



Gender and Climate Finance

Liane Schalatek, HBF, with
Smita Nakhoda, ODI

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Fundamentals

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Women, who form the majority of the world's 1.2 billion poorest people, are often disproportionately affected by climate change impacts as a result of persisting gender norms and discriminations. Women and men also contribute to climate change responses in different ways. The Cancun Agreements acknowledge that gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for all aspects of any response to climate change, but especially for adaptation. Gender-responsive climate financing instruments and funding allocations are needed. This is a matter of using scarce public funding in an equitable, efficient and effective way. It also acknowledges that climate finance decisions are not made within a normative vacuum, but must be guided by the acknowledgement of women's rights as unalienable human rights. Gender considerations are not always addressed systematically in existing climate funds. The new Green Climate Fund, currently being operationalized, has the opportunity to distinguish itself from existing funds by integrating a gender perspective from the outset into its business model framework. This note outlines some key principles and actions for making climate financing instruments more gender-responsive.

Overview

Women form the majority of the world's 1.2 billion people still living in abject poverty. They are often disproportionately affected by climate change impacts. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) acknowledges the role of gender in contributing to climate change vulnerability. This is largely due to persisting gender norms and widespread gender discriminations that deny women income, legal rights, access to resources or political participation, while assigning them the primary role in caring for their families and providing for their livelihoods. This contributes to women's marginalization in many communities. Women and men also contribute to climate change responses in different ways and have different capabilities based on their respective knowledge, experiences and expertise to mitigate and adapt. This makes women important agents of change in the fight against global warming.

Gender in recent UNFCCC Agreements

UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 in Cancun confirmed important short- and long-term climate finance goals and provided guiding principles for the finance obligations of Annex II countries under the Convention. Article 7 in the Cancun decision also acknowledged that gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for all aspects of climate change. This is especially relevant for adaptation as the decisions in Cancun and Durban seek a gender-sensitive approach in the framing of new National Adaptation Plans. In Durban, Parties also confirmed the need for gender balance in the composition of two new bodies dealing with adaptation and climate finance respectively, namely the Adaptation Committee and the Standing Committee as well

as in the Board and Secretariat of the new Green Climate Fund (GCF). In Doha, UNFCCC Decision 23/CP.18 urged the promotion of gender balance and the improvement in the participation of women in all convention bodies, "in order to inform gender-responsive climate policy."

The Importance of Gender-Responsive Climate Financing

International experience from development programmes indicates that increasing the gender-responsiveness of public climate change funding is an opportunity to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

The example of adaptation financing in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) illustrates this. SSA is one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change, and its current finance needs for adaptation activities are estimated to be as high as USD 2 billion per year. Actual adaptation finance flows approved to the region from funds monitored by CFU are far lower, at only USD 682 million cumulatively since 2003. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women are still the primary agricultural producers, accounting for up to 80 per cent of the household food production. Women seldom own the land they work on, and are therefore often excluded from formal consultation processes to determine adaptation needs of rural communities and are unable to secure credits or other agricultural extension services. In times of food insecurity—aggravated by the extreme weather variability and long-term weather patterns changes brought on by climate change—women and girls are often likely to receive less food because of gender-biases in the distribution of resources within households.

To be effective, scaled up funding for adaptation projects and programmes in Africa that target rural areas and agriculture need to consider the gender dynamics of food production, procurement and distribution within both households and markets. For example, special efforts can be made to include women in capacity-building programmes, consultation outreach, technical assistance and tailored agricultural extension services. Without a gender-sensitive lens, climate financing instruments delivering adaptation funding for Africa can exacerbate current tendencies that discriminate against women. This threatens women's rights and directly contravenes the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has been adopted by almost all recipient and contributor countries of international climate finance.

There is a growing body of research and literature that confirms the value of integrating gender-awareness into project design and implementation, including its potential to improve development outcomes, and thus effectiveness. Ignoring women as a crucially relevant stakeholder group in recipient countries can lead to suboptimal results from the use of climate finance.

Integration of Gender Considerations in Existing Climate Funds

Gender considerations were not integrated from the start into the design and operationalization of existing dedicated climate financing mechanisms. While they are not completely absent, most have been added only as an afterthought in a relatively ad hoc fashion over the last few years, and lack systematic integration as a result. However, substantial effort has been made in recent years to incorporate gender considerations into fund programming.

The Climate Investment Funds

The World Bank and the regional multilateral development banks implementing the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) have gender policies for their development financing operations. The World Bank has a mandate to mainstream gender. However, a 2012 comprehensive CIF gender review confirmed that the programs supported by the Clean Technology Fund, which finances large-scale mitigation in large economies and accounts for 70 per cent of the CIFs pledged funding portfolio of USD 7.2 billion, did not address gender considerations systematically. Initial CTF attempts to acknowledge the importance of gender (in the transport sector, for example) need to be strengthened. Gender is not included in the operational principles of the Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR), which funds programmatic adaptation portfolios in a few developing countries, although most pilot countries have included some gender dimensions in their programme planning stage. According to the CIF gender review, these vary from the inclusion during project preparation of recipient country government agencies focused on women and gender or gender experts from country missions, to outreach to women's groups as key stakeholders in consultations or the development of gender action plans for specific projects. However, an integrated approach addressing multiple planning dimensions is missing. Gender-responsive programme implementation is the real challenge going forward. Only a quarter of the projects include gender indicators. Initial investment plans analysed by the 2012 CIF gender review of the Scaling-Up Renewable Energy in Low-Income Countries Program (SREP), the newest of the CIFs, include information about "environmental, social and gender co-benefits" by identifying women as investment beneficiaries.

Efforts to secure greater involvement and empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups appear uneven, however. The CIF gender review identified a variety of concrete measures and tools that should strengthen the CIFs' gender-responsiveness, including the development of a gender scorecard or detailed guidance on collecting data via gender-responsive indicators. The Administrative Unit has recruited a gender focal point in response to the review findings.

The Adaptation Fund

Early project proposals to the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund include some gender analysis, though it has been uneven. In July 2011 operational guidelines were adopted that require the inclusion of gender considerations in project and programme planning, as well as in project consultation processes as an important review criterion. Efforts are underway to develop new environmental and social policies, which may further strengthen attention to gender, as the draft policy proposes respect for human rights and support for gender equality and women's empowerment as key principles for the design and implementation of Adaptation Fund projects and programmes.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)

The GEF is one of the longest standing international climate funds, but gender considerations have not been prominent in program review and approval processes. The GEF adopted a Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in 2011. Until then, the consideration of gender had not been a central decision criterion for project review and approval for the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). The Policy requires all existing GEF agencies (mostly MDBs and UN agencies) to be assessed for their compliance with the GEF gender mainstreaming mandate and makes the gender capacity of new implementing agencies a criterion for GEF accreditation. All GEF implementing agencies have to demonstrate that they have made efforts to analyse gender considerations in GEF projects. It also requires all implementing agencies to establish policies, strategies, or action plans that promote gender equality and satisfy minimum requirements on gender mainstreaming. Key among these are the use of gender-disaggregated indicators for monitoring, measures to avoid or mitigate adverse gender impacts of projects, as well as the requirement for GEF implementing agencies to have experienced gender experts that can monitor and provide support for the implementation of these minimum requirements. In addition, the GEF Secretariat has worked on strengthening its own gender mainstreaming capacities. A Gender Focal Point at the GEF is tasked with screening attention to gender in proposals and forging networks and collaborations with partners who can support gender sensitive approaches.

These measures will help the LDCF, for example, which is supposed to fund and implement National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), with only a third of NAPAs including a gender analysis or gender indicators. Women's participation in NAPA development has been likewise uneven, despite clear UNFCCC guidance on this issue. Recent NAPA implementation projects funded under the LDCF have improved over earlier projects in addressing gender, with further improvements expected under the new GEF-wide guidance on the inclusion of gender aspects in the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Good Practices and Experiences from other Global Funds and the Potential of the Green Climate Fund

Experience in other areas of development show that it is possible to include gender considerations systematically and effectively in a global financing mechanism devoted to developing country actions. The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI Alliance) have had a gender action plan or a detailed gender policy on the books since 2008. In addition, there is a “gender infrastructure” for both funds. This constitutes a Gender Working Group in the case of GAVI, which includes representatives from all secretariat teams. In the case of the Global Fund, there are several full time gender advisors as well as gender experts on the monitoring, evaluation, legal advisory and civil society outreach teams.

On its own, a formal gender policy or gender action plan for a climate financing instrument is rarely enough. The systematic integration of gender equality in a fund’s governance structure as well in its public participation mechanisms is equally important, for example through a dedicated role for gender-focused organizations and women’s groups. At the CIFs, civil society representatives can participate as active observers in board meetings with the right to take the floor, add agenda items and recommend outside experts for consideration by a fund board. Such participation by civil society as active observers needs to be gender-balanced and gender-informed and should be replicated by other funds, including by the GCF.

The GCF has taken initial steps towards mainstreaming gender responsiveness into its operations. The governing instrument for the GCF includes several references to gender and women in the Fund’s objectives, governance and operational modalities, including on stakeholder participation. A recent Board decision taken in the context of operationalizing the fund integrated gender awareness as a criterion of effectiveness in the results framework. The GCF will be the first multilateral climate fund to discuss a gender-sensitive approach to its operations and have a gender policy in place from the outset, before it begins funding programs.

Key Principles and Actions for Gender-Responsive Climate Financing

The effective use of climate finance requires mainstreaming climate change considerations into development policy and planning, which in turn requires the incorporation of gender considerations in order to achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes. Funding allocations need to be coherent and consistent with national development plans and mitigation

and adaptation strategies, which should in turn be developed through gender-responsive participatory and transparent processes involving all relevant stakeholders.

Some key principles and actions to operationalize such an approach include the use of:

- Gender equality as a guiding principle and a cross-cutting issue for all climate finance instruments, but particularly for the Green Climate Fund.
- Gender-responsive funding guidelines and allocation criteria for each thematic funding window or sub-fund.
- Explicit gender criteria in performance objectives and results measurement frameworks and for the evaluation of funding options. Such criteria could include a mandatory gender analysis of the proposed project or programme, a gender budget and some clear quantitative and qualitative indicators measuring how projects and programs contribute to gender equality objectives, as well as the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data.
- Gender-balance and gender-expertise of an institution’s staff administering climate financing to ensure that gender equality principles are integrated in the development of funding and programming guidelines and are considered in programme and project review and the monitoring, reporting, verification and evaluation of a mechanism’s funding portfolio.
- Special efforts to seek the meaningful input and participation of women as key stakeholders and beneficiaries throughout the funding cycle of a programme or project from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation.
- A regular audit of the gender impacts of funding allocations in order to ensure balance between mitigation and adaptation activities and gender-responsive delivery.
- A robust set of social, gender and environmental safeguards and guidelines for their implementation that guarantee gender equality, women’s rights and women’s full participation. These safeguards should comply with existing international obligations, including on human and women’s rights, labor standards and environmental law.
- An independent evaluation and recourse mechanism allowing groups and individuals, including women, affected by climate change funding in recipient countries to voice their grievances and seek compensation and restitution.

References

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The Climate Finance Fundamentals are based on Climate Funds Update data and available in English, French and Spanish at www.climatefundsupdate.org

Overseas Development Institute

203 Blackfriars Road | London | SE1 8NJ | UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0300

Heinrich Böll Stiftung North America

1432 K Street | NW | Suite 500 Washington | DC 20005 | USA
Tel: +1 202 462 7514