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Act. 2.2.2 Review of NAP-MEF to Include Gender Considerations and
Inclusion in The Digital Tool**

**Deliverable 19: Report of the Inclusion of the Gender Considerations into
the NAP-MEF Digital Tool and NC5/BTR1**

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19: Report of the Inclusion of the Gender Considerations into the NAP-MEF Digital Tool and NC5/BTR1

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1. Background to the report

The disproportionate impacts of climate change on socially marginalized populations, particularly women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and vulnerable households, represent a critical area of concern within climate policy and governance. These groups frequently experience heightened risks due to systemic inequalities and exclusion in their access to resources, decision-making authority, and adaptive capacities. As a result, global climate discourse has increasingly recognized that climate change is not gender neutral, and its effects are experienced diversely based on varying levels of vulnerability and resilience. This recognition is encapsulated in global frameworks, with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stating the necessity to “*enhance the integration of gender considerations into all aspects of their climate policies, including mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation*”¹. At the same time, these populations possess valuable, often localised, knowledge and capacities that are essential for building effective community resilience. Consequently, the integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) into climate action is not merely a matter of social justice but a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring that interventions are effective, equitable, and sustainable².

In that lieu, this report investigates the current state of GESI integration within Zimbabwe’s climate change adaptation transparency and reporting arrangements. The report commences with a conceptual overview of the intersection of climate change, gender, and inclusivity, followed by a situational analysis of how these considerations have been addressed within Zimbabwe’s national reporting processes, from the Initial National Communication (1998) through to the Fifth National Communication (2024). The analysis further extends to the treatment of GESI within the National Adaptation Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (NAP-MEF) and the tracking of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and also draws lessons from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) Project.

Based on this assessment, the report identifies key opportunities and ongoing challenges. It concludes with a set of targeted recommendations aimed at strengthening GESI considerations. These include improvements to the NAP-MEF, enhancements to digital tools, adjustments to National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and measures for more robustly embedding gender and inclusion into the adaptation component of NDC tracking. At the end of this report, an annex is attached summarising the GESI training materials used in the training workshops and district pilot. Collectively, this report seeks to provide a clear and actionable pathway for systematically integrating GESI considerations into Zimbabwe’s climate governance and reporting systems.

2. Climate Change, Gender and Inclusivity

2.1. UNFCCC Gender Action Plan

The UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP) serves as a critical blueprint for embedding GESI into global climate policy. The GAP mandates that effective climate action must be participatory and

¹ UNFCCC 2019 <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/workstreams/the-gender-action-plan>

² Mapedza, E., Huyer, H. Chanana, N., Jacobs-Mata, I., *et al.* (2022). “Framework for incorporating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) elements in climate information services (CIS)”, Sustainability 15.1 (2022): 190.

equitable, through acknowledging that climate change impacts are not gender-neutral. This means ensuring that women, along with other marginalized and vulnerable groups, are at the forefront of climate decision-making and implementation³. The framework provides a structured approach for countries to address existing gender inequalities while simultaneously enhancing the sustainability and fairness of their climate responses.

A key component of this international framework is its application at the national level. Parties, including Zimbabwe, are required to mainstream gender considerations into core climate policy documents and processes. This includes incorporating GESI principles into NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and frameworks for transparency and reporting. Beyond policy, the GAP emphasizes the need for practical measures, such as promoting gender balance in national delegations, empowering women in leadership roles, and integrating gender-responsive budgeting into climate finance mechanisms

Ultimately, the framework emphasizes the importance of accountability through transparent reporting. Parties are required to submit detailed information on gender consideration in climate change in their NCs and BTRs. This consistent reporting enhances the visibility of gender-responsive actions and contributes to a growing body of evidence that can inform future policy decisions and actions, both nationally and internationally. This process ensures that commitments to GESI are measurable and transparent promoting continuous improvement in climate governance.

Table 1: The 5 UNFCCC Gender Action Plan Priority Areas

PRIORITY AREA	CORE FOCUS AND KEY ACTIONS
Capacity-building, Knowledge Sharing, and Communication	Strengthening the understanding of the links between gender and climate change. This includes training, workshops, and improving access to disaggregated data.
Gender Balance, Participation, and Women’s Leadership	Promoting the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in climate negotiations, decision-making, and implementation at all levels.
Coherence	Ensuring coordination among UNFCCC bodies, national institutions, and other stakeholders to consistently integrate gender into climate action.
Gender-responsive Implementation and Means of Implementation	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into climate policies, including adaptation and mitigation actions, technology transfer, and access to climate finance.
Monitoring and Reporting	Strengthening the integration of gender considerations into national reporting under the UNFCCC. This involves using clear indicators and follow-up mechanisms to track progress.

Source: UNFCCC GAP⁴

The UNFCCC GAP serves as a crucial framework and accountability mechanism for integrating gender equality and social inclusion into climate governance. Although progress in its implementation has been uneven among Parties, the GAP has played a vital role in raising awareness, establishing entry points for gender-responsive climate action, and shifting the focus from abstract rhetoric to tangible and practical measures. Zimbabwe’s Gender Action Plan (GAP) was informed by the UNFCCC GAP and adapted to the national context. It provides a significant reference point for domestic climate policy, offering a blueprint for ensuring that national climate transparency frameworks and reporting systems are not only inclusive and participatory but also responsive to the diverse and differentiated needs of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.

2.2 Inclusivity in the context of Action for Climate Empowerment

³ UN Women. (2025), Financing Gender Equality in the Green Transition in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Toolkit to Integrate Gender in Climate Policies. New York.

⁴ UNFCCC 2019 <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/workstreams/the-gender-action-plan>

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), established under Article 6 of the UNFCCC and reiterated in Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, focuses on empowering individuals, groups, and societies to actively engage in addressing climate change. This section analyses how the principles of inclusivity in the context of ACE are integrated into Zimbabwe’s NAP-ME, the associated Digital Tool, and its official NCs and BTRs. Inclusivity, as a core principle of ACE, asserts that climate change impacts are not evenly distributed, requiring the active and meaningful participation of marginalized groups to create effective, just, and sustainable climate solutions.

Parties to the UNFCCC are encouraged to:

- Develop and implement national ACE strategies or action plans that are inclusive and participatory, ensuring the representation of marginalized groups.
- Integrate gender and inclusivity perspectives into education curricula, training programs, and awareness raising campaigns.
- Ensure equal opportunities for participation in climate policy consultations, workshops, and decision-making platforms, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- Improve access to climate information in formats and languages that are understandable and usable by different communities, including those with low literacy or living in remote areas.
- Strengthen international cooperation by supporting capacity-building and sharing best practices that highlight inclusive approaches to ACE.



Figure 1: The 6 interconnected elements of ACE (Sibanda, P, 2025)

Together, these elements in Fig. 1 aim to ensure that climate action is not limited to technical or political decisions but is supported by informed, engaged, and empowered citizens at all levels.

ACE provides a critical entry point for embedding GESI in climate action reporting. By emphasizing education, awareness, and participation, ACE ensures that climate solutions are not top-down but grounded in the lived realities of those most affected (Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, 2015). For example, including rural women in climate dialogues can bring forward traditional knowledge on sustainable land and water use, while engaging youth fosters innovation and long-term commitment to climate goals. Inclusivity in ACE also aligns with broader global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), and SDG 13 (climate action).

Despite its potential, inclusivity within ACE faces several challenges. These include limited resources to implement inclusive programs, insufficient capacity among institutions to mainstream GESI in ACE activities, and a lack of gender and age-disaggregated data to measure inclusivity outcomes⁵. However, opportunities exist in the growing global recognition of the need for just and inclusive climate transitions. Innovative communication technologies, community-based education models, and youth-led climate movements provide practical pathways to operationalize inclusivity within ACE. Inclusivity in the context of ACE is a practical necessity for effective climate action in Zimbabwe. When diverse voices are included and empowered, climate solutions become more responsive, equitable, and sustainable⁶. For Zimbabwe, integrating inclusivity in ACE offers an opportunity to strengthen community resilience, harness local knowledge, and ensure that climate action truly leaves no one behind. Inclusivity in the context of ACE in Zimbabwe could be enhanced through the following actions (Table 2).

Table 2: Inclusivity in the context of Action for Climate Empowerment in Zimbabwe

COMPONENT	INCLUSIVITY ACTION POINTS
<p>National Adaptation Plan-Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</p> <p>The NAP-MEF is the primary mechanism for tracking and evaluating progress in climate adaptation. To be truly inclusive, it must move beyond general data to capture differentiated impacts and outcomes for various societal groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Disaggregation: Mandate the collection of gender-, age and disability-disaggregated data. • Participatory Indicators: Use indicators to measure the quality and extent of participation by marginalized groups. • Feedback and Learning: Integrate grassroots feedback mechanisms for community voices to inform policy.
<p>Digital Tool</p> <p>A digital tool for climate reporting offers significant opportunities to enhance data collection and transparency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility and usability: Ensure universal access through assistive technologies. • Capacity-building: Provide targeted training to address digital literacy gaps among women, rural communities, and the elderly.
<p>National Communications (NCs) / Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs)</p> <p>As mandated reports under the UNFCCC, NCs and BTRs are a primary vehicle for demonstrating a country's climate action to the international community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-responsive reporting: Provide a detailed analysis of how gender is mainstreamed into climate policies and report on outcomes of investments. • Inclusive drafting process: Ensure a multi-stakeholder, participatory process involving civil society, youth, and women associations. • Accountability on vulnerabilities: Use disaggregated data from the NAP-MEF and digital tool to report on the differentiated impacts of climate change.

As shown in Table 2, there are key inclusivity components that ensure that the ACE framework is aligned with. With that backdrop, similarly, the UNFCCC emphasizes that inclusivity goes beyond simply informing these groups. It is about empowering them to become active participants in shaping climate policies and strategies. This shift from passive recipients to active collaborators is essential for achieving climate justice. Without this deliberate and inclusive approach, well-intentioned initiatives can fail. For example, education programs might unintentionally exclude women and girls, while inaccessible participation processes can reinforce existing social inequalities. To be effective, ACE initiatives must be designed with inclusivity in mind, considering differences in literacy, language, mobility and cultural context⁷, which the ICAT project sought to achieve. Proactively addressing these barriers, ensures that climate action benefits everyone and that those most affected are at the forefront of the solutions.

⁵ Glasgow Work program on ACE (2021). <https://citizensclimate.earth/2021/11/06/aims-for-a-strong-glasgow-work-programme-for-ace-implementation/>

⁶ Sabel, C, and David, G. (2022). Fixing the climate: Strategies for an uncertain world. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2022.

⁷ UNICEF 2023-2030 Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan. <https://www.unicef.org/documents/sustainability-climate-change-action-plan>

2.3. Zimbabwe National Climate Policy Framework

Zimbabwe has developed comprehensive climate policies and strategies over the past decade, which collectively provide the foundation for addressing climate change while also embedding aspects of GESI. These frameworks include the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS, 2014), the National Climate Policy (NCP, 2017), the updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs, 2021), the National Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP, 2016–2020, extended informally in practice), the National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2024-2030), and the overarching National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1, 2021-2025). While each document demonstrates some level of recognition of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized rural communities, the degree of mainstreaming and operationalization of GESI principles varies significantly across them.

The National Climate Change Response Strategy (2014) was Zimbabwe’s first comprehensive roadmap to articulate adaptation and mitigation priorities. It acknowledged the differentiated impacts of climate change, particularly on rural women and smallholder farmers, who are often at the frontline of climate shocks. The strategy stressed the need for awareness raising, capacity building, and gender-sensitive approaches to adaptation in agriculture and water management. While GESI was conceptually recognized, the NCCRS lacked detailed implementation mechanisms, measurable indicators, or budget allocations to ensure equity outcomes.

The National Climate Policy (2017) built on the NCCRS, provided a clearer framework for mainstreaming climate action across all sectors. The policy explicitly emphasized inclusivity, highlighting the importance of ensuring women’s participation in climate decision-making and promoting equitable access to climate finance and technologies. Importantly, the foreword of the policy specifically recognises climate change as a development issue linked to poverty, health, and food security, areas where women and marginalized groups are disproportionately affected. Despite this progress, the main limitation of the policy lies in its broad framing; it lacks the prescription of concrete measures such as mandatory quotas, gender-responsive budgeting, or disaggregated monitoring systems, thereby limiting its practical effectiveness in driving structural inclusivity.

Zimbabwe’s updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs, 2021) provide the country’s commitments under the Paris Agreement. The updated NDCs emphasise adaptation in agriculture, water, health, and disaster risk reduction, sectors central to community resilience. The document also acknowledges that women, children, and vulnerable groups face higher exposure to climate risks, particularly in rural livelihoods. In the Revised NDCs (2021) Adaptation Section, particularly under the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector, gender-sensitive adaptation measures are included, such as support for smallholder farmers (the majority being women) and attention to climate-smart agriculture. The gaps in the revised NDCs are observed in the failure to set binding gender targets or allocation of resources specifically for GESI outcomes, lack of integration of disaggregated indicators into the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) framework. This omission risks leaving inclusivity as a principle rather than a measurable outcome.

The Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP, 2016-2020)⁸ is a landmark effort to operationalise gender considerations in climate governance. It outlines priority areas such as capacity building for women, improved access to climate finance, gender-sensitive technology transfer, and

⁸ UNFCCC2016, https://unfccc.int/files/gender_and_climate_change/application/pdf/egmreport.pdf

institutional strengthening for women’s participation in climate decision-making. The CC-GAP remains one of the few frameworks in Zimbabwe that provides explicit, actionable steps for gender mainstreaming, and it has been widely recognized by development partners (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF). Nevertheless, its implementation has been limited by resource constraints, weak institutional coordination and the absence of formal extension beyond its initial timeframe. Its integration with other climate governance instruments has also been partial, leading to fragmented rather than systemic GESI mainstreaming. A detailed introduction on the CC-GAP will be provided in the next Section.

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2024–2030) represents a significant step forward by consolidating adaptation planning within a single, long-term framework. The NAP emphasizes community-based adaptation, sectoral mainstreaming, and resilience building in agriculture, water, human settlements, health, and infrastructure. Specifically, the commitment of NAP to inclusivity is detailed in Chapter 3: Climate Change Adaptation, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. Zimbabwe's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) effectively integrates principles of GESI by linking adaptation to equitable development. It acknowledges that marginalized groups like women and youth are disproportionately vulnerable to climate impacts. The plan aims to empower these groups to participate in and benefit from adaptation efforts by leveraging their unique knowledge to build a more resilient society. The main strength of the lies in its clear policy commitment and its alignment with national development strategies like Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1). This alignment provides a critical entry point to embed GESI into future sectoral adaptation plans. The weakness of the NAP is its lack of explicit operational provisions. It does not mandate key mechanisms for GESI, such as gender and age-disaggregated data collection, gender-responsive budgeting, and dedicated institutional structures to oversee and monitor inclusion. This absence of concrete measures can lead to inequitable distribution of adaptation financing and outcomes, which the ICAT project seeks to redress.

The National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1, 2021–2025), Zimbabwe’s overarching economic blueprint, is a foundational document that provides a high-level framework for national development, including climate action. Unlike the other climate-specific frameworks, the approach of NDS1 GESI is broader, tying it directly to the national vision of “*leaving no one behind.*” This strategy is explicitly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities. The NDS1 represents a significant step forward in policy commitment by mainstreaming gender across various national priorities. It outlines strategies to *promote women’s empowerment*. The policy aims to improve the participation of women and youth in the economy across all sectors and increase their representation in decision-making positions, access to finance, and participation in decision-making processes.

Similar to the climate-specific policies, the operationalization of GESI within NDS1 faces challenges. While the document articulates clear aspirations and strategies, it often lacks concrete, measurable indicators and dedicated budget allocations to track progress and ensure accountability. This can result in GESI being treated as a cross-cutting issue in theory rather than a fully integrated, resourced, and monitored component of the strategy. The success of its GESI principles is therefore highly dependent on the effective implementation of its sectoral policies and the commitment of various government ministries to turn these aspirational goals into tangible outcomes. Table 3 provides an overview of GESI progress and gaps in Zimbabwe national climate policy framework.

Table 3: Summary of GESI Progress and Gaps in Zimbabwe National Climate Policy Framework (2014-2024)

Policy	Narrative	Key Progress (GESI)	Gaps (GESI)
National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS, 2014)	Zimbabwe's first comprehensive roadmap for adaptation and mitigation.	Acknowledged the differentiated impacts on rural women and smallholder farmers. Stressed the need for awareness, capacity building, and gender-sensitive approaches.	Lacks detailed implementation mechanisms, measurable indicators, and specific budget allocations for equity outcomes.
National Climate Policy (NCP, 2017)	Provides a clearer framework for mainstreaming climate action across all sectors.	Explicitly emphasized inclusivity and women's participation. Recognized climate change as a development issue linked to poverty, health, and food security.	Lacked concrete measures such as mandatory quotas, gender-responsive budgeting, and disaggregated monitoring systems.
Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP, 2016-2020)	A landmark effort to operationalize gender considerations in climate governance.	Provided explicit, actionable steps for gender mainstreaming. Outlined priority areas like capacity building for women, access to climate finance, and technology transfer.	Its implementation was limited by resource constraints, weak institutional coordination, and the absence of a formal extension beyond its timeframe.
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs, updated 2021)	Zimbabwe's commitments under the Paris Agreement focusing on adaptation.	Acknowledged that women, children, and vulnerable groups face higher exposure to climate risks. Included gender-sensitive measures like support for smallholder farmers (majority being women) and attention to climate-smart agriculture.	Did not set binding gender targets or allocate specific resources for GESI. Lacked the integration of disaggregated indicators into the MRV framework.
National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1, 2021-2025)	The overarching national economic blueprint tied to the vision of "leaving no one behind."	Promotes women's empowerment through affirmative action and improved access to financing. Aligned with SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and aims to increase the participation of youth and women.	Lacks concrete, measurable indicators and dedicated budget allocations to track GESI progress and ensure accountability.
National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2024-2030)	Consolidates adaptation planning into a long-term, comprehensive framework.	Acknowledges the disproportionate vulnerability of marginalized groups. Chapter 3 specifically links adaptation to GESI, aiming to empower these groups. Its alignment with Vision 2030 and NDS1 provides a critical entry point for GESI.	Lacks explicit operational provisions. Does not mandate gender- and age-disaggregated data collection, gender-responsive budgeting, or dedicated institutional structures.

2.4. Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP)

Zimbabwe's Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP) was launched on April 17, 2023, following the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s Gender Action Plan at COP25 and was informed by a gender analysis on climate change conducted in 2020. The Zimbabwe Climate Change-GAP, at inception and to date, seeks to systematically integrate gender considerations into climate change efforts in Zimbabwe, which also guides the necessity of GESI in the ICAT project. The CC-GAP was a landmark effort, driven by the recognition that climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable groups and that a

gender-responsive approach is essential for effective climate action. It aligns with Zimbabwe’s NDC priority sectors (Agriculture, Forestry and other Land Use (AFOLU), Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU), and Waste) while also addressing cross-cutting issues like climate finance, data, and institutional participation. This makes it highly significant because it moves beyond rhetoric and provides practical, sector-specific pathways for ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups are protected from climate risks and positioned to benefit from opportunities in adaptation and mitigation.

The CC-GAP serves as the primary instrument through which Zimbabwe operationalizes its gender commitments under the UNFCCC and integrates them into national planning instruments. Progress has been made in several important areas. Firstly, the launch of the Zimbabwe CC-GAP in 2023 elevated Zimbabwe’s visibility as a country committed to gender-responsive climate action and created a strong political signal for implementation. Secondly, the GAP provides practical guidance through sector-based action menus, such as measures to support women’s participation in clean energy value chains, gender-responsive agricultural extension, and inclusive waste management livelihoods. Despite its progressive nature, the CC-GAP’s practical effectiveness was limited by several key weaknesses. Table 4 above summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the CC-GAP.

Table 4: Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan

ASPECT	STRENGTHS OF THE CC-GAP	WEAKNESSES OF THE CC-GAP
Operationalization of GESI	Clear focus on operationalizing GESI	The plan’s ambitious goals were often hindered.
Key Actions	Dedicated sections for specific, tangible actions: Capacity Building, Access to Climate Finance, and Gender-Sensitive Technology Transfer.	Lack of a dedicated and sufficient budget. This restricted its ability to scale up its initiatives.
Institutional Approach	Stand-alone framework providing a clear roadmap for gender mainstreaming.	"Whole-of-government" approach was hampered by a lack of coordination among different ministries, leading to fragmented efforts.
Timeline	Provided a time-bound plan for gender action (2016-2020).	Absence of formal extension after 2020. This has resulted in a loss of momentum and a partial integration into more recent policy instruments.

ICAT is addressing these gaps through its support for Zimbabwe’s capacity in operationalizing Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement. By providing technical and financial support, ICAT has helped the country to:

- **Develop the NAP-MEF Digital Tool:** to collect, process, and transmit data for the NAP-MEF. A key feature of this tool is its ability to integrate gender indicators into its data collection.
- **Integrate GESI into Reporting:** ICAT is directly assisting Zimbabwe in embedding GESI into its National Communications (NC) and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs). This means that future climate reports will not only show emissions data but will also explicitly report on the GESI outcomes of climate actions.
- **Enhance Capacity for GESI Analysis:** ICAT supported trainings and workshops that capacitated government officials and stakeholders to collect, analyse, and use gender and age-disaggregated data.

3. Situational analysis in relation to Gender and Inclusivity in Zimbabwe’s climate transparency

Zimbabwe’s climate transparency in climate action have gradually evolved, with the country demonstrating commitment to the UNFCCC’s Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) through the submission of five National Communications and its first Biennial Update Report. However, the integration of gender and inclusivity across these reporting instruments has remained uneven. Earlier submissions were largely focusing on emissions inventories and sectoral vulnerabilities, with limited attention to the differentiated roles, vulnerabilities, and capacities of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups. Although more recent reports, particularly the Fifth National Communication and the NDC updates, reference social inclusion, systematic analysis of gender-differentiated impacts is still limited.

To address these gaps, the consultant reviewed the indicators under the NAP-MEF and found none to be GESI-sensitive. In response, a Training Manual was developed collaboratively with the NAP Expert, Digital Tool Expert, and M&E Expert, with a dedicated section on gender and inclusivity (*see Annex 1*). This section emphasized key GESI concepts, minimum standards, application of a GESI lens, and methods for conducting GESI analysis. Training of Trainers (ToT) was undertaken to build the capacity of CCMD officers, district and municipal technical experts, and other stakeholders, enabling them to integrate GESI considerations into their daily work and climate reporting processes. A particular focus was placed on strengthening the ability of data providers to collect gender-disaggregated, age-disaggregated, and disability data, thereby improving the tracking of equitable progress in climate action and enhancing Zimbabwe’s ability to meet its transparency commitments in an inclusive and accountable manner. The methodological grounding of the training was anchored in the GESI lens framework, which emphasizes identifying and addressing power imbalances, recognizing differentiated climate impacts, and ensuring that the voices of vulnerable groups women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly are systematically included in data and reporting. This approach strengthened technical capacity and embedded inclusivity as a guiding principle in Zimbabwe’s climate transparency arrangements.

The following Table 5 illustrates the frequency of selected key GESI terms across the analyzed documents. The visualization highlights the increasing integration of GESI principles over time, reinforcing the narrative derived from the word count data.

Table 5: Frequency of GESI Terms in Zimbabwe’s Climate Policy Documents

	NCCRS (2014)	NCP (2017)	NDCs (2021)	CC-GAP (2016–2020)	NAP (2024)	First BTR & Fifth NC 2024	NDS1
Content	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Adolescence/adolescent,	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Boy/s	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Child/children	65	6	4	2	8	21	50
Disability/disabled	9	4	1	2	6	25	14
Equality	0	1	3	8	1	11	10
Equity	2	2	2	3	5	0	2
Female	1	0	0	0	1	3	2
Future generations	1	3	0	0	0	3	2
Gender	24	18	32	100	1	95	48
Girl, girls	1	0	0	0	0	10	0
Inequality	2	1	4	2	0	3	2
Marginalised	2	1	1	0	0	1	4
Minority	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vulnerable/vulnerability	89	14	15	6	17	118	40
Vulnerable groups	38	6	3	0	7	10	19
Women/young women	22	10	18	19	6	82	40
Young/young people	7	1	2	0	0	1	40
Youth	44	3	11	0	7	30	79

An analysis of frequency in key climate-related documents indicated in Table 5, shows a clear trend toward more comprehensive and inclusive language over time.

- **Growing Inclusivity:** The word “Gender” is a good example of this trend, appearing 24 times in the 2014 NCCRS, but jumping to 100 times in the 2016-2020 CC-GAP and 95 times in the First Biennial Transparency Report & Fifth National Communication (BTR & Fifth NC). This significant increase indicates a heightened focus on gender as a core component of climate action.
- **Shifting Terminology:** The shift from broad terms like “Vulnerable/vulnerability” to more specific ones like “Women/young women” and “Youth” is notable. For instance, while “Vulnerable/vulnerability” appeared 89 times in the 2014 NCCRS, “Women/young women” was used only 22 times. In contrast, the First BTR & Fifth NC used “Women/young women” 82 times and “Youth” 30 times, suggesting a more specific focus on these groups.
- **Progress in Social Inclusion:** The inclusion of terms like “Disability/disabled” and “Equity” also shows progress. The frequency of “Disability/disabled” increased from 9 in the 2014 NCCRS to 25 in the First BTR & Fifth NC. Similarly, “Equity” saw a consistent presence across documents, indicating an ongoing commitment to fairness and social justice. The significant jump in the use of terms like “Child/children” from 65 in the NCCRS to 50 in the NDS1, and “Youth” from 44 to 79 in the same documents, further highlights an evolving focus on different demographics.

The observed increase in GESI-related terms across successive climate policies and reports demonstrates significant progress in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion. For BTR2 and NC6, it is recommended to strengthen the integration of the GESI perspective by providing deeper analysis and clearer evidence of real actions, commitments, and outcomes. The focus should not be about increasing the frequency, but on demonstrating genuine progress and tangible results. It should also illustrate the active participation, leadership, and contributions of these groups in climate mitigation, adaptation, finance, and capacity-building initiatives. Moving beyond vulnerability-focused

narratives, reports should highlight agency and tangible impacts, demonstrating how the ICAT project and other related projects have successfully advanced inclusive and equitable climate action. BTR2 and NC6 offer the opportunity to showcase continued progress and the meaningful engagement of women, youth, children, and marginalized groups in shaping Zimbabwe’s climate response.

3.1 Analysis of Gender and Inclusivity Reporting from Initial National Communication to Fifth National Communication.

Initial to Second National Communications (1st NC – 2ndNC): The earliest communications (1998 1st NC and 2013 2nd NC) were, prioritizing greenhouse gas inventories, vulnerability assessments, and sectoral adaptation measures. References to gender or social inclusion were minimal and mostly implicit, as illustrated in the word frequency analysis above. Vulnerability was often described in broad terms, such as “*rural communities*” or “*smallholder farmers*,” without disaggregating how climate impacts affect women, men, youth, or persons with disabilities differently. The reports acknowledged the socio-economic context of climate change but lacked specific indicators or data demonstrating the differentiated roles and coping capacities of vulnerable groups. As a result, gender remained on the periphery of reporting, and inclusivity was not framed as a necessary component of adaptation or mitigation strategies.

Third National Communication (3rd NC, 2016): The Third National Communication marked a small but important shift. While still dominated by technical reporting, it included clearer references to communities, poverty, and the need to protect vulnerable populations. In the 3rd NC, women are identified as being particularly at risk due to their dependence on climate-sensitive resources, such as water and agriculture. However, the analysis was largely narrative, relying on generalized descriptions rather than disaggregated evidence. Youth and other marginalized groups were not systematically mentioned. The 3rd NC thus showed a growing awareness of the social dimensions of climate change but remained limited in operationalizing GESI in its reporting frameworks.

Fourth National Communication (4th NC, 2022): By the 4th NC, inclusivity considerations became more visible. The report acknowledged women’s roles in natural resource management, household food security, and smallholder agriculture, noting how climate variability placed additional burdens on them. It also recognized the importance of building adaptive capacity among vulnerable groups, including rural households and the urban poor. Still, there were no standardized indicators or disaggregated datasets to quantify these impacts. The treatment of GESI remained largely descriptive, with limited evidence of systematic data collection or integration into monitoring and evaluation systems.

Fifth National Communication (5th NC, 2024): The 5th NC represents the substantive progress in incorporating gender and inclusivity. The 5th NC makes a more deliberate reference to gender-differentiated vulnerabilities, particularly in agriculture, water, and health sectors, and acknowledges the disproportionate risks faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups. The report also highlights the importance of aligning national reporting with instruments such as the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan. While the 5th NC recognizes the need for gender- and age-disaggregated data, such data were not consistently presented, and inclusivity in mitigation and finance reporting remained limited. The absence of systematic indicators meant that progress on gender-responsive adaptation could not be measured over time.

Across the five NCs, Zimbabwe has gradually moved from near silence on GESI issues to increasingly explicit and deliberate acknowledgment of gender and inclusivity as central to climate action. The trajectory reflects growing political recognition of the importance of mainstreaming gender and social equity in climate policy. However, the NCs consistently fall short of providing

disaggregated data, measurable indicators, or robust analysis of outcomes for women, youth, and marginalized groups. Progress has therefore been more discursive than empirical. Moving forward, embedding standardized GESI indicators and ensuring systematic data collection and reporting will be critical to strengthening Zimbabwe’s transparency and accountability on equity dimensions of climate change.

Table 6: Progress and Gaps in GESI Integration from 1st NC to 5th NC

National Communication	Progress on GESI Issues	Gaps/Limitations
Initial National Communication (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focused mainly on technical aspects (GHG inventories, vulnerability). ● Some recognition of socio-economic vulnerability in rural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No explicit mention of gender or inclusivity. ● Vulnerabilities reported in aggregate, no disaggregated data.
Second National Communication (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Slightly broader framing of vulnerability. ● Acknowledged rural smallholders and poverty context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimal gender analysis. ● No systematic treatment of women, youth, or marginalized groups.
Third National Communication (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentioned women as particularly vulnerable in agriculture and water. ● Greater recognition of social dimensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Still narrative and qualitative. ● No gender- or age-disaggregated data. Youth and disability are largely absent.
Fourth National Communication (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acknowledged women’s role in food security and resource management. ● Recognized the importance of building adaptive capacity for vulnerable households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lacked standardized indicators. ● Limited quantitative data to back GESI claims. ● Analysis remained descriptive.
Fifth National Communication (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More deliberate reference to gender-differentiated vulnerabilities. ● Linked reporting to the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan. ● Greater emphasis on youth and marginalized groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data is mostly qualitative. Lack of consistent gender- and age-disaggregated data. ● Gaps in inclusivity for mitigation and finance reporting.

3.2 Gender and Inclusivity in NAP-MEF and NDC Tracking Arrangements

The NAP-MEF is designed to serve as Zimbabwe’s cornerstone for adaptation transparency, yet its operationalization presents both opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming gender and inclusivity. While the framework acknowledges the importance of a participatory and gender-sensitive approach, most indicators to date remain focused on outputs (e.g., number of boreholes drilled, hectares under climate-smart agriculture) rather than differentiated outcomes across women, men, youth, and persons with disabilities. The lack of standardized gender, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) at both local and sectoral levels poses a significant gap, as does the absence of metrics to capture women’s leadership, decision-making roles, and equitable access to adaptation resources.

To strengthen GESI integration, the NAP-MEF indicators were reviewed by this ICAT project experts and GESI-sensitive indicators were introduced to reflect differentiated vulnerabilities, capacities, and adaptation outcomes. This marked a significant shift from output-based to outcome-oriented tracking. Complementing this, a digital tool was developed and piloted to provide a standardized system for data collection at national and subnational levels. The tool allows for systematic capturing of SADDD and GESI-related indicators, strengthening the consistency, reliability, and inclusivity of evidence generated.

Zimbabwe’s 2021 Revised NDC includes both mitigation and adaptation measures with explicit references to inclusivity and vulnerable groups. However, similar to the NAP-MEF, the NDC tracking

arrangements remain largely quantitative, emphasizing sectoral progress without systematically examining who benefits, who participates, and who is excluded. For example, while renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, and resilience-building interventions are tracked, there is limited reporting on women’s participation in renewable energy jobs, youth engagement in adaptation enterprises, or whether persons with disabilities have equitable access to climate information and services. Mainstreaming GESI into NDC tracking requires deliberate alignment of indicators with both the National Gender Policy and best practice reporting under the UNFCCC. This includes ensuring that adaptation and mitigation finance is gender-tagged, that all data systems are capable of generating SADDD, and that participation metrics capture not only the number but also the quality of involvement by women, youth, and marginalized groups in climate decision-making.

Both the NAP-MEF and NDC tracking systems present a critical opportunity for Zimbabwe to demonstrate leadership in aligning adaptation and mitigation reporting with global gender mandates such as the UNFCCC GAP. Integrating gender-responsive indicators at the design stage, harmonizing SADDD across reporting tools, embedding finance-tracking mechanisms, and strengthening practitioner capacity will ensure that transparency arrangements capture not only the scale of climate action but also its equity and inclusivity. A robust GESI-responsive approach will enable Zimbabwe to provide evidence of how climate progress is translating into tangible benefits for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. This transformation from technical monitoring frameworks into instruments of accountability for equity will be vital in strengthening both national ownership and international credibility of Zimbabwe’s climate reporting.

4. Lessons from the ICAT Phase II Project

Noting that there was limited information on GESI-related issues across different climate-related and development documents in the country, it was necessary to explore why GESI-related information remains scarce. Understanding the reasons behind these gaps is critical to closing them and ensuring more comprehensive availability and use of GESI data. This process will improve the collection and integration of GESI-related data into climate change programming and policy. During field visits in pilot districts, Nyanga, Mutare, Gweru, and Tsholotsho, discussions were held with representatives from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MWACSMED), Ministry of Youth Empowerment Development and Vocational Training (MYEDVT), Department of Social Development, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). Three key questions guided the discussions, and the responses are summarized in the tables 7(1), (II), (III) below:

- What are the major gaps and challenges in relation to data collection on (e.g., women, youth, persons with disabilities, minority groups)?
- Do agencies and organizations share gender and inclusivity data?
- What would help improve gender and inclusivity data collection and use (e.g., training, new tools, partnerships)?

Table 7: Major Gaps and Challenges in Collecting Climate-Related GESI Data

Challenge	Description
Complex and Technical Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate-related surveys are often technical, using scientific terms for weather patterns, drought impact, and agricultural practices, which are difficult for rural farmers to understand. • Translation and simplification are often lacking.
Cultural and Religious Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriarchal norms and male-dominated decision-making limit women’s voices in reporting climate impacts. • Minority and religious groups may restrict women’s participation in discussions about climate risks.

Limited Participation of Vulnerable Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and youth prioritize livelihood activities over surveys. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) face mobility and access challenges. • Migrating populations leave women as primary respondents but with limited decision-making power.
Trust and Awareness Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust in the data infrastructure ecosystem by being transparent, participatory, ownership of data and products generated, provide feedback. • Lack of feedback reduces trust.
Enumerator Dynamics and Gender Matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male enumerators may not access sensitive climate information from women. • Local enumerators are more trusted.
Uneven digital access and literacy “Digital disability” in certain groups Discrimination of PWD in digital technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance digital literacy and access among the stakeholders. • Devise appropriate strategies to assist those with “digital disability” • Use assistive technology
Resource and Infrastructure Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited budgets, poor transport, and low digital literacy hinder data collection. • Remote areas face poor network coverage.
Political and Administrative Gatekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance from authorities or political structures delays data collection, especially in disaster-affected areas.

Table 8: Good Practices and Challenges in Sharing Climate-Related GESI Data Among Agencies and Organizations

Aspect	Description
Positive Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some NGOs and CBOs share climate impact data disaggregated by gender, age, and disability with relevant ministries and NGO forums. • Gender-sensitive climate registers track impacts of floods, droughts, and food insecurity on women, youth, and PWDs. • Inter-ministerial committees (e.g., civil protection committees) are occasionally used for data sharing.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INGOs maintain strict protocols limiting data sharing, while smaller CBOs and FBOs share more readily. • Climate data is scattered, inconsistent, and often unverified; central repositories are lacking. • Competition, fear of blame, and misinterpretation of vulnerabilities reduce willingness to share. • ZIMSTAT validation delays the use of climate-related GESI data for policy and planning.

Table 9: Proposed Improvements for Climate-Related GESI Data Collection and Use

Improvement Area	Description
Inclusive Tools and Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop short, simple, and culturally sensitive climate questionnaires in local languages. • Tailor tools for vulnerable groups addressing water scarcity, flood exposure, and food insecurity. • Collect data in safe spaces and through trusted local enumerators to increase openness.
Capacity Building and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train enumerators on climate-related risks and gendered disaster impacts. • Ensure adequate funding, transport, and time for field surveys in remote areas. • Use technology where feasible, addressing digital literacy gaps for women and rural populations.
Coordination and Consolidation (Role of CCMD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a centralized, climate-specific GESI data repository coordinated by CCMD and linked with ZIMSTAT. • Produce regular reports on climate impacts disaggregated by gender, age, and disability. • Strengthen collaboration across stakeholders to avoid duplication. • Promote joint planning and standardized reporting templates.
Community Engagement and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform communities about the purpose of data collection and provide feedback to maintain trust. • Use door-to-door methods and engage local youth and women as enumerators to reach marginalized households.

5. Challenges and Opportunities

5.1 Key Challenges

- **Limited Systematic Integration:** Despite progress, systematic GESI analysis and dedicated indicators are still at an early stage of use in national monitoring and reporting frameworks.
- **Prioritization Gaps:** GESI considerations, while referenced, remain secondary to technical aspects such as emissions inventories and sectoral vulnerabilities, limiting their influence in transparency reporting.
- **Data Collection Barriers:** Inadequate tools in earlier processes, resource constraints, and cultural norms restricting participation of vulnerable groups continue to hinder comprehensive data gathering.
- **Fragmented Coordination:** Climate-related GESI data remains scattered, inconsistently shared, and lacks a centralized repository to guide national planning and transparent reporting.

5.2. Opportunities

- **Growing Policy Commitment:** Zimbabwe has shown progress by including gender references in the Fifth National Communication and updated NDCs, signaling stronger political will to mainstream GESI in climate transparency.
- **Capacity Strengthening and Tools:** The development of a Training Manual, which includes a dedicated GESI section, together with ToTs for CCMD officers and local experts, will provide a strong foundation for embedding inclusivity in climate reporting and strengthening institutional capacity.
- **Strengthened Framework through GESI Indicators:** The review of the NAP-MEF led to the inclusion of GESI-sensitive indicators, creating an opportunity to systematically track differentiated climate impacts and ensure that reporting reflects the needs of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups.
- **Improved Data Practices:** Emerging efforts to collect gender-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data, supported by the development of a digital tool that enables the capturing of GESI-related data, highlight progress and open pathways for building more inclusive and accessible datasets.
- **Evidence of Progress in Reporting:** Content frequency analysis of climate documents demonstrates an increasing recognition of GESI concepts, marking a shift to more socially responsive reporting and providing a measurable baseline for future progress.

6. Recommendations for enhancing gender and inclusivity in tracking and reporting climate adaptation in Zimbabwe

6.1 Recommendations to strengthen a GESI-responsive NAP-MEF

Recommendation	Rationale	Expected Outcome
Institutionalize GESI-Sensitive Indicators	Ensure that the newly introduced GESI indicators in the NAP-MEF are fully operationalized with clear definitions, baselines, and measurable targets.	Systematic tracking of differentiated climate impacts on women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups.
Strengthen Data Collection Systems	Expand the use of the digital tool developed under the ICAT project to standardize disaggregated data collection, supported by simple, culturally sensitive tools.	Improved availability of gender-, age-, and disability-disaggregated climate data that captures diverse community experiences.
Enhance Institutional Capacity and Coordination	Provide refresher training on applying a GESI lens in M&E and establish coordination mechanisms across ministries, local authorities, and NGOs.	Stronger institutional ability to mainstream GESI and reduce data fragmentation across agencies.
Integrate GESI into Adaptation Tracking for NDCs	Align NAP-MEF indicators with NDC adaptation tracking systems to make inclusivity central in resilience monitoring and transparency reporting.	Coherent and inclusive reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework, reflecting equity in adaptation outcomes.

6.2. Recommendations to sustain a GESI-inclusive Digital Tool

- **Refresher Trainings for Sustainability:** Conduct periodic refresher trainings for district data providers to reinforce skills, address challenges in use, and ensure that GESI-sensitive data collection continues beyond the lifespan of the ICAT project.
- **Strengthen Data Quality Assurance:** Introduce built-in validation checks, standard definitions, and prompts within the tool to minimize errors, ensure consistency, and improve the reliability of GESI-sensitive climate data.
- **Integration with National Reporting Systems:** Ensure seamless linkage between the digital tool, the NAP-MEF framework, and ZIMSTAT's central systems so that GESI-related climate data directly informs national reporting and transparency commitments.
- **Community Feedback and Transparency Functions:** Incorporate features that allow aggregated results (e.g., district summaries) to be shared back with local stakeholders and communities, reinforcing accountability and encouraging continued participation in data provision.

6.3. Recommendations to mainstream GESI in National Communications and BTR-reporting

- **Provide Guidance Notes/Checklists for Data providers:** Equip data providers with structured guidance to ensure GESI considerations are consistently addressed throughout all reporting sections. This strengthens the quality and reliability of inclusivity reporting.
- **Develop Standardized GESI Reporting Templates:** Introduce clear templates and guidelines requiring consistent gender-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data, qualitative insights, and explanations of GESI-informed decisions. This promotes coherence, comparability, and credibility of reporting.

- **Institutionalize use of GESI-Sensitive Indicators:** Align reporting with the GESI indicators in the NAP-MEF to systematically monitor gender-differentiated vulnerabilities and resilience outcomes. This connects local, district, and national reporting with international transparency commitments.
- **Strengthen Inter-Ministerial Coordination and Data Sharing:** Formalize coordination within ministries and other relevant stakeholders to harmonize data collection, reduce duplication, and ensure timely, inclusive, and credible contributions to NCs and BTRs.
- **Integrate GESI in Tracking Climate Finance and Technology Transfer:** Ensure reporting on finance, capacity building, and technology transfer explicitly addresses how interventions reach vulnerable populations, demonstrating accountability and equitable impact.

6.4. Recommendations to integrate GESI considerations into NDC planning and implementation

- **Disaggregate Adaptation Measures by GESI Categories:** Understanding how adaptation interventions impact women, youth, PWDs, and marginalized groups is essential for targeted action. This ensures clear identification of beneficiaries and equitable distribution of resources.
- **Include GESI-Sensitive Vulnerability Assessments:** Climate vulnerability differs across social groups; capturing this is critical for planning adaptation interventions. Adaptation strategies can then address the specific needs of vulnerable populations, enhancing resilience outcomes.
- **Use Local Participatory Approaches for Adaptation Planning:** Engaging local women, youth, and PWDs ensures their knowledge and needs inform adaptation measures, increasing ownership and effectiveness of interventions and improving community resilience.
- **Integrate Monitoring of Adaptation Outcomes by Gender and Vulnerability:** Tracking how adaptation actions reduce differential vulnerabilities provides evidence-based assessment of effectiveness and informs future planning.
- **Allocate Adaptation Finance with GESI Considerations:** Explicit targeting ensures that resources reach the most vulnerable, providing transparent, equitable funding for adaptation and increasing impact on women, youth, PWDs, and marginalized communities.

Annex 1: Gender and Inclusivity Training Manual



**Government of Zimbabwe
Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife**

**with support from
ICAT, UNOPS and UNEP-CCC**

**Initiative for Climate Action Transparency Project in Zimbabwe
Phase II**

**Gender and Inclusivity Training Manual for
The NAP-MEF Digital Tool**

30 August 2025

1. Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide practical guidance on how to systematically integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) into climate change adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. It seeks to ensure that climate actions are equitable, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs, priorities and capacities of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

Specifically, the manual aims to:

- Strengthen capacity of practitioners, policymakers and stakeholders to design and implement gender-responsive and socially inclusive adaptation interventions.
- Promote the application of GESI principles across all stages of the project cycle assessment, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- Encourage the collection and use of disaggregated data (by sex, age and disability) to inform inclusive climate policies and evidence-based decision-making.
- Promote transformative change by promoting equitable participation, access to resources, and decision-making power among vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Ultimately, this manual serves as a practical resource to ensure that climate change adaptation efforts do not perpetuate existing inequalities but instead contribute to empowerment, resilience and sustainable development for all. The activities outlined in this manual were implemented during the Digital Tool Training Workshops and the insights generated informed the development of the Report on the Inclusion of Gender Considerations into the NAP-MEF Digital Tool and National Communications 5 (NC5)/ Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1) (D19), which builds upon and complements the work documented herein.

2. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Climate Change Adaptation

Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities, due to pre-existing social, economic, and political inequalities. Climate change is neither gender-neutral in its causes nor its impacts, as structural inequalities shape the ability of different groups to respond to climate risks⁹. Women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups often face greater exposure to climate-induced challenges due to limited access to resources, information, decision-making power, financial services and adaptive technologies. At the same time, these groups play crucial roles in agriculture and community resilience, making their inclusion in climate adaptation strategies essential for effective and sustainable responses.

A gender-responsive approach ensures that all groups actively participate in the design and implementation of adaptation strategies, leading to outcomes that are equitable, effective and sustainable. This approach aligns with global commitments such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan (GAP) and the Paris Agreement, both of which emphasize the importance of gender equality and inclusivity in climate action¹⁰. The UNFCCC GAP seeks to strengthen the participation of women and marginalized groups in climate decision-making and promote the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data to inform evidence-based, gender-responsive policies and programs. Similarly, Article 7 of the Paris Agreement underscores that adaptation action should be “country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent,” taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups, communities, and ecosystems, and guided by both scientific and traditional knowledge systems. Recognizing that climate impacts vary according to social, economic, and cultural contexts, national transparency frameworks and adaptation strategies must therefore integrate gender and inclusivity considerations to ensure that no one is left behind in climate resilience and development efforts.

⁹ UNFCCC2016, https://unfccc.int/files/gender_and_climate_change/application/pdf/egmreport.pdf

¹⁰ van Duijn, Diandra (2021). The Importance of Gender Equality in Climate Action: An investigation into how UN member states view the relation between gender equality and climate action.

3. Understanding GESI Key Concepts ¹¹

Activity 1

What do you understand by the term gender equality and by the term social inclusion? Write down the words that come to your mind when you hear the terms gender equality and social inclusion.

After you have written down your thoughts, share what you wrote with another person. Combine your thoughts and to write them down and share them orally.

What is Gender Equality?

It is the state or condition that affords women and girls, men and boys, equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities and resources. It includes expanding freedoms and voice, improving power dynamics and relations, transforming gender roles and enhancing overall quality of life so that males and females achieve their full potential.

What is Social Inclusion?

It seeks to address inequality and/or exclusion of vulnerable populations by improving terms of participation in society and enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for human rights. It seeks to promote empowerment and advance peaceful and inclusive societies and institutions.

What is GESI?

GESI is a **process of change** that address **the root causes of inequality and exclusion**. It is a **multi-layered process** of transformation. The goal of GESI is to remove barriers and increase access, decision-making and participation of the most vulnerable. It requires creating **enabling environments** for all engage in and benefit **equally** from development interventions.

¹¹ Understanding GESI concepts. Adapted from the GESI Continuum in “DFID Girls’ Education Challenge: Leave No Girl Behind Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Guidance” (July 2018); and the USAID IGWG Gender Integration Continuum (2017).

3.1 Equality and Equity

- Treating everyone equally does not always lead to equal outcomes. To promote fairness, it is important to identify and remove barriers and actively support inclusion. This sometimes requires treating people differently in order to achieve GESI.
- There is a distinction between equality and equity, these terms are not interchangeable.
- Equality means giving everyone the same resources or opportunities, while equity involves distributing resources based on the specific needs of individuals or groups to achieve fair outcomes.
- Encourage participants to explore these concepts by discussing their own understanding of equality and equity and sharing real-life examples of each¹².

What is Equality?

The state or condition that affords all people equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, and resources. More than parity or laws, genuine social equality is expanded freedom and improved overall quality of life for all.

What is Equity?

The process of being fair to all people. To ensure fairness, measures are required to compensate for the cumulative and historical economic, social, and political disadvantages that have and continue to prevent disadvantaged groups from operating on a level playing field.

!! While equality is a common focus, it is important to remember that genuine equality can only be realized after equity, once all barriers have been removed or eliminated. Display the image on the screen and pose the question: *If we move forward with equality alone, would it lead to any real change?*

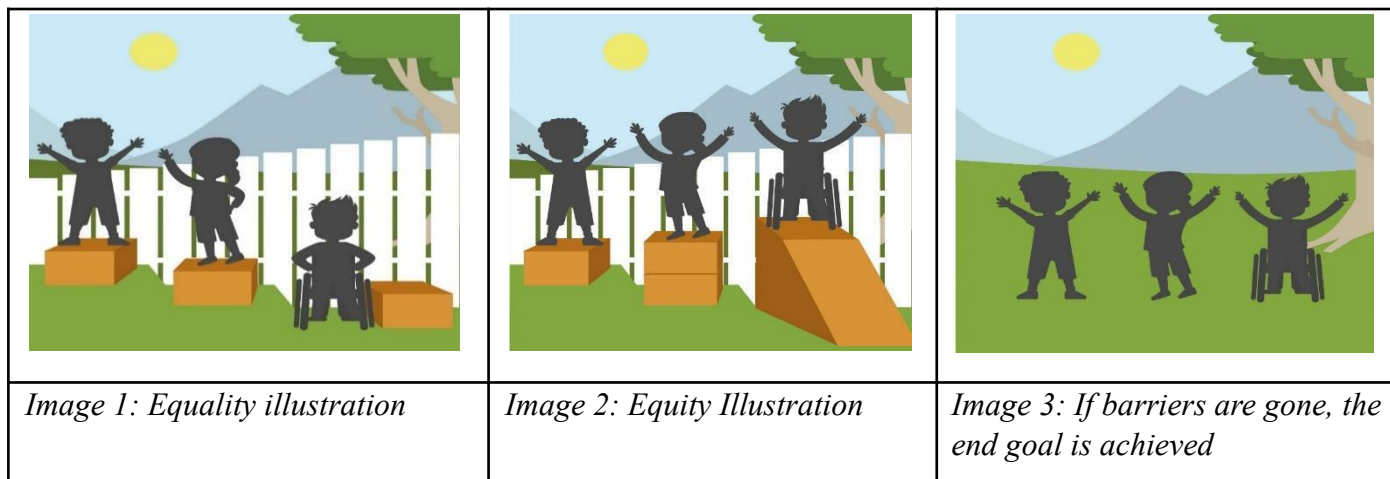


Image 1: While we often talk about equality, treating everyone the same does not always lead to fair outcomes. As illustrated in this image, applying equality uniformly may not make a meaningful difference. This is why equity is important, it ensures support is tailored to individual needs and circumstances, enabling everyone to reach the same outcome.

¹² UNDP (2016). Africa human development report 2016 accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Image 2: Each child has received the tailored support they need to see over the fence, allowing them all to enjoy the view. This support is not the same for everyone; it is thoughtfully designed to address individual needs and vulnerabilities. This is what equity looks like, fairness that creates true inclusion. It reflects an equitable approach.

Image3: While image 2 celebrates the value of equity, it is important to go a step further and address the root causes of inequality and exclusion. Adaptation should not only involve adjusting programs around existing barriers, it should aim to eliminate those barriers altogether. This means challenging and transforming the harmful social norms, systems and practices that sustain exclusion. As shown in image 3, when the fence (barrier) is removed, everyone can enjoy the view equally.

In the context of climate change adaptation, this equity-based approach is crucial. Women, children, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities often face greater risks and have fewer resources to cope with climate-related shocks. While the illustration shows progress, much more can be done. The true goal is to build adaptive strategies that not only protect these groups but actively reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate change impacts.

To do that, there is a need to go beyond temporary support and barriers must be removed entirely. That means dismantling harmful social norms, systemic inequalities, and discriminatory practices that fuel exclusion and undermine resilience. If the fence is knocked down, the metaphor for these barriers, everyone, regardless of gender, age or ability, will have equal footing and opportunity to adapt, thrive and contribute to climate-resilient development.

3.2 Intersectionality

Not all vulnerable populations are equally affected by climate change. To design inclusive and effective climate change adaptation strategies, it is essential to understand the overlapping and inter-related barriers that different individuals and groups face. People embody multiple identities such as gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, or displacement which shape their unique experiences of vulnerability, inequality, and exclusion in the face of climate-related shocks.

This concept is known as intersectionality¹³ recognizing that some individuals experience multiple, compounding disadvantages that amplify their vulnerability to climate change. For example:

- **Women with disabilities** may face double marginalization during climate-induced disasters, due to both restrictive gender norms and limited mobility or access to emergency services.
- **Adolescent boys** in extreme poverty might be more exposed to high-risk coping mechanisms such as child labour or migration during periods of drought or food insecurity, making them vulnerable to exploitation or violence.
- **Elderly refugee women** may be excluded from adaptation programs due to assumptions about capacity or decision-making roles, despite having valuable traditional knowledge on resource use.

Understanding these intersecting vulnerabilities is critical to identifying who is most at risk and ensuring that adaptation efforts are inclusive, context-specific, and equitable. Without this lens, climate programs may unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities. Recognizing intersectionality allows us to break down complex barriers and ensure that no one is left behind in building resilience to climate change.

What is intersectionality?

It refers to the interplay of multiple social characteristics (such as gender, race, class, disability, marital status, immigration status, geographical location level of education, religion, ethnicity) that increases vulnerability and inequality in privilege and power, and further entrenches inequalities and injustice. These characteristics are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

¹³ MenEngage Alliance (2019). Accountability Training Toolkit.

3.3 Other GESI Concepts

Table 1: GESI Concepts¹⁴

Term	Definition
Disaggregated data	Data broken down by detailed sub-categories. It can reveal deprivations, exclusions and inequalities that may not be fully reflected in aggregated data. Data collected about people can be classified by sex, age, disability status, ethnic group, level of education, and rural–urban differences, among others.
Persons with disabilities	Refers to those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with attitudinal and environmental barriers hinders the full and effective participation in society on equal terms.
Gender roles	Refers to the socially and culturally assigned behaviors, attitudes, attributes, responsibilities and activities of people based on their gender. Social and cultural factors that shape gender roles include country or region, ethnic group, age, economic class or religion.
Vulnerable groups	Group(s) of individuals who are disadvantaged and are more susceptible to falling into poverty and other harms, than other members of the population because they hold less power, are more dependent, are less visible, or are otherwise marginalized. These groups may include female-headed households, the elderly, orphans, destitute families, persons with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees, and people living with HIV, or with other chronic health challenges
Gender-Based Violence	An umbrella term for any harm that is perpetrated against a person’s will that has a negative impact on the physical or psychological health, development and identity of the person; and that is the result of gendered power inequities that exploit socially ascribed distinctions between males and females, and among males and among females. It is rooted in economic, social, and political inequalities between men and women, and the nature and extent of specific types of “vary across cultures, countries and regions.

¹⁴ Adapted from World Vision Manual for Trainers and Facilitators, How to integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation.

4. GESI minimum standards

The GESI minimum standards provide a checklist for project managers/policy makers to assess how well they are doing in addressing GESI issues in their programs or policies. There are minimum standards necessary to advance equitable and inclusive development. The checklist covers issues of policy, capacity and culture, participation and partnership, budget, analysis, data collection, indicators, ‘do no harm,’ and accountability. This manual will only focus on analysis, data collection and indicators.

Table 2: GESI Integration Check List¹⁵

Standards and Attributes	1=Yes, 2=Partially, 3=No	Recommendations
<p>Standard 1 Conduct and utilize GESI assessments</p> <p>1.1 GESI assessment is conducted during the design stage and included in the program proposal.</p> <p>1.2 The GESI assessment allows for hearing the voices of diverse stakeholders, including potential program participants (all gender and social groups are represented), community leaders, and local government representatives (e.g. time and location of interviews/ focus group discussions are convenient and safe for all, especially if sensitive topics are addressed).</p> <p>1.3 The GESI assessment employs participatory methods, allowing individuals and groups to meaningfully contribute.</p> <p>1.4 The findings from the GESI assessments are used to inform program work plans, activities, budgets, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes.</p> <p>1.5 The assessment evaluates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Roles and responsibilities within households and communities, including productive and reproductive workloads and mobility. b) Access to and control of assets, resources and opportunities and obstacles in seeking services. c) Decision-making and power relations at household, community, regional and/or national levels. d) Needs, priorities and perspectives, including practical needs and strategic interests of different groups and their ideas on appropriate and sustainable ways of addressing needs. e) Participation and leadership in community activities and associations, leadership views on gender equality and social inclusion, preferred communication channels and barriers to women’s leadership. f) Knowledge, cultural beliefs and perceptions including access to knowledge and social, religious and cultural attitudes and norms which affect women, men, boys and girls, persons with disabilities and other excluded groups differently. g) Legal frameworks, laws or other barriers that prevent women and men, boys and girls, persons with disabilities and other excluded groups from having equal opportunities. 		
<p>Standard 2 Collect and analyze data disaggregated by gender, disability and other social characteristics</p>		

¹⁵ World Vision (2020b). A Toolkit for Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation

<p>2.1 The GESI assessment collects disaggregated data by sex, age, and other relevant and important social characteristics (disability status, economic status, religious affiliation, ethnicity, race, etc.) to assess differences and constraints of various groups.</p> <p>2.2 Baseline, midline, and end-line studies or evaluations of programs collect data disaggregated by gender, age, and other relevant and important social characteristics (age, disability, economic status, religious affiliation, ethnicity, race, etc.).</p> <p>2.3 Data collection methods and processes take measures to ensure safety, security, accessibility and cultural sensitivity of different social groups.</p> <p>2.4 Evaluations and program reports highlight the benefits or impacts of programming on different social groups.</p>		
<p>Standard 3 Use GESI indicators</p> <p>3.1 Findings from the GESI assessment inform the selection of cross-cutting and sector-specific GESI indicators.</p> <p>3.2 GESI indicators selected for program monitoring and evaluation processes are disaggregated in accordance with GESI domains: access, decision making, participation, equal systems and well-being (i.e. ensure that there is at least one core indicator for each domain, where possible).</p> <p>3.3 GESI sector-specific indicators are measured in all programs.</p> <p>3.4 Both quantitative and qualitative GESI indicators are utilized to capture diverse experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and realities.</p>		

5. GESI Domains and Continuum

This section provides an overview of the GESI lens, a critical approach for identifying and addressing the diverse needs, challenges and opportunities faced by different groups within society. The GESI lens can be systematically integrated into policies, programs and every stage of the project cycle, from assessment and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It helps uncover hidden barriers to participation and access, supports the design of targeted interventions and promotes more just and sustainable outcomes.

5.1 GESI Domains

Table 3: GESI Domains

Domain	Definition
Access	The ability to access, use, control, and/or own assets, resources, opportunities, services, benefits and infrastructures.
Participation	The ability to participate in or engage in societal affairs and systems of power that influence and determine development, life activities and outcomes.
Decision Making	The ability to make decisions free of coercion at individual, family, community, and societal levels.
Systems	The availability of equal and inclusive systems that promote equity, account for the different needs of vulnerable populations and create enabling environments for their engagement.
Well-being	The sense of agency, worth, capability status, confidence, dignity, safety, health and overall physical, emotional psychological and spiritual well-being.

The GESI domains of change are necessary to achieving greater gender equality and social inclusion. It is important to reflect on how climate change adaptation interventions address all the five GESI domains to ensure its GESI-responsiveness. GESI-responsiveness means understanding, taking into account of the differences in needs, opportunities, experiences of women, men, girls, boys, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups and adjusting goals, activities, strategies and practices in ways that appropriately integrate those needs, opportunities, and experiences in programming. The goal is to achieve a transformative and sustainable change within an ecosystem, considering gender and social inclusion barriers and/or opportunities at the ecosystem's individual, household, community and societal levels.

5.2GESI Continuum

There are a number of ways in which we can assess a project/program’s progress towards GESI transformation. We can identify where projects and programs fall on the continuum and suggest ways that make programming more GESI-transformative. It is important to recognize whether a climate change adaptation program is GESI-accommodating, sensitive or GESI-transformative. There are three types of programs that are not GESI-responsive, these are GESI absent, GESI exploitative and GESI insensitive programs. This section will focus on GESI-responsive programs (GESI-accommodating/sensitive and GESI-transformative).

Table 4: GESI continuum

Not GESI Responsive	GESI Absent	There is no consideration of gender norms and unequal power relations, or potential patterns of gender equality or social inclusion in the design or delivery of program activities. There is no discussion of the gendered or inclusive dimensions of the environment where programs may be operating in and how this may affect interventions
	GESI Exploitative	Reinforces, uses and/or takes advantage of gender inequalities, social norms and stereotypes
	GESI Insensitive	Gender norms and social inequalities are acknowledged as key aspects of context but not brought into any aspects of program planning, delivery, or feedback
GESI Responsive	GESI Accommodating/ Sensitive	Acknowledges but works around gender, disability or other social differences and inequalities to achieve project objectives. Interventions address practical needs of vulnerable groups but not the underlying root causes of inequality or exclusion. There is a “missed opportunity” to shift norms that reinforce inequality and exclusion
	GESI Transformative	Actively seeks to engage with and transform gender and social inequalities in the long term to achieve GESI sustainable change. Challenges or shifts gender norms, unequal power relations, stereotypes and discriminatory practices. Promotes equitable system

Activity 2

Brainstorming Questions

Share examples of GESI-accommodating/sensitive and GESI-transformative programs from your work.

What actions do you think need to be considered to move programs/policies from not GESI-responsive programs or GESI accommodating to GESI-transformative programs?