its programs and projects, prompting additional resources and capacity toward this end. CIF recruited a specialist on gender and social issues in 2014, and developed the initial CIF Gender Action Plan – Phase 1 in 2014. In

December 2016, the CIF adopted the Gender Action Plan – Phase 2 for FY17-20. Additionally, the Gender Action Plan – Phase 2 emphasized the shift from gender mainstreaming processes to more ambitious transformational gender outcomes for “women’s improved asset position, voice, and livelihoods status through access to benefits from CIF-funded investments,” offering a strengthened framework for monitoring of gender results and impacts.³¹

The **CIF Gender Policy**, adopted in 2018, provides a governance framework to “advance equal access to and benefit from CIF supported investments for women and men in CIF pilot countries,”³² supporting gender mainstreaming across CIF operational modalities, governance structures, investments, program design and implementation. The CIF also now includes gender equality as a co-benefit and core criteria in FIP and the SREP. Other CIF programs are also now expected to assess the gender dimensions of investment plans during their technical reviews. However, only the PPCR and FIP explicitly indicate women and women’s groups as key stakeholders who should be consulted for the preparation of IPs and project design, which could be a limitation to this engagement of women’s organizations more broadly across the programs.³³

The CIF Governance structure includes the role of “active observers”³⁴ across each of the CIF programs. Observers hold a seat on the trust fund committees, alongside donor and recipient governments. The structure aims to ensure each committee has a diverse representation of stakeholders from civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector, from developed and developing countries. In 2011, following the first term of CIF observers, the election process for new observers specified that, “Special effort will be made to recruit and select observer organizations that are represented by women and/or that focus on women’s involvement in addressing the challenges of climate change.” This encouraged a few organizations to apply for observer status, including the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) and in subsequent years, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN), Lao Women’s Union (LWU) and the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

In 2018, the new CIF Gender Policy introduced a new category of “gender representatives” to the CIF for all Trust Fund Committees and Sub-Committees to be selected from among existing sets of CIF observers. This category created an additional opportunity for improved and sustained engagement of women and gender-related groups and gender experts in CIF governance, as well as for capacity building across all current CIF Observers on gender issues.

Climate Investment Funds Key Resources

[An Overview of the CIF, Governance and Programming Information](#)

[CIF Operational and Results Reports](#)

[Mainstreaming Gender](#)

(dedicated CIF resource page)

[Building Gender Into Climate Finance, ADB Experience with the Climate Investment Funds](#)

[Gender and Renewable Energy: Entry Points for Women’s Livelihoods and Employment](#)

PATHWAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Become CSO Observers

Women’s organizations can apply to become an observer of one or more of the CIF programs through a nomination and voting process. Details on that process can be found in the [CIF orientation booklet](#). Each program can have only four CSO observers at any given time. With limited space for observers, women’s organizations can also engage with the observers to provide input and support for feminist perspectives and gender-responsive approaches. Linking with these observers, listed on the CIF [webpage](#), could also be useful for women’s organizations in gaining access to project implementation.

In 2015, the CIF established the Stakeholder Advisory Network (SAN) to “strengthen the partnership of non-state actors with climate finance entities to advance the agenda of climate smart development through collaboration, research, advocacy, networking and partnerships.”³⁵ The concept note of the SAN does not

include explicit mentions of gender or women, but the network is steered by a governing committee made up of civil society members and Indigenous Peoples, as well as private sector representatives.³⁶ The SAN is currently hosted by the CIF and membership is open to all stakeholders engaged as observers to multilateral climate finance funds. The SAN is currently working on its development as an independent entity.

Connect with CIF Country Focal Points and Engage in Investment Plan Creation

Organizations can engage with their country’s CIF government focal points to provide CSO perspectives as stakeholders, and also provide expertise in planning, design, and development of their country IP. Few countries have plans approved for all programs of the CIF, so women’s organizations (pending strategic direction of the CIF) should reach out to CIF country focal points to inquire about whether investment plans are in the drafting process and if their expertise could support their development process. Countries also revise their IPs, creating opportunities for women’s organizations to be included post-approval of the IP to enhance the gender inclusiveness of the IP and projects. Even if there are not additional IPs or revisions, there is the opportunity for women’s organizations to contribute to the continuing implementation of projects, as well as the monitoring and reporting.

Country Investment Plans

Each [country webpage](#) includes links to their IPs as well as the contact information for the country-level MDB focal point and government focal point for each program included in the IP.

Apply for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (DGM), or support implementation

The DGM is implemented by the World Bank and provides grants on a smaller scale directly to CSOs rather than through national governments. However, it only functions under the Forest Investment Program, funding projects on forestry and REDD+. Thus far, the DGM has approved 51 million USD in ten different projects throughout the world, but in the Asia-Pacific region, is working only in its pilot

countries, including Indonesia, Nepal and Lao PDR. In the DGM [Design Document](#), one key principle is the inclusion and cooperation with other actors and processes, opening a space for inclusion of women’s organizations, but it should be noted there is limited mention of gender in the document.

Dedicated Grant Mechanism

For more information, please visit the [website](#) and see an [overview presentation](#).

Connect with the MDBs

Country IPs are prepared by governments in collaboration with the CIF MDBs; therefore, it is also valuable to establish relationships with the MDBs working in the region. Across the MDBs, policies and methods of inclusion can vary; for example, approaches can be private sector driven or MDBs might have more robust and well-institutionalised gender considerations, with gender action plans and mandated criteria in place for every project.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a key actor administering CIF funds, and has worked to increase gender mainstreaming into project documents, and to include women’s organizations and groups in projects. As of 2016, ADB administered over half the CIF portfolio in the region, working across 18 countries.³⁷

Connect with the CIF Stakeholder Engagement Team

Women’s organizations can connect directly with the CIF Stakeholder Engagement Team and Gender Program, fostering relationships and potential engagement in regional and global stakeholder engagement meetings.

GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF)



The GCF, established in 2010 by the UNFCCC, is expected to become the primary international channel of climate finance³⁸ and is the largest fund by amount of available and anticipated funding. The GCF’s approach to climate finance seeks to “promote a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development.”³⁹

The GCF was founded with a strong emphasis on the principle of country ownership, and each country has a National Designated Authority (NDA), often a ministry of finance or environment, with a designated focal point to serve as the representative between an NDA and GCF. NDAs serve as each country’s “interface”⁴⁰ with the GCF and are fundamental to the GCF’s funding processes and ways of working, from accessing readiness support to signing off on every funding proposal submitted to the GCF Board with activities for that country.

The GCF disburses funding through an accreditation system whereby any organization submitting a funding proposal must be an accredited entity (AE). This system was designed to ensure that AEs, particularly those that only work on the national level, “possess the type of specialist knowledge and experience that can be best utilized to mobilize climate finance on the ground.”⁴¹ AEs, which can be private, public, non-governmental, regional, or national in their scope and operation, can be considered as one of two different types: a Direct Access Entity (DAE) or an international access entity (IAE), as seen in the figure. The idea of country ownership is also manifested through the direct access modality, where DAEs can “receive funding directly, rather than only via international intermediaries.” This means countries can access funds not only through Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), UN agencies, and other IAEs, but also through accredited national, regional and sub-national entities.

A DIRECT ACCESS ENTITY	AN INTERNATIONAL ACCESS ENTITY
<p>A sub-national, national or regional organization that needs to be nominated by developing country National Designated Authorities (NDAs) or focal points.</p> <p>Organizations nominated to become Direct Access Entities may be eligible to receive GCF readiness support.</p>	<p>United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, international financial institutions and regional institutions with the wide reach and expertise to handle a variety of climate change issues, including ones that cross borders and thematic areas.</p> <p>International Access Entities do not need to be nominated by developing country NDAs / focal points.</p>

THE GCF AND GENDER

The GCF is uniquely positioned as the first multilateral development fund mandated to include “key building blocks for a comprehensive gender-responsive approach to its operations.”⁴² The **governing instrument** of the GCF ensures that gender is embedded within all GCF activities—both internally and in funded projects—by stating the GCF will “strive to maximize the impact of its funding...taking a gender-sensitive approach.”⁴³ Board and Secretariat membership is also decided by taking into account gender balance.⁴⁴

The GCF is “the first climate finance mechanism to mainstream gender perspectives from the outset of its operations as an essential decision-making element for the deployment of its resources.”⁴⁵ As part of the accreditation process, the GCF Secretariat assesses the “gender-responsive capacity” of applicants by ensuring all AEs have a proven track record and are capable of complying with the GCF Gender Policy.⁴⁶

The GCF’s **Gender Policy** dates to 2015 and though associated with a Gender Action Plan for 2015-2017, has standing as a policy beyond those years. (Though drafted and revised following the February 2018 board meeting, an **updated Gender Policy and Action Plan** was not publicly discussed in substance or voted on at the July 2018, October 2018, or February 2019 board meetings; the policy is scheduled to be resolved at the July 2019 Board meeting.) A key consideration for including an action plan of three years was building in the ability for “feedback” and potential modifications,



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specifically from stakeholders and other partners as the Fund’s mechanisms evolved.⁴⁷ In a section on resources, the policy creates the space to recognize the potential role of organizations with expertise on women-centered projects: “When it is necessary to correct for climate change-exacerbated gender inequality which affects women, the Fund will target funds to support women’s climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.”⁴⁸ This language demonstrates the potential, not yet realized, for specific engagement from women’s organizations.

The Gender Policy provided the foundation for a gender assessment to be carried out before projects are presented to the Board for approval. Expectations for a gender assessment are part of both the concept note template and the full project proposal template guidance documents. The project proposal template requires entities to describe the project’s gender programming; submit a gender and social assessment comprehensive enough to show the differentiated needs of men and women, boys and girls, the elderly, and other social groups; and often, include a gender and social inclusion action plan (GAP). According to the gender analysis and GAP **template** provided by the GCF, a GAP includes “clear targets, gender design features and measurable performance indicators to ensure women’s participation and benefits.”⁴⁹ In addition to the assessment and action plan templates, the GCF has also created a **toolkit** to guide mainstreaming gender

throughout the project cycle that largely focuses on designing gender-responsive elements in the project. A general understanding among civil society members who follow the GCF, though, is that the quality and depth of the gender assessments and gender action plans submitted with the projects varies widely—their existence is not synonymous with projects having solid footing for gender-responsive implementation.

The GCF **environmental and social policy** also includes strong gender considerations, with a guiding principle recognizing the need for a “gender-sensitive approach.”⁵⁰ The policy requires a stakeholder engagement plan that “will describe the disclosure of information, meaningful consultation and informed participation in a culturally appropriate and gender responsive manner.”⁵¹ Both the ideological foundation of this policy and the Gender Policy, as well as their intent to create mechanisms for meaningful feedback and improvement at both an individual and institutional level, are key features of the GCF policy landscape that are important for women’s organizations to recognize.

Green Climate Fund Key Resources

[Green Climate Fund 101](#)

[Governing Instrument](#)

Green Climate Fund Proposal Toolkit 2017: Toolkit To Develop A Project Proposal For The GCF

Green Climate Fund: Observers

Mainstreaming Gender In Green Climate Fund Projects

Leveraging Co-Benefits Between Gender Equality And Climate Action For Sustainable Development

PATHWAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Join CSO Platforms Engaged in the GCF

Regardless of observer status, civil society organizations can join the **GCF-CSO mailing** list through a request to one of the active observers. The coordination among CSOs is incredibly valuable in staying abreast of GCF developments, and reviewing and providing feedback on proposed policies and procedures as well as the funding proposals and applications for accreditation. Observing and commenting as civil society also unlocks the value of reviewing proposals to understand proposal structure, evaluate strengths, inspire ideas for proposal development, and identify opportunities where gender expertise will be needed to implement proposals' gender action plans.

Become an Accredited Observer

Women's organizations can become official observers of GCF by applying for observer status when calls for accreditation are periodically issued.⁵² Accredited observers are identified and listed on the GCF website and individuals associated with those organizations are able to attend board meetings, though no funding is provided for travel to and accommodation at these meetings. Additionally, only the accredited observers are eligible to help choose the CSO Active Observers who will speak on their behalf at the board meetings. The two Active Observers represent the developing and developing country constituencies, though positions are crafted by CSOs from both constituencies working together so that each intervention reflects both constituencies, regardless of which Active Observer delivers it.

Connect with Your National Designated Authority (NDA)

Prior to considering accreditation and in consideration of any engagement with the GCF, organizations will

find value in connecting with the NDA of any country where they work. As of April 2019, 145 countries have designated NDAs.⁵³ NDAs, as well as DAEs, are entitled to grants and technical assistance through GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) to strengthen their capacity to "efficiently engage with the Fund."⁵⁴ An NDA can nominate a DAE, or an organization seeking to become a DAE, to receive readiness support.⁵⁵ NDAs can also pursue readiness support to develop country programmes or do adaptation planning, including in relationship to the National Adaptation Plans. These activities should entail consultations with stakeholders, including civil society, and indeed stakeholder consultations are generally a key responsibility of the NDAs through the RPSP. While civil society engagement in the RPSP has been found by the Independent Evaluation Unit to be lacking,⁵⁶ the framework remains an opportunity to increase engagement.

Another way NDAs can facilitate stakeholder engagement in the GCF is by supporting the inclusion of organizations in the regional Structured Dialogues, which take place in different regions and different times. For the Asia-Pacific Region, the most recent Structured Dialogues took place in April 2017 and April 2018 for Asia, and July 2017 and 2018 for the Pacific. These multi-day regional meetings bring together diverse stakeholders, and invitations to organizations are overseen by the Secretariat in consultation with the NDAs.

National Designated Authorities

NDAs can be identified on the GCF website: go to the **country profiles** under "What We Do."

The contact for the GCF Readiness Program is readiness@gcfund.org.

Partner with Accredited Entities

Women's organizations can engage with accredited entities to provide capacity and technical expertise on gender, from preparation of project proposals and reviewing drafted proposals to conducting gender analyses and preparing GAPs. According to an accredited private entity, "a lot of the private sector doesn't know how to deal with GCF's strong gender requirements, so there is a niche market-need for women's rights organizations where they could also benefit from being

a guaranteed recipient of some of the funding or of some of the output products, etc."⁵⁷ Women's organizations can use the GCF project requirements as a reason for why implementing organizations should value their expertise and inclusion. A list of AEs can be found on the GCF website, in the **Accredited Entity Directory**.

The GCF also occasionally sends out a Request for Proposals. While the GCF will sometimes accept proposals from entities that have not been accredited, the non-accredited entity must "team up" with an Accredited Entity. Non-accredited organizations hoping to become accredited and who submit proposals to the Request for Proposals will be prioritized for accreditation.⁵⁸ Organizations that are not accredited can submit proposals to the GCF through an AE; the GCF may also be considering a project specific framework approach in 2019.⁵⁹

A key process to understand in conversations with AEs (as well as NDAs) is the **Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme (SAP)**, which the GCF adopted in October 2017. This initiative simplifies the application process for small-scale activities (10 million USD or less requested from the GCF), and streamlines the review and approval process. NDAs, as well as accredited entities, can submit SAP concept notes, so women's organizations may leverage these relationships to become partners in conceptualizing these smaller-scale initiatives.

Become an Accredited Entity

Women's organizations can also seek accreditation so they can submit projects as AEs, enabling ownership of the project design and implementation so there is more flexibility in proposal scope, timing, and collaborators. While there are many tools available to guide organizations through this complex process, the experiences of other women's organizations or comparable nonprofits are equally valuable to the decision and process of pursuing accreditation. The Micronesia Conservation Trust, for example, was able to use its accreditation status with the Adaptation Fund to become accredited through the Fast Track mechanism, an option also available to entities accredited with the GEF and Europe AID/EC. The Samdhana Institute has been pursuing accreditation for several years, and while it has been sharing its insights during this process,⁶⁰ its ultimate success (or failure) may yield more guidance specific to similar institutions.

The GCF Secretariat is also a key contact for this work: one accredited entity interviewed felt the GCF provides direct communication and feedback with entities throughout the accreditation and approval processes, with "open lines of communication and support."⁶¹

Information for Considering Accreditation

The GCF has a number of tools and guidance available for the accreditation process, including an **assessment tool** and **step-by-step guidance**. To apply, the NDA must fill out a **template** nominating the entity for accreditation.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)



The Global Environment Facility (GEF), one of the first multilateral channels for climate finance, was established in 1992 through the Rio Earth Summit as a pilot program. The GEF was created as

an independent financial organization to provide grants for projects related to environmental issues across six focal areas: biological diversity, land degradation, ozone layer depletion, international waters, persistent organic pollutants, and climate change.⁶² The GEF administers two funds established through the UNFCCC: the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). Its decision-making body is the GEF Council. The GEF now includes representation from 182 member-governments and works with 18 implementing partners, acting as a secretariat to funnel money to these organizations.

Projects approved by the GEF range in size, from up to 1 million USD for "Enabling activities", between 1-2 million for "medium-sized" projects, and over 2 million for "full-sized."⁶³ Compared to the GCF, where a 2 million USD project would be considered "micro," the "full-sized" GEF projects are smaller in scale. As of 2017, the LDCF has approved 1.16 billion USD across 51 countries, and as of 2018, the SCCF has a portfolio of about 350 million USD across 79 countries.⁶⁴

THE GEF AND GENDER

The GEF is one of the longest standing multilateral channels for climate financing, and the inclusion of gender in its programming and structure has increased

over the past decade, along a similar timeline as the emergence and/or commitment to gender of the other funds discussed here. The first significant inclusion of gender was in 2011, with the adoption of a **Policy on Gender Mainstreaming**. The policy required agencies to have policies satisfying seven minimum requirements to ensure gender mainstreaming and also mandated requirements for the GEF Secretariat to increase its capacity to address gender as well as leverage the expertise in gender within already existing groups and networks.⁶⁵ The GEF reached a second gender milestone in 2014, when the GEF Council approved a **Gender Equality Action Plan**.

In 2016, the Fund committed to determining, via engagement with stakeholders, a new vision and action plan for how the GEF and civil society should interact. This decision led to the **Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF**.⁶⁶ In the vision statement, one of the three priorities outlines that the primary role of civil society is:

to contribute to, as appropriate, the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GEF projects on the ground, through (amongst others) engagement in projects on the ground, building awareness of the GEF in local communities, dissemination of information about the GEF to stakeholders and participation with Council members.⁶⁷

The 2017 **Policy on Gender Equality**, superseding the 2011 *Policy on Gender Mainstreaming*, builds on lessons learned from GEF's experience as well as the experience of other multilateral climate finance channels (the CIF and GCF). This policy presents that gender-responsivity informs the entire lifecycle, from identification through evaluation, of any GEF activities.⁶⁸ The activities must furthermore integrate inclusivity, ensuring that "consultations with women's organizations, including indigenous women and local women's groups, are supported at all scales." This inclusion sets a precedent for all GEF project proposals for the engagement of groups, and their perspectives and priorities considered.

In June 2018, the GEF published **Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs**. This guidance focuses on gender-responsive design, implementation, and monitoring of their projects.

One recommendation is to "actively reach out to women's organizations."⁶⁹

Despite this timeline of progress, reviews of the GEF have critiqued the Fund's gender-responsiveness. According to the Evaluation on Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF, conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office in 2018, only 15.7% of completed projects reviewed conducted a gender analysis prior to approval.⁷⁰ The evaluation also found that the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming does not provide a clear framework and "remains unclear on certain provisions and implementation." Furthermore, the institutional capacity to implement the policy and achieve gender mainstreaming was found to be "insufficient," with a recommendation to rethink how to align its policy with best practices. Because of the time lag between completed projects and the relatively new action plan, the evaluation also concluded that the Gender Equality Action Plan has been relevant and effective, and that the GEF Gender Partnership is "slowly developing into a relevant and effective platform for building a wider constituency on gender and the environment."⁷¹

Global Environment Facility Key Resources

The GEF and Climate Change - Catalyzing Transformation

Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs

Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF

GEF Gender Implementation Strategy

Women as Environmental Stewards: The Experience of the Small Grants Programme

PATHWAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Join the GEF CSO Network

In 1995, the GEF CSO Network was established. Comprised of organizations whose work aligns with the GEF mandate, its vision is to "safeguard the global environment through strengthening civil society partnership with GEF by enhancing informed participation, contributing to policy development and stimulating local action."⁷² The GEF regularly holds

Consultations Meetings with the Network prior to the GEF Council Meetings. The GEF CSO Network also has regional meetings and Expanded Constituency Workshops to strengthen participant knowledge of GEF strategies, policies, programs and procedures

GEF CSO Network

The [website](#) for the GEF CSO Network has a list of members and a country-specific search options.

The contact information for the GEF and Civil Society team is gefcivilsociety@thegef.org

At the 54th GEF Council Meeting in June 2018, the GEF Council agreed the next CSO consultation meeting, in December 2018, would focus on "Connecting Environmental Impact and Gender Equality."⁷³ This decision reflects the GEF Council's interest in learning about "opportunities to engage civil society organizations and women [sic] groups to address interconnected drivers for unsustainability, exclusion and inequality."⁷⁴

The GEF CSO Network may open up opportunities to participate in the GEF Gender Partnership, made up of gender experts from GEF Partner Agencies, representatives from the GEF Independent Evaluation Office, the GEF CSO Network, the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, other environmental finance providers and organizations, and led by GEF's gender specialist. The Partnership convenes to support stakeholder engagement in making decisions regarding GEF policies, and was an integral part of developing the GEF Policy on Gender Equality. According to the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office, this partnership is "one of the most significant achievements" of the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan.⁷⁵

Apply to the Small Grants Program (SGP) and National Steering Committee

Another opportunity for inclusion and access is through the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) implemented by UNDP. This program provides financial and technical support to environmental projects that realize co-benefits, including progress toward gender equality, strengthening civil society engagement, and enhanced

livelihoods.⁷⁶ By granting up to 50,000 USD to local communities, the SGP focuses on ensuring financing goes directly to local organizations. In every country the SGP works through the National Country Teams and the National Steering Committee, which is made up of civil society organizations, government representatives, academia, indigenous peoples' organizations, the private sector and the media. Among other activities, the Committee is tasked with reviewing and selecting projects for SGP funding.

Small Grants Program

The [SGP website](#) includes an an easy-to read [guide](#) on the functions of the SGP.

An [online list](#) of all the SGP countries includes each country's contact person.

You can access [a database](#) on every SGP project, or read [The GEF Small Grants Programme Results Report FY: 2017-2018](#).

Gender, according to the SGP, is a key part of SGP country programme teams and their support to NGO partners: all SGP Country Programmes must have a National Steering Committee member who is a designated focal point for gender expertise and tasked with reviewing the gender considerations within projects.⁷⁷ The Gender Mainstreaming page of the SGP, which includes a list of key features on gender mainstreaming, can be found [here](#).

Engaging women’s organizations in climate financing: experiences and challenges from the Asia-Pacific region

This section illustrates the current landscape of women’s organizations’ engagement in climate financing, based on key stakeholder interviews focused within the Asia-Pacific region.

CAPACITY OF WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS

Women’s organizations are often small organizations,⁷⁸ and their limited funding, staff, and operational systems are in sharp contrast to the majority of the entities that operate as implementing entities across one or more of these large climate finance mechanisms. The structure of women’s organizations often reflects the grassroots organizing and network-building that is central to the origin and sustainability of these organizations, and **their smaller scale and ways of operation predicts their limited engagement in higher-level interactions with the financing mechanisms.** Without specific advocates and personnel with knowledge of the large funds’ meetings, national representatives, and policy and guidance documents, it is difficult for any organization to become engaged in the processes.

Seeking accreditation to the GCF, An example from the Mongolian Women’s Fund (MONES)

Connecting with other civil society organizations, from Prospera to filia to Both ENDS, was essential in MONES’ work to understand the GCF. Without these connections, and the technical and financial support they provided, MONES would not have been able to explore engaging with the GCF at a technical level. After extensive capacity-building and work on climate finance, MONES ultimately developed a relationship with the National Designated Authority of Mongolia, which has proved the most fruitful part of its efforts to meaningfully engage with climate finance in their country. Interacting with the direct access Accredited Entity active in Mongolia has been another key hallmark of MONES’ recognition as a valued national stakeholder for the GCF. These relationships would not have been cultivated without the initial introduction to climate finance that Prospera, filia, and Both ENDS contributed to fostering.



When organizations are aware of the financing mechanisms, accessing and engaging with the funds still holds challenges. One of the most direct avenues to engagement is accreditation; however, interviewees shared that women’s organizations often lack the time and capacity to fulfill the bureaucratic accreditation requirements. There is widespread agreement, including within the GCF itself, that the accreditation system is not “fully fit for purpose”⁷⁹ for civil society organizations that may not have the required fiduciary capacity, policies, and standards.⁸⁰ Interviews confirmed that the amount of knowledge and work to understand, address and complete accreditation processes takes time that most local, or even national CSO or NGOs do not have the ability to allocate, much less the human or financial resources to support. It becomes the all-too-familiar chicken or the egg situation: **the organizations need funding to get funding, but cannot get funding unless they already have invested the time and resources to secure it.**

Organizations do not often have a dedicated team with the technical or financial know-how to support

the process, and thus bring in consultants. Consultants, though, may lack the nuanced information on the local or regional context necessary to support inclusive and gender-responsive project design and processes. This situation provides little long-term capacity building or training to enhance the ability of women’s organizations to engage in the future.

Women’s organizations also face the double burden of personnel or representatives that, likely due to entrenched socio-cultural systems and gender dynamics, take on the **majority of the care burden in their households, and also may face negative stigma of leaving their home (or town) for extended periods of time for professional activities.** Also, without access to funding to actually participate in person, their capability to initially and sustainably engage in climate initiative dialogues and decision-making is hindered. (Funding is provided by CIF for accredited Observers to participate from developing countries, but the GCF does not provide any resources for participation of developing country representatives.)

Inclusion also entails practical matters beyond the structural barriers and willingness to engage. For example, globally, **English is considered the lingua franca for climate finance communications.** Although some women’s organizations in the Asia-Pacific region do have English-speaking capacities, these are much more prevalent in major cities than rural or remote areas. This dynamic effectively excludes the participation of organizations with limited capacity in English. In addition to communicating in English, these funds also rely heavily on technical language and jargon, noted by interviewees as creating further confusion and exclusion.

Creating a Climate Finance Community, An Example from Nepal

In April 2018, Prakriti Resources Center in Nepal hosted an “Orientation Program on Gender and Climate Finance”, with Climate and Development Dialogue Members. This program included information on climate change in Nepal, climate finance and the GCF, gender integration in climate change and Nepal’s NDA’s role. Through this orientation and training, members were able to

enhance their understanding and capacity on how to engage with the GCF. They also took it upon themselves to identify steps to engage with the GCF: get accredited, become executing entities of accredited entities, and implement GCF funded projects. Members decided that until the formal process and approval of accreditation occurs (see below for additional information and challenges associated with this), they will function as a vigilance group, tracking and monitoring climate finance in their country.⁸¹

RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT UNITS

Government units overseeing climate financing, and the representatives to the funds, are usually ministries of the environment or finance, who do not often have strong relationships with women’s organizations. If women’s organizations work with ministries, it is usually with ministries of gender or women’s affairs or the national gender machinery. While a lack of interest or understanding from these departments on the need for women’s organizations’ engagement may play a role, interviewees acknowledged that **women’s organizations are not necessarily connecting their work to the ministry level at all.** More often women’s organizations are working, and working well, at the community level with user-groups, and sometimes with local government offices. Connected with challenges of capacity, women’s organizations are not often in a position in a country—considering geography, politics, and prioritization of issues—to link their local-level climate issues with domestic and international structures, ultimately limiting women’s organizations becoming a part of national planning and policy processes.⁸²

Linking women’s organizations with national entities is of particular significance for accreditation. National governments’ designated focal points or representatives must usually provide endorsement for organizations to receive accreditation. Several interviewees noted that the **ministries hold the authority, and they are often seeking engagement from large, well-resourced national or international NGOs,** preventing connections with local or national women’s organizations and other CSOs.⁸³

Funding Country-Level Engagement, An Example from APWLD

In August 2018, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development (APWLD) invited grassroots women's organizations to apply for grants of up to 3,000 USD to hold a workshop/dialogue between a variety of GCF national-level stakeholders (GCF board members, GCF secretariat, CSOs monitoring GCF, National Designated Authorities and Country Focal Points, project specific departments and organizations, Accredited and Direct Access Entities of GCF and other related NGOs advocating GCF). The grantees were supported to a regional training to catalyze their work. Grantees were asked to build this engagement with stakeholders, including government entities, so to better identify and articulate to their governments and the GCF-relevant CSO Observers key recommendations that would reflect local communities' and women's rights perspectives on climate finance.⁸⁴

organizations and gender specialists. Interviewees shared that much of the work of women's organizations and gender equality advocacy groups is awareness raising and developing capacity to elevate the conversation to higher levels.⁸⁵ The financing mechanisms themselves, national banks, and international and national implementing organizations, especially those focused on mitigation activities over adaptation, require capacity building on these issues.

A key opportunity for inclusion and building capacity is partnering with women's organizations in conducting gender analyses. Assessments or analyses are now required across the funds; however, many implementing entities use existing research to inform gender analyses and action plans, in effect conducting the analysis "in-house" and limiting significant progress on gender inequality by using older data with inadequate contextual awareness and nuanced dynamics of the project dimensions.

This narrow focus on financial outcomes is perceived by civil society advocates as lack of interest in the relevance of the social aspects of climate finance at best, and at worst, a willingness to sacrifice social outcomes for financial gain. However, according to an accredited private entity, the private sector struggles to integrate the GCF's gender requirements. They did perceive the requirements, though, to be a "niche market need for women's organizations where they could also benefit, from being a guaranteed recipient of some of the funding or of some of the output products or something like that."⁸⁶

Additionally, **implementing entities are often unaware of the networks and organizations working on climate and gender in their countries, and even less likely to know of existing women's organizations.** One entity directly involved with a project mentioned that it was difficult to include women's rights organizations that might be productive for the project because they simply do not exist. This statement highlighted a strong disconnect with the local and regional context, as interviewed organizations who do work on gender and climate in that same country stated that they had not been contacted.

Many implementing entities often need their own internal gender-responsive capacity building. Many MDBs were reported to be functioning in silos, with

social considerations integrated inconsistently and dependent on budget, despite gender-responsive budgeting mandates and trainings. MDBs may provide loans rather than grants, presenting another barrier for women's organizations not oriented toward cost recovery. MDBs are not necessarily rewarded for including gender and social dimensions in their programming, but have incentives focused primarily on "getting out the business."⁸⁷

THE ORIENTATION OF CLIMATE FINANCE ARCHITECTURE

Assessments show that climate finance is often marked by a lack of alignment between local, national, and international levels. Those working in the field commonly agree that the current climate finance architecture is "not yet designed for small grassroots organizations."⁸⁸ Indeed, most climate finance mechanisms were not established with local stakeholders in mind—the structures were put in place to "channel to other entities who then channel the money to others."⁸⁹

The architecture is also increasingly oriented toward large-scale projects, especially in the GCF. Stakeholders engaged in climate financing shared during interviews that the infrastructure is not suitable for projects focused on resilience and reducing vulnerabilities.⁹⁰ **Even though billions of dollars are available in climate finance, the size of the projects, particularly in the newest and largest fund, the GCF, can preclude rather than enable women's organizations' receiving the funds.** In the GCF, "micro" programs are projects less than 10 million USD, and one million dollars is beyond the scope of most women's organizations. In response, organizations are often recommended to partner with larger banks or entities with greater capacity, but these arrangements affect direct access and ownership. This structure often treats women's organizations as "add-ons" not considered integral to the project.

Correspondingly, as implementing agencies may fail to fully appreciate gender and climate change linkages, so too does the climate finance architecture sometimes overlook this intersection. Funding proposals have been rejected because they were considered to be "pure development". Stakeholders interviewed highlighted this perception as particularly dangerous, as it views policies and projects that mention or integrate gender narrowly,

and not supporting and essential to climate action and impact.⁹¹ Decisions on the design and modalities of funds regarding "how much qualitative measurement can supplement quantitative [measurement]" can "make the difference on whether women can access or benefit from some of that funding."⁹²

The funding structure does not challenge the extractive economic systems in place that emphasizes growth rather than positive social, transformational change. For many funds, the key objective is to disperse money, which stakeholders believe causes projects to be "out of touch with communities."⁹³

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

Ultimately, the discourse on gender equality and civil social engagement associated with the funds' policies and modalities does not translate into significant engagement of women's organizations. The funds' gender action plans and decisions on civil society engagement, as well as their accreditation and approval processes, imply the need for including women's organizations is recognized, but mechanisms to catalyze and facilitate meaningful engagement are often not explicitly organized, or held satisfactorily accountable. The interviewed organizations working in the Asia-Pacific region conveyed they were not contacted, and generally felt there was limited effort by the climate finance actors to connect to regional networks and groups focused on gender and climate change.

These challenges—lack of capacity, connection with governments, appreciation by implementing entities, and attention within the overall climate finance architecture—are interrelated and influence one another. Moreover, to affect a paradigmatic shift in women's organizations' access to substantive climate funding for increased results in climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, these barriers must be addressed systemically. Lack of technical capacity within women's organizations, for example, cannot be relegated to a challenge that women's organizations alone must struggle to solve. Climate funds, their decision-making bodies, and stakeholders also have responsibilities to both build capacity and improve the design of their systems to orient themselves toward the organizations that are critical to realizing gender-responsive programs and results.

RECOGNITION AND PRIORITIZATION OF GENDER BY IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES

The organizations that are accredited or otherwise operate as implementing entities of the various climate funds—here referred to generally as implementing entities rather than their various terms used under each fund—do not regularly include women's organizations in their project design, implementation, and monitoring phases.

Consistent feedback from this research demonstrated that **implementing agencies do not necessarily understand the important dynamics of gender-responsive climate programs, much less the "how-to."** The knowledge on links between gender and climate change is still relatively nascent and unfamiliar to those not engaged as specialists, despite policy and architecture now structured to support this precise uptake of gender in climate financing.

While there are a common set of issues across international conventions (e.g., CEDAW, UNFCCC, Agenda2030), **there are still many countries lacking awareness of, or political will to prioritize gender considerations, responses, and perspectives of women's**

Moving Forward: Key Actions to Enhance Engagement in Climate Finance

The experiences of various stakeholders and funds shared above indicate varied levels of gender integration and engagement of women and women’s organizations throughout different phases of climate financing and climate initiatives. Project documents from the funds indicate women’s participation is limited in the region (and beyond), which could be attributed to the limited engagement of women’s organizations from the outset of planning and development—and across all different stages.

This diversity and breadth of experiences, country context, and specific projects hinders detailed identification of formulaic lessons learned about practices, policies, or enabling conditions to increase women’s access to financing from the projects and more directly from funds. Nevertheless, with this research indicating broad challenges for women’s organizations in gaining access, this section proposes possible opportunities and steps for moving forward, drawing substantially from the themes of exploration and collaboration.

Catalyzing multi-level action to shift the patterns of access and scale of impact is imperative. Knowledge sharing among women’s organizations, especially with experiences of those already engaging with these funds, is a key step to building capacity among these groups to engage and access resources, and the funds themselves should consider how to create accessible pathways for the participation of women’s organizations.

As the gender expertise, experience, and perspectives available are vital to the overall goals of both the funds and their portfolio of projects, organizations should be vocal about the value in their inclusion. Several stakeholders expressed that women’s rights organizations need to be present within national discourses on climate finance, to share and insert their own expertise.⁹⁴ They must “demand that if consultations are done, they must be done meaningfully and with partnerships that are committed and supported with resources,” they must “demand for a certain way of communicating and engaging, with stronger language with clearer guidance on inclusion requirements,” and they

must “demand for a very specific statute or rule stating that women’s organizations must be included in funding.”⁹⁵

The following general steps provide an actionable framework for women’s organizations seeking to engage with climate finance, complementing the fund-specific pathways for engagement outlined earlier in the report.

WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS, FEMINIST ADVOCATES AND GENDER-RELATED GROUPS CAN:

1. Learn the processes and procedures of the climate fund(s) of interest.

- *Understand the fund’s structure and methods of operating.* Fund websites provide the first line of information on how different funds work: who can submit projects? Which countries are involved? How much funding is available, and how are decisions made about its distribution? One interviewee asserted that engaging on a policy level is “technical work and you can only engage if you understand the set-up and the structure of various funds, as well as their political functioning.”⁹⁶

Key resources have also been developed for CSOs, including the following:

- **The Green Climate Fund: A CSO Guide for Engagement and Local Access with a Specific Focus on the Indonesian Context**
- **User Guide: Indigenous Peoples and GEF Project Financing**
- **Civil Society Engagement with the Green Climate Fund**
- *Become familiar with the overarching gender, human rights, and stakeholder policies and procedures.* These funds have explicitly stated their commitments and procedures with regard to these topics, and these documents should govern and guide attention to gender in project development, though the limitations of policies have been acknowledged.
- **Gender Policy and Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund**
- **CIF Gender Policy and CIF Gender Action Plan Phase 2**
- **GCF Gender Policy and Action Plan**
- **GEF Policy on Gender Equality and Gender Equality Action Plan**



PHOTO CREDIT: ANNABELLE AVRIL / WECF

2. Connect with stakeholders and networks directly engaging with the climate finance funds, particularly those already receiving funding for approved projects.

- *Reach out to the governmental focal points designated at a country-level for a fund.* Governmental focal points are key to identifying opportunities within the funds, which is why organizations seeking to engage must be proactive in reaching out to their contacts. Waiting to be contacted because you are an NGO recognized for your work on gender is simply not an effective strategy.
- Identify and connect with other civil society stakeholders. CSOs with experience with the funds have key insights and often, a willingness to share them. There are also strong and growing platforms for knowledge sharing on climate finance mechanisms; for example, there is an **NGO-forum on the ADB** based in Manila.

Beyond seeking individual connections, organizations and networks should coordinate to generate a “clearer understanding of which groups can work more politically, providing support on technical submissions and providing input, and which groups can help in sharing information about the funds that are there and the possibilities for engagement on a national and subnational level.”⁹⁷ This requires groups to conduct their own “self-reflection” on which spaces they best fit into generating a clearer

understanding of “how activities fit together and mutually reinforce each other.”⁹⁸

- *Look for opportunities—from conferences or direct outreach—to engage with fellow stakeholders, including implementing entities, MDBs, observers, etc.* Follow the calendars of the funds of interest. Ask other stakeholders if any meetings are coming up. Start conversations in climate action spaces about climate finance, inquiring if others are following certain funds or processes.
 - *Follow the proposed and approved projects to identify additional stakeholders and opportunities for engagement (e.g., providing technical expertise).* Use the fund websites to learn about specific projects in the region and identify points of potential connection using project descriptions, timelines, and materials such as gender action plans. Identify the stakeholders whom the project plans to involve.
- #### 3. Pitch themselves to implementing entities, or pursue funding directly.

- *Pursue any capacity-building opportunities on climate change, financing structures, government policy/planning, etc.* These chances to “increase confidence”⁹⁹ cannot be under-rated. To uniquely position women’s organizations as experts on the integration of required gender components into climate finance projects, opportunities to develop knowledge and build skills should be identified and pursued (e.g., the experience in Nepal, and with the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development trainings).
- *Connect workstreams and articulate linkages with climate mitigation and adaptation.* Collect stories and evidence of good projects already being

implemented. Work by the Samdhana Institute based in the Philippines, for example, can be used for advocacy purposes. They wrote and published “[Getting Climate Finance Right: Successful Examples for the Green Climate Fund from around the World](#).” Linking with organizations like Samdhana and developing other research showing positive examples will increase standing with the Funds and will emphasize the need for inclusion of organizations working directly with vulnerable populations.

4. Develop a mapping tool of implementing entities.

- A tool displaying entities that are implementing projects on behalf of the funds (as accredited entities, national implementing entities, etc. according to the fund) would be especially useful for organizations seeking partnership opportunities. This database tool could be created in a format similar to AWID’s website on funding entities organizations, found [here](#). Stakeholders recommended the creation of a database on the national level, for both funds and organizations, “if anything just for transparency-knowing who talks to who and how to step in.”¹⁰⁰

5. Identify and pursue further concerted research in several areas:

Document local organizations’ and networks’ capacities to capture and describe the concerns of their constituents, coordinate and/or make direct technical inputs, and identify issues overlooked in a non-inclusive project development process;

- Within a specific fund, interrogate the reasons why women’s organizations, feminist advocates and gender-related groups in a region are not connected to the work;
- Analyze how governments access finance and make decisions about the inclusivity of other stakeholders in their disbursement of funds;
- Document and analyze specific women’s funds’ interactions and involvement with climate finance entities;

Review the implementation of gender-related activities within projects using the funds’ M&E guidelines and indicators, as well as evaluations of the projects.

Working for Advocacy and Influence, An Example Across Regions

Co-led by the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Both ENDS, as a member of the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action, the “Participation is Power: Women Demand Gender-Just Climate Finance” initiative strives to build capacity and knowledge to track, monitor and, most importantly, influence the projects and financial flows of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). With the hope of mobilizing further resources and support, the initiative is funding the direct participation of feminist and women’s rights activists in the work of the GCF; supporting regional feedback channels in Latin America, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region; working with women’s funds on strategies for direct access; and hosting a [webinar series](#) to take a deep dive into important aspects of the climate financing architecture. This initiative aims to ensure that money reaches local women’s groups, projects are designed to respond to the needs of communities, and the work of the GCF respects human rights.

Lessons from Broader Civil Society Engagement, An Example from Africa

The challenge of engagement is not one solely limited to women’s organizations and others focused on gender, but to many civil society organizations with different aims. The “[Civil Society Organisations \(CSOs\) Readiness for the Green Climate Fund \(GCF\)](#)” project focuses on Africa, particularly Ghana, Morocco, Malawi, Kenya and Senegal, and is implemented by a variety of organizations. Local and international partners have supported capacity-building workshops, engagement forums, and dialogues in these countries, while also organizing regional workshops and webinars. Members of civil society are also sponsored to attend GCF board-meetings. Highlights of the project include its engagement of accredited entities and government officials, including National Designated Authorities, to facilitate exchange with civil society, as well as building readiness and communication channels, such as [factsheets](#), issue briefs or national CSO platforms, to support civil society communications.

FINANCE MECHANISMS AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES SHOULD:

1. Map out the women’s organizations working in their region and/or sector of interest.

- Connect with country-level Fund focal points, ask ministries of social affairs, gender, etc., and seek any existing lists of organizations or networks they support/engage with; reach out to women’s funds and networks, and/or contact the organizations listed in this report.
- Consider supporting an effort to create a regional database that multiple organizations can use to identify key partners with gender expertise working in their area.

2. Integrate women’s organizations and their expertise into program design and implementation.

- Partner with women’s organizations at the project outset to ensure their expertise is integrated throughout the program (from planning and design, to implementation and evaluation), not simply as an add-on or check-box to tick. These partnerships can also be used as opportunities to build the capacity of these organizations to support project implementation, and vice versa, support institutional gender mainstreaming.
- If a project is already under-way, consult women’s organizations about ongoing activities as a way to strengthen community involvement and improve outcomes.

TOWARD CHANGE: IN PROCESS, STRUCTURE, ACCESS, AND IMPACT

Moving beyond an approach to gender that simply checks the box—by holding a single consultation with a women’s group, contracting out all gender components of a proposal after the project scope and design is determined, or any of the other tokenistic ways of considering gender—has become a key policy component of the climate funds. Women’s rights organizations and funds are key actors in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and their expertise can and should be pivotal to gender mainstreaming in climate projects, but also for ensuring more robust climate action, initiatives, and results. Recognizing that these projects can be women-led, that women’s organizations and funds should have direct access to financing opportunities, is as significant as ensuring robust mechanisms for their voices to influence, monitor, and hold accountable the proposed and implemented activities in their region.

Establishing and sustaining engagement of feminist advocates and women’s organizations is an opportunity to enact comprehensive interventions to achieve transformative climate action and solutions. Efforts toward enhanced gender-responsiveness of climate finance must include the groups, organizations, and networks best positioned to realize gender equality on the ground, contributing to more robust climate solutions and outcomes. The identified pathways to engagement seek to address this gap, but organizations pursuing any of these ideas should recognize they are possibilities rather than guarantees of success.

Furthermore, even if undertaken collectively by women’s organizations and implementing entities across the globe, the outlined actions alone will not transform the climate policy and finance landscape into a gender-responsive system. Gender-just climate finance will require active and systemic effort, with the funds supporting and institutionalizing transformational systemic change to include and engage these organizations and groups as integral partners at all stages of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and at all levels and types of financing.

Annex I. Key Links and Resources

Adaptation Fund Key Resources

- Operational Policies and Guidelines for Parties to Access Resources from the Adaptation Fund
- Instructions For Preparing A Request For Project Or Programme Funding From the Adaptation Fund
- Third Review of the Adaptation Fund, UNFCCC
- Knowledge and Learning: Gender (dedicated AF resource webpage)
- Guidance Document For Implementing Entities On Compliance With The Adaptation Fund Gender Policy

Climate Investment Funds Key Resources

- An Overview of the CIF, Governance and Programming Information
- CIF Operational and Results Reports
- Mainstreaming Gender (dedicated CIF resource page)
- Building Gender Into Climate Finance, ADB Experience with the Climate Investment Funds
- Gender and Renewable Energy: Entry Points for Women's Livelihoods and Employment

Green Climate Fund Key Resources

- Green Climate Fund 101
- Governing Instrument
- Green Climate Fund Proposal Toolkit 2017: Toolkit To Develop A Project Proposal For The GCF
- Green Climate Fund: Observers
- Mainstreaming Gender In Green Climate Fund Projects
- Leveraging Co-Benefits Between Gender Equality And Climate Action For Sustainable Development

Global Environment Facility Key Resources

- The GEF and Climate Change - Catalyzing Transformation
- Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs
- Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF
- GEF Gender Implementation Strategy
- Women as Environmental Stewards: The Experience of the Small Grants Programme

Additional Resources:

- Financing Mitigation: Exposing Gender Gaps in Financing Climate Change Mitigation, and Proposing Solutions
- Gender and Climate Finance
- Climate Finance Fundamentals: Gender and Climate Finance
- Gender Mainstreaming and Climate Change
- Gender Must Be At The Heart of Climate Action
- Governing Climate Funds: What Will Work for Women?
- Guidelines for Integrating Gender into Conservation Programming
- Making the Green Climate Fund "Effective" Soon- In a Lasting Way
- The Asian Development Bank and the Climate Investment Funds Country Fact Sheets
- The Global Climate Finance Architecture
- Six Steps to Local Climate Finance
- What should be included in the Green Climate Fund's new Gender Policy and Action Plan?
- Chart: Global Architecture of Climate Finance
- Unlocking the Door to Action: Gender-responsive Climate Finance

Annex II. Project and Fund Disbursement Overview in Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, and Nepal

A number of projects and programs have been implemented by the four funds in the Asia-Pacific region. Research focused on women's organizations engagement in projects in Mongolia, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The research, especially through interviews with key personnel, revealed very limited direct connections

between women's organizations and the climate finance mechanisms, or national entities and implementing partners. Most women's organizations, especially those not operating in capitals and/or major cities, were limited in their knowledge of the funds, and thus have little to no knowledge of projects already being implemented, or how to engage with them. The table below provides an overview of each fund's projects administered by country, including the amount of funding channeled to country for implementation.

FUND	COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDING (USD)*
AF**	Bangladesh	1	10.0 million USD
	India	6	9.9 million USD
	Mongolia	2	10.0 million USD
	Nepal	1	9.5 million USD
CIF	Bangladesh	9	160.8 million USD
	India***	8	870.3 million USD
	Mongolia	3	28.2 million USD
	Nepal	8	131.5 million USD
GCF	Bangladesh	3	85.0 million USD
	India	3	177.8 million USD
	Mongolia	7, including 3 as part of multi-country programs and 1 SAP	760.7 million USD
	Nepal	Readiness Programme	(\$3.8 million USD)****
GEF	Bangladesh	12	\$40.7 million USD
	India	40	\$330.2 million USD
	Mongolia	11	\$11.1 million USD
	Nepal	8	\$20.4 million USD

*No co-financing included, only single-country projects summed, and all totals rounded to the nearest one-hundred thousand.

** Only funded projects included; active pipeline projects excluded.

***Two disbursements for the same project and multiple phases of the same project counted as the same project.

****Readiness funding not included in other country totals.

Annex III. Organizations Engaging Regionally

The following organizations are engaging with the various funds as observers or seekers of accreditation. This list, focused on organizations in the Asia-Pacific region, is not exhaustive.

Adaptation Fund

Kottamalyan Educational and Rural Women Development Society – India

Society for Women’s Education and Awareness Development (SWEAD) – India

Women and Youth’s Development Organization (WYDO) – Pakistan

CIF

Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) – Global

SWAGEN – Uganda

Lao Women’s Union (LWU) – Lao PDR

GCF

The African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) – Regional

Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) – Regional

Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) – Global

Solidaritas Perempuan (Women’s Solidarity for Human Rights) – Indonesia

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) – Regional

JAGO NARI (Fighting for Women Empowerment) – Bangladesh

Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management (WOCAN) – Global

Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice – Indonesia

Mongolian Women’s Fund (MONES) – Mongolia

Climate Watch Thailand – Thailand

Other gender-inclusive organizations engaging with GCF
BothENDS – Global

Heinrich Boll – Global

WEDO – Global

Care International – Global

Action Aid – Global

Prakriti Resources Centre – Nepal

Jubilee South Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development (JS APMDDI) – Regional

The Samdhana Institute – Regional

Overseas Development Institute (ODI) – Global

Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales: FARN – Argentina

GEF:

National Women’s Welfare Society – India

Women’s Access to Entrepreneurship Development and Training (WAEDAT) – Regional

Women’s Association for the Environment Protection and Sustainable Development (AFPMDD) – Moldova

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