

Adaptation Committee - Call for submissions on how to mainstream gender considerations into national adaptation planning and implementation

Submission from the International Institute for Sustainable Development

This submission is based on research and analysis undertaken by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), through the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network Secretariat.

What are good examples of lessons learned and best practices in prioritizing/incorporating gender in the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans in your country or constituency?

Since 2018, the NAP Global Network has been collaborating with six country governments in Africa (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea-Conakry, Madagascar and Togo) to undertake targeted gender analyses to inform their NAP processes.¹ These analyses provide an understanding of country-specific gender and adaptation issues and identify gaps and opportunities for integrating gender in NAP processes. Although the countries are at different stages in the formulation and implementation of their NAPs, each felt that they had reached a strategic moment to conduct these analyses to inform the coming steps in the process.

The specific methodology for the gender analyses varied from country to country; however, in general, it involved a review of available literature combined with stakeholder consultations through interviews and workshops. Each analysis involved ongoing communication and collaboration with the government team leading the NAP process to ensure that it was as targeted as possible and linked to emerging entry points for its application.

Each gender analysis was comprised of four major components:

1. A policy and institutional analysis on gender and climate change adaptation
2. A technical analysis exploring the links between gender and climate change to identify practical considerations for prioritizing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating adaptation actions
3. Analysis of the implications for the NAP process

¹ This analysis is based on gender analyses completed by ministries of each of the six country members: Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Ecologie et des Forêts de Madagascar, 2019; Ministère de l'Environnement, des Eaux et Forêts de Guinée, in press; Ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources Forestières du Togo, in press; Ministère du Cadre de Vie et du Développement Durable du Bénin, in press; Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable de la République de la Côte d'Ivoire, 2019; Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération Internationale de Burkina Faso, 2017.

4. Development of recommendations for the NAP process

The following are some of the lessons that have been learned through the process of conducting NAP-focused gender analyses:

- **NAP-focused gender analyses can be used in a number of ways to inform a country's NAP process.** Considering that the linking of climate change to gender equality is new or limited in most countries, a high-level analysis can provide helpful insights to improve the effectiveness of the NAP process. Specifically, these analyses can help governments to understand how to best frame gender issues in line with the country context; map existing expertise and capacities that can support integration of gender considerations in NAP processes; identify entities and individuals with gender expertise who require capacity building for effective engagement in the NAP process; and propose changes to the institutional arrangements for the NAP to improve gender integration. As NAP processes advance, gender analysis can provide specific recommendations for gender-responsive implementation of adaptation actions. Gender analysis is useful throughout the NAP process, and should be viewed as an ongoing, iterative process.
- **Gender analysis must be a participatory process.** Strong engagement of the NAP focal point, as well as other government actors involved in the NAP process, throughout the gender analysis process is crucial. This ensures that the recommendations are owned by in-country actors and can be implemented based on available or planned resources. It can also help to establish, or strengthen, the link between the NAP team and the ministry responsible for gender and/or women's issues. A participatory gender analysis process also serves to raise awareness about the NAP process, gender and the links between the two – this has proven to be a key benefit of the gender analyses to date. Stakeholder engagement during gender analyses helps to ensure that the findings are relevant and creates connections between gender actors and climate change actors that can facilitate gender-responsive implementation of adaptation actions as the NAP process progresses.
- **Capacity constraints call for a team of experts rather than an individual to conduct these analyses.** The pool of international and national experts with expertise on climate adaptation (including NAPs) and gender is limited, a problem even more pronounced in francophone countries. Due to a general lack of understanding of the NAP process, there is also a risk that the analysis will focus on gender issues as they relate to climate adaptation in general without making it specific to the NAP process. In our experience, the analysis is best undertaken by a team comprising experts on gender, adaptation and the NAP process. We found that involving at least one expert in each country team who had already been involved in a similar analysis in another country is a useful approach to foster learning and capacity building on the methodology.
- **To provide useful recommendations, the NAP-focused gender analysis does not need to be a complicated process.** The analysis does not require the development or use of complex tools. A common framework based on guiding questions targeting different aspects of the NAP process was used as a basis for conducting these analyses, building on existing information, capacities and resources. This framework allowed for the flexibility to focus on the most relevant issues based on identified entry points in the NAP process, providing a basis for specific, focused recommendations. For example, in Ethiopia and Togo the analyses were conducted after the NAP document had been completed, enabling the development of concrete recommendations for the implementation of adaptation options and strategic priorities identified in the plans. On the other hand, in Cote d'Ivoire, the gender analysis occurred at the beginning of the NAP process, providing a more general overview and recommendations for the NAP process and associated institutional

arrangements. On average, and due to the nature of the participatory process, we found that countries need to plan for a four-to-six-month process to conduct the analysis.

- **While context-specific information on the differentiated impacts of climate change on men and women is often limited, there is generally enough data and information available to conduct an initial gender analysis.** Given the frequent lack of available and accessible sex-disaggregated data and documented information, a useful first step is to review existing information available on gender and women (not necessarily linked to climate change or climate variability). For example, gender analyses conducted in areas such as water, agricultural and health can form a strong basis for understanding gender issues related to adaptation in these sectors, even if they do not specifically address climate change. Findings from such analyses can be extrapolated to analyze the implications for climate change adaptation, ensuring that assumptions are interrogated and documented. Further, local actors, if appropriately guided, can start documenting gender-specific climate impacts and capacities for adaptation based on their own experiences and knowledge.

Additional information can be found in this [briefing note](#). The analyses are already proving useful in the country NAP processes – for example, in Ethiopia, the gender analysis is a key input to the development of an implementation roadmap for the NAP, while in Côte d’Ivoire it is informing the development of a decree for the establishment of a national commission on climate change, as well as a gender and climate change strategy – both will guide the updating of the NDC and the NAP process as it advances.

In another example of good practice, the Government of Jamaica requested support from the NAP Global Network to conduct a workshop that brought together the gender focal points and the climate change focal points from different ministries of the government, along with gender and climate change focal points from Saint Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda. A blog describing the workshop and the lessons learned can be found [here](#).

How can gender best be incorporated into adaptation action?

NAP processes represent a key opportunity to integrate gender into adaptation action, if they are undertaken in a gender-responsive manner. We recommend the following actions for **country teams** undertaking NAP processes:

Commit to a gender-responsive NAP process going forward. What this commitment looks like will depend on the context; however, our analysis demonstrates that opportunities remain to more effectively integrate gender considerations, regardless of the stage that countries are at in their NAP processes. The most important first step for NAP teams to take is to reflect on how gender issues have been addressed in the process so far to identify strengths and weaknesses. On this basis, country teams can identify concrete steps to address gender in the process as it moves forward.

Develop a deeper understanding of gender issues – including differences among women and men and intersections of gender with other drivers of vulnerability to climate change – to inform the NAP process. Targeted gender analysis supports informed decision making in the NAP process, enabling NAP teams to unpack assumptions and analyze specific issues related to their particular context and NAP process. The NAP Global Network’s experience has shown that this analysis will be useful even if a NAP document has already been completed, to support development of implementation strategies, funding proposals and M&E systems. It is recommended that that NAP teams collaborate with gender actors in government or civil society to undertake this analysis, using a participatory process to provide a basis for ongoing dialogue and iterative integration of gender as the NAP process advances.

Use the NAP process to enhance institutional linkages between climate change adaptation and gender equality. Dialogue between gender and climate change adaptation actors is vital for effective

integration of gender in NAP processes. Creating institutional linkages between the ministry responsible for gender and the team leading the NAP process creates the conditions for this dialogue to occur and increases the likelihood that gender issues will be considered. There are many ways to achieve this—it may involve representation on decision-making and coordination mechanisms (for example by including the ministry responsible for gender issues in a NAP steering committee), identification of focal points or specific working groups focusing on gender and adaptation. Countries must find the best approach for their particular policy and institutional context, building on and strengthening what is already in place.

Improve gender balance in NAP-related institutional arrangements, in terms of both participation and influence. The planning and coordination mechanisms that are established for the NAP process should strive for gender balance in participation and influence in decision making. Recognizing that participation is often determined by role, not by individual, this may require specific actions to promote women’s leadership in relevant ministries, and to ensure that institutions with women in decision-making roles are included. On the other hand, in some contexts, men are the minority in coordination mechanisms for adaptation, requiring targeted efforts to ensure their perspectives are captured. Gender balance must go beyond representation, addressing power imbalances in decision making and challenging traditional roles. Representatives of groups that are typically excluded may require targeted capacity building and coaching to effectively voice their perspectives and engage in debates on adaptation. In parallel, traditional power holders may need awareness raising and training on inclusive decision-making processes.

Identify existing capacities and gaps related to gender and climate change adaptation. For NAP processes to be gender-responsive, capacities are needed by both gender actors and adaptation actors, within government and among stakeholders. The capacities needed differ, with adaptation actors requiring awareness of gender issues, skills in gender-responsive facilitation and ideally, knowledge of methods and tools for gender analysis and mainstreaming. Conversely, gender actors need an understanding of adaptation and where the entry points exist for applying a gender lens in the NAP process. To ensure that existing capacities are effectively utilized, countries should undertake mapping of gender and adaptation actors and stakeholders to determine where the knowledge and skills can be accessed. This will also enable identification of gaps that may need to be filled with additional resources.

Undertake gender-balanced and inclusive stakeholder engagement for NAP processes. UNFCCC guidance recommends that NAP processes should be participatory and transparent, with consideration of vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems. This creates a clear mandate for stakeholder engagement in the process. Gender-balanced involvement of stakeholders in adaptation planning, implementation and monitoring & evaluation is critical for NAP processes to be gender-responsive, again with the understanding that gender balance is about more than representation. However, achieving gender balance is only an initial step in ensuring that adaptation decision making is inclusive—attention is needed to ensure that vulnerable groups are represented, and importantly, that diverse voices are heard and have the opportunity to influence the process. This may require targeted outreach and capacity building to enable marginalized groups to meaningfully engage.

Use gender analysis and stakeholder inputs efficiently and effectively by drawing on existing information and knowledge. Many countries face resource limitations for undertaking their NAP processes, which can limit the scope of analysis and stakeholder engagement that can be feasibly conducted. An important first step is taking stock of what has already been done that can inform the NAP process. For example, gender analysis may have been completed for relevant sectors such as agriculture, and/or adaptation projects may have completed participatory vulnerability assessments with women and men at the community level. Analyzing what is already in place to inform the NAP process can help ensure that additional analysis and stakeholder engagement is targeted and strategic,

making the best use of available resources. Further, gathering data and securing inputs from stakeholders do not automatically lead to better integration of gender—it is how this information is analyzed and applied that will determine how gender-responsive NAP processes are. There must be a clear strategy in place to integrate the analysis in decision-making going forward. Countries should view this as an ongoing effort throughout the iterative NAP process.

In addition, we have the following recommendations for **development partners** supporting countries in undertaking NAP processes:

Invest in in-country capacity building on gender and adaptation. Capacity to integrate gender in the NAP process is a barrier to progress on this issue. Development partners can support country governments in filling capacity gaps, for example by providing dedicated human resources (such as a climate change advisor in the ministry focused on gender), investing in capacity building for gender experts to support gender-responsive NAP processes and facilitating access to training and technical support for NAP actors. To ensure that information is available for gender-responsive decision making in the longer term, the establishment of systems for sex-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis to inform adaptation decision making is another potential area of support. Finally, development partners can contribute to creating opportunities for dialogue among gender and adaptation actors by, for example, financing workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Provide support in ways that enable the participatory and inclusive adaptation decision-making processes that are crucial for gender-responsive approaches. Development partners should recognize that the NAP is a process, not a document, and that gender-responsiveness is largely reliant on how this process unfolds. Participation takes time and ensuring that the process is inclusive requires additional effort and resources, both human and financial. The iterative nature of the process should allow for capacity development and learning by doing, for adaptation outcomes that are equitable and sustained over the longer term. Providing flexible, process-oriented support to NAP formulation and implementation can facilitate this. At the same time, countries may need technical support to understand trade-offs associated with different approaches to their NAP processes in order to identify the most strategic way forward in their particular context.

Harmonize guidance on gender mainstreaming in adaptation. Countries seeking financial assistance for their NAP process face a range of different policies and requirements in relation to gender mainstreaming in adaptation policymaking and program implementation. To increase efficiency, different institutions could work together to ensure that guidance provided to countries is consistent, practical and allows for increasing integration of gender considerations over time as countries develop their capacity, undertake analysis and more effectively engage stakeholders. Aligning gender mainstreaming guidance for NAPs with existing tools and approaches for integrating gender in policies and programs, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), can help to maximize synergies and avoid duplication of effort.

Share knowledge on gender and climate change adaptation with government partners and other actors. Development partners often have a great deal of experience in supporting gender-responsive policy development and program implementation in adaptation and other relevant sectors, sometimes across multiple countries and regions. This knowledge should be captured and shared, in relevant formats and languages, with governments engaged in NAP processes to enable them to incorporate the lessons learned. Concise commentary pieces (such as blogs), case studies, policy briefs and guidance documents may be useful in this regard. Creating opportunities for exchange across countries can also support ongoing learning on gender and climate change adaptation, toward gender-responsive NAP processes.

In your experience, what are remaining gaps related to incorporating gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation?

Through dialogue with countries, we have identified the following **common challenges** in relation to integrating gender considerations in adaptation planning and implementation:

- **Framing of gender issues as being only about women:** The framing of gender issues in many contexts is a challenge to integration in the NAP process. Gender is often interpreted as being about women, which can serve to obscure differences among women, vulnerability of some men and the intersectionality with other issues such as ethnicity and disability. This has implications for the effectiveness of efforts toward gender equality. Men, particularly those who perceive themselves as having something to lose if women are empowered, may be alienated by this framing. Approaches to gender integration must focus on differences between women and men, as well as among women and among men, in order to be inclusive and address social norms that present barriers to gender equality. Men are key players in achieving gender equality, and they must be part of the solution.
- **Tendency to adopt a technical approach to adaptation:** In many countries, adaptation is approached as a technical issue, with adaptation planning organized around key climate-sensitive sectors, such as water, agriculture and energy. With this approach, adaptation planning may focus more on “hard options” such as technologies and infrastructure. While these are certainly part of the solution, this approach may yield barriers to introducing sociocultural issues such as gender, as they may not seem relevant to the actors involved. This can make it difficult to identify the best entry points to integrate gender considerations.
- **Institutional barriers:** Related to the above, the fact that gender and climate change are both cross-cutting issues can create challenges in establishing effective institutional mechanisms for integrating gender in the NAP process. Ministries responsible for adaptation planning may not traditionally have collaborated with those responsible for gender equality, while gender-focused actors may not see the relevance of the NAP process for their work. Social and cultural barriers to gender equality play out in institutions as well as in households and communities, which can create barriers to women’s leadership and gender-balanced participation in decision making.
- **Capacity challenges:** The complexity of gender issues and the intersections with vulnerability to climate change and adaptive capacity mean that actors involved in the NAP process may lack awareness of gender issues and how to concretely consider them in planning and decision making. These actors require clear guidance on gender concepts, entry points for integration and strategies for gender-responsive adaptation planning and action. Similarly, gender actors may encounter difficulties in applying their knowledge to the challenge of climate change adaptation, which can limit their ability to meaningfully engage in the NAP process. Human and financial resources to undertake gender mainstreaming were also identified as an obstacle.
- **Information gaps:** The above issue is exacerbated by gaps in the data and analysis available to link gender, adaptation and particular sectors or interventions. Specific gaps include sex-disaggregated data related to climate impacts and adaptation needs and gender analysis of adaptation options, barriers and opportunities. Without this information, it is difficult for adaptation decision-makers to determine what needs to be done to ensure that the NAP process is responsive to gender differences. However, as noted above, in most contexts some information is available to support an initial gender analysis, and this can provide a basis for identifying and addressing gaps as the process advances.

What are useful sources relevant to this topic?

The NAP Global Network has developed a number of resources on integrating gender considerations in NAP processes:

Reports and briefing notes

[Towards Gender-Responsive National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Processes: Progress and Recommendations for the Way Forward](#)

[Conducting Gender Analysis to Inform National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Processes: Reflections from six African countries](#)

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

Country gender analysis reports

[Integrating Gender Considerations in Ethiopia's National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Process](#)

[Pour un Processus de Plan National d'Adaptation \(PNA\) qui Réponde aux Questions de Genre à Madagascar](#)

[Pour un Processus de Plan National d'Adaptation \(PNA\) qui Réponde aux Questions de Genre en Côte d'Ivoire](#)

[Strengthening Gender Considerations in Kiribati's National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Process](#)

Infographics

[Acting on the Gender Action Plan \(GAP\)](#)

[Addressing Gender Equality in Climate Change Adaptation](#)