

# A Framework for Gender-Responsive National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Processes

## 1 Introduction

With the adoption of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and the [Paris Agreement](#) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), increased attention is turning to the synergies between efforts to address climate change and those to achieve sustainable development (Hammill & Price-Kelly, 2017). One key area of intersection is the efforts to integrate gender equality across both processes. This brief discusses this issue in the context of the formulation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) (hereafter referred to as “NAP processes”). It presents the rationale for considering gender issues in climate change adaptation and introduces a working framework for gender-responsive NAP processes. It aims to promote discussion and reflection on integration of gender by actors engaged in NAP processes. The framework builds on previous guidance developed by the UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group ([available here](#)) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) ([available here](#)). It has been developed as part of an ongoing initiative by the [NAP Global Network](#) to promote gender-responsive investments in climate change adaptation.



## 2 Why a Gender-Responsive NAP Process?

Addressing gender considerations in NAP processes adds an additional layer of complexity to an already complicated, multi-dimensional process. So why is this so important? First, **gender equality is a universal human right** as acknowledged with the adoption of various international instruments, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, among others. It is at the centre of the SDGs, as both a stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting issue across a number of other goals to be reached by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). These commitments represent a strong statement by the global community that gender equality is a priority.



Second, **adaptation efforts will not be effective or sustainable if they do not take gender into account** (UNFCCC, 2015a). Women, girls, boys and men<sup>1</sup> experience the impacts of climate change in different ways and have different needs, opportunities and capacities to respond. In many contexts, women face additional barriers to adaptation compared to their male counterparts due to social norms and practices that limit their access to information, resources and opportunities (IUCN, UNDP & GGCA, 2009; CARE, 2010).<sup>2</sup> If these issues are not considered in NAP processes, there is a risk that they will maintain, exacerbate or create new gender inequalities. For example, studies have found that in some cases adaptation actions have led to increased workload and reduced decision-making power for women (see for example Sovacool & Linner, 2016). Consideration of gender issues therefore provides a critical basis for understanding differential vulnerability to climate change and addressing the underlying causes.

Third, **the NAP process presents an opportunity to address gender inequalities**. By acknowledging gender differences in the process, efforts can be made to empower women as agents of change. Women play key roles in contributing to household food and livelihood security, managing climate-sensitive resources and in community organization and leadership. If NAP processes explicitly aim to harness this capacity and apply it to the challenge of climate change, it can help overcome traditional barriers to women's participation in decision making. With equitable and effective participation by women and women's organizations in adaptation planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), there is a greater likelihood that finance and other resources for adaptation will be channeled in gender-responsive ways, and that the opportunities and benefits resulting from these processes will be more equitably shared.

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<sup>1</sup> In the remainder of the brief, we will refer to women and men, because it is typically adults who are involved in NAP processes. However, where there are efforts to engage youth, it would equally apply to girls and boys

<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that all women are vulnerable or that men are not vulnerable—vulnerability to climate change is influenced by a range of issues such as poverty, ethnicity and disability that also affect men.

Finally, **there is also a policy imperative to integrate gender considerations in NAP processes.** In the context of the UNFCCC negotiations, adaptation and gender issues were linked as early as 2001 in the guiding elements for the preparation of national adaptation programs of action (NAPAs) (UNFCCC, 2001). More recently, the decision that established the NAP process noted the need for gender-sensitive approaches (UNFCCC, 2012a), later defined as responding to “the different constraints and needs of individuals based on their gender” (UNFCCC, 2015a, p. 16). The 2015 Paris Agreement took these commitments even further, referring to gender-responsive approaches, as well as to the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women (UNFCCC, 2015b). The Lima Work Programme on Gender and Climate Change, established by the UNFCCC in 2014, was renewed in 2016, focusing on strengthening gender-responsive climate policy, including for adaptation (UNFCCC, 2016a). These recent pledges signal a strong commitment by UNFCCC Parties to integrating gender in responses to climate change, among which the NAP process is a key opportunity (UNFCCC, 2016b).

### 3 What Does a Gender-Responsive NAP Process Look Like?

Approaches to integrating gender considerations in policies, plans and programs range from harmful, where inequitable gender stereotypes are reinforced, to transformative, where social norms and structures are challenged in an effort to achieve gender equality (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002; CARE, 2008). The NAP Global Network understands gender-responsive approaches as those that examine and actively address gender norms, roles and inequalities (WHO, 2009). **Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to gender differences—they actively seek to promote gender equality** (WHO, 2009; CARE & International Center for Research on Women [ICRW], 2007), often through specific actions to empower women in their households and communities as well as broader policy and planning processes (Burns & Lee, 2015).

Applying this to the NAP process requires attention to gender throughout the iterative cycle of planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. It also means consideration of gender issues in the cross-cutting dimensions, including institutional arrangements, capacity development and information sharing. A gender-responsive NAP process involves:



Figure 1 (next page) provides an overview of what it looks like when these considerations are effectively integrated in the NAP process.

**Figure 1: A gender-responsive NAP process**



**4 How Can NAP Processes Be More Gender-Responsive?**

The iterative nature of the NAP process provides ample opportunities for integrating gender considerations. The first and most important step is for NAP teams to commit to being gender-responsive (for example by including this as a key issue in stocktaking and the NAP roadmap). With this commitment, action can be taken to bring in gender analysis and responsive actions throughout all of the dimensions of the NAP process. Table 1 presents key issues for NAP teams to consider as they advance their NAP processes. The relevant steps in the NAP technical guidelines developed by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) are presented in brackets where appropriate (UNFCCC, 2012b).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The references refer to the steps identified within the four main elements of the NAP process as they are outlined in the guidance, namely: A) Lay the Groundwork and Address Gaps, B) Preparatory Elements, C) Implementation Strategies, D) Reporting, Monitoring and Review.

**Table 1: Gender-responsive NAP processes: Key issues for NAP teams to consider**

<b>Key issues to consider for gender-responsive approaches</b>			
	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>M&amp;E</b>
<b>NAP PROCESS</b>	<p>Use sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive climate vulnerability assessments and inputs from gender experts to inform adaptation planning (A4, B2)</p> <p>Analyze national policies to identify gaps and opportunities in relation to integration of gender (A2)</p> <p>Build on existing good practices related to gender and climate change adaptation in planning processes (B3)</p> <p>Recognize women as a distinct stakeholder group in the NAP process (B4)</p> <p>Ensure effective participation of women, women's organizations and institutions promoting gender equality in planning processes (B4)</p> <p>Facilitate inclusive decision making that takes the specific needs and priorities of women and men into consideration (B4)</p>	<p>Build on existing strategies, policies and programs that address gender inequalities (C1)</p> <p>Integrate gender equality in criteria for prioritizing adaptation actions (C1)</p> <p>Ensure that adaptation actions address gender-related vulnerabilities and build on existing knowledge and capacities of women and men (C3)</p> <p>Ensure that adaptation actions support vulnerable women to access the resources and opportunities they need for adaptation (C1)</p> <p>Identify specific actions targeting particularly vulnerable women (C2)</p> <p>Empower individual women and women's organizations to take on leadership roles in implementation of adaptation actions (C3)</p> <p>Practice gender-responsive budgeting (C2)</p> <p>Ensure allocation of resources for adaptation, including finance, is gender-equitable</p> <p>Ensure that adaptation actions enhance equity in realization of rights and access to resources for women and men (C1, C2)</p>	<p>Involve gender experts in development of M&amp;E frameworks, building on existing systems (C1)</p> <p>Incorporate sex-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis of data (D1)</p> <p>Involve women in data collection and analysis (D2)</p> <p>Include indicators of gender equality and women's empowerment in adaptation processes (D1)</p> <p>Evaluate differentiated impact of adaptation actions on women and men (D2)</p>
	<b>Institutional arrangements (A1)</b>	<b>Capacity development (C3)</b>	<b>Information sharing (B4, C3)</b>
<b>ENABLING FACTORS</b>	<p>Ensure equitable representation of women and men in institutional structures for the NAP process</p> <p>Facilitate participation of organizations promoting gender equality and/or women's interests (including government ministries focused on gender)</p> <p>Highlight gender sensitivity in operations and decision making in terms of reference for institutional structures</p> <p>Include organizations promoting gender equality and/or women's interests (including at sub-national levels) in stakeholder platforms linked to the NAP process</p>	<p>Identify key actors on gender equality and sources of gender expertise within the country</p> <p>Design capacity development strategies to yield equitable benefits for women and men</p> <p>Facilitate targeted capacity building for women and women's organizations to enable effective participation in the NAP process</p> <p>Facilitate capacity building for NAP teams on integrating gender considerations</p>	<p>Address gender-specific barriers to information access in communication and dissemination strategies</p> <p>Design climate information services to provide equitable access for women and men</p> <p>Ensure equitable representation of women in platforms and networks</p>

Sources: IUCN (2011); UNDP, GGCA & Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (2016); CARE (2010); Burns & Lee (2015)

## 5 The Way Forward

In an effort to identify entry points for integrating gender considerations in NAP processes, the NAP Global Network recently conducted a review of NAP documents from 15 countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas. This pilot review was designed to test a methodology for tracking integration of gender considerations in NAP processes, with an initial focus on planning and institutional arrangements. It involved a systematic review of documents, including both national adaptation plans and plans for adaptation in key sectors, using a set of questions based on the above framework.<sup>4</sup>

The analysis revealed that **most of the countries have made an effort to address gender issues in their NAP processes**: in some cases, gender is recognized as a factor that influences vulnerability to climate change; in others, it is identified as a cross-cutting issue for the plan. However, most of the documents reviewed present an overarching framework for adaptation, with limited detail provided on the steps to follow, including further prioritization of adaptation actions, implementation approaches and allocation of finance and other resources. This makes it difficult to assess the extent to which gender aspects will be a consideration as the process moves forward based on the existing documents. That said, most countries are in the relatively early stages of their NAP processes, which means there is considerable scope to strengthen integration of gender considerations as they advance.

Moving forward, **more emphasis on gender is needed**, particularly as countries progress into development of implementation, financing and communication strategies as well as M&E systems for climate change adaptation. To enable this to occur, **gender should be a key consideration in capacity development efforts for both NAP teams and stakeholders in the process**. Efforts to integrate gender considerations must be documented in country adaptation plans, strategies and reports, for transparency and learning, as well as to enable tracking of progress on this issue at the international level.

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<sup>4</sup> The review tool built on the methodology used for reviewing gender in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): <https://genderclimatetracker.org/app/overview.html>.

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