

Practical Action

GENDER IN NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Insights from Practical Action towards the Adaptation Committee

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Big change starts small

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Introduction

Practical Action is an international development organisation that puts ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world. The group consists of a UK registered charity with community projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, an independent development publishing company and a technical consulting service.

We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems. Challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. We work with communities to develop ingenious, lasting and locally owned solutions for agriculture, water and waste management, climate resilience and clean energy. And we share what works with others, so answers that start small can grow big.

This document responds to the call for submission from the Adaptation Committee (AC), which provides technical support and guidance to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Parties. It will feed into the AC's upcoming deliverables on how to mainstream gender considerations into national adaptation planning and implementation.

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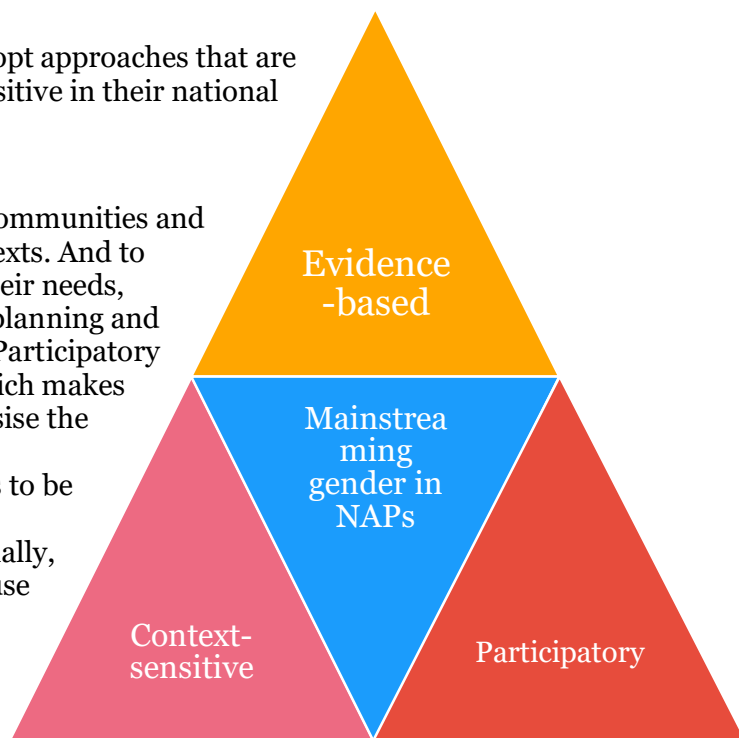
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Best practice

Lessons learned and best practice in prioritizing/incorporating gender in the formulation and interpretation of national adaptation plans (NAPs) in different contexts

We recommend that national governments adopt approaches that are evidence-based, participatory and context-sensitive in their national adaptation plans.

Evidence is needed to identify which groups, communities and populations are marginalised in different contexts. And to identify how best to integrate these groups - their needs, capacities, priorities and perspectives - in the planning and implementation of national adaptation plans. Participatory approaches allow co-construction of plans, which makes them more likely to succeed. They also emphasise the capacity of marginalised and excluded people alongside their vulnerability. This allows NAPs to be strengthened and improved by the insight, experience and knowledge of stakeholders. Finally, a context-specific approach is necessary, because the drivers of exclusion and integration of marginalised gender groups are different in different places.



Evidence-based

- **Map** actors who might contribute to and/or be impacted by national adaptation planning and implementation. Several actors should be considered, such as:
 - Different gender groups.
 - Civil society stakeholders involved in adaptation and/or gender issues, such as Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) representing women, youth and marginalized groups, feminist and gender responsive grassroots organizations and networks.
 - National, sub-national, and local actors.
- **Review** neglected sources of data (inter-sectoral, e.g. human rights reports).
- **Triangulate** sources, identify areas of inconsistency and understand why these inconsistencies in data exist.
- **Budget** for evidence gathering where there is insufficient or missing data regarding gender, and especially context-specific issues of exclusion, marginalisation, inequality

and discrimination (i.e. criminalisation of LGBTI¹ communities, ethnic or religious tensions, lack of support for people with disabilities, gendered norms affecting widows, single mothers, single women, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, etc.).

- **Measure** progress, with gender-disaggregated indicators such as:
 - Number and percentage of women, men, LGBTI and other gendered groups who attend participatory planning and consultation meetings.
 - Number of women, men, LGBTI and other gendered groups in decision making and or leadership positions in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate change related structures at all levels of government structures.

In the case of Nepal, such DRR structures are Multistakeholder Climate Change Steering Committee; DRR Council (at National level); DRRM Committee (at Provincial level), DRRM Committee (at Municipal level); DRR Committee (at Ward level), and Community Disaster Management Committee (at Community level).

- Number and percentage of women, men, LGBTI and other gendered groups in user groups

While capturing such data, we should be thinking beyond narrow, one-dimensional framings of women's/men's identities, by clearly reflecting their diversity and intersectionality, looking at factors such as class, caste, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geography, etc.

- **Update** your analysis on an ongoing basis.

¹ We use the initials following the definition of the National LGBTI Health Alliance: “‘LGBTI’ refer collectively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex. These five distinct but sometimes overlapping groupings are part, but not all, of what we mean when we speak about ‘LGBTI’ communities/populations” (<https://lgbtihealth.org.au>)

Participatory

Different strategies should be used to reach an effective participation of actors, ideally in various steps of the planning and implementation process (see *Incorporating gender* section).

Marginalised gender groups

Marginalised gender groups are likely to experience different constraints to their active participation in planning and implementation of national adaptation plans. Participatory activities should thus consider:

1. **Knowledge access:** Marginalized gender groups might face challenges in ownership of and access to key knowledge-sharing assets (such as mobile phones, televisions or radios). They are also less likely to read or speak the official language due to lower education and literacy levels. In some countries, traditional media are led mainly by men, sometimes leading to unconscious bias in the way information is treated and shared. Strategies to reach marginalised gender groups include peer-to-peer learning, mixed and inclusive communication teams (for example, women sharing emergency messages in early warning systems), and capacity building trainings to gender networks and federations who can share information and knowledge.

Radio is a very powerful media platform, especially in rural communities where Internet connection might be slow, unreliable or expensive, but also in communities where families are used to gather at the end of the day to listen to music and radio programmes. Local radio can also be used as an empowerment tool: gendered groups can be interviewed about their understanding of climate change and adaptation, and they can also be trained as local communicators performing interviews or soap operas in their communities.

2. **Physical access:** Transportation to attend a meeting or workshop can be complicated because of costs, social norms or specific responsibilities linked with gender. The time and days where meetings and workshops are held can also influence who is able to attend. Safe and proactively targeted spaces for marginalised groups who are at risk of harassment or discrimination are vital to ensure that, for example, LGBTI individuals, women with disabilities or from ethnic, religious, linguistic or other minority backgrounds, are welcomed and practically supported to participate. Providing safe spaces for children during workshops is one way to respond to a major barrier to women's attendance. Another way is to implement gender transformative approaches challenging underlying gender norms which place all domestic and childcare responsibility on women, and revisit how adaptation is delivered, putting marginalised gender groups at the centre and considering whether workshops are the most effective and inclusive model.

During the 2017 floods in Peru, the community of Cuatro de Mayo in Piura was severely affected. This community has a very high proportion of single mothers, who were unable to reconstruct their houses because of their family responsibilities. With the support of Practical Action, mothers organized a community kitchen and a nursery, with shift responsibilities.



- Cultural access:** gendered groups' leadership development and organisation of relevant networks, associations, etc. is critical to strengthen their agency and voice. Leadership development needs to consider intersecting identities and vulnerabilities: rural/urban origin, socio-economic level, caste, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, health status all affect needs, capacities, priorities, and perspectives which cannot be effectively represented by one person.

In Bolivia, Practical Action invited couples to be trained as local developers of climate-related technologies. Working with couples, instead of only men or women, avoided family and community restriction regarding women participation. As a result, half of the local developers are women, and are now travelling to other communities, often by themselves, to improve technology uptake.



4. **Effective access:** even when gendered groups are present in participatory spaces, they can feel that their voices are not relevant or will not be listened to or acted upon. So safe and welcoming spaces are needed to discuss the issues that are important to them. This can be facilitated by special interest agencies, such as Community Based Organizations that serve specific vulnerable groups like widows, transgender women, women with disabilities, women from historically excluded and marginalized groups such as Dalit women and Janajati women in Nepal.

In Nepal, Practical Action led a study on Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems (EWS). We found that women are not represented in decision making during the formation, discussion, and planning of disaster committees and community resilience activities. This exclusion discourages them from speaking out about their experiences, ideas and suggestions, as they feel that it is men's role.



Focus group discussion for gender and EWS study, central Nepal

National, sub-national and local authorities

1. **Train** national, sub-national and local authorities on international frameworks (2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement) and policies such as gender equality², safeguarding, taking into account that local governments often lack financial and human resources. Training should emphasise the relevance of gender sensitive, responsive and transformative approaches across sectors. To avoid loss of capacity due to staff turnover, training should be delivered regularly, for example once a year.
2. **Involve** national, sub-national, and local authorities who have expertise and/or budget for gender-related activities to coordinate joint activities. For example, in Peru, actors such as the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) as well as the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) or local actors such as the Center-Emergency-Women (CEM), while not working specifically on adaptation issues, should be involved in data collection, planning and implementation of National Adaptation Plans.
3. **Challenge** the balance of diverse gender identities represented in formal institutions and spaces. These might include:
 - Representation and participation in community meetings, planning and implementation processes as well as their representations in national, sub-national and local level structures of Climate Change and DRR.
 - Representation in meetings for collective bargaining with service providers, the financial sector, or arms of government.
 - Representation of gendered groups within service providers, the financial sector or arms of government themselves.

In some communities in Bolivia, men do the vast majority of public speaking. When women attend meetings, they are usually confined to roles of listeners, food providers, accountancy or secretarial. They might also sit on the floor to be near to Mother Earth, in a symbolically lower power position.



² IUCN and UNDP through the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance (GGCA), developed recently a Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change: www.iucn.org/content/training-manual-gender-and-climate-change

- **Encourage** effective multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Nepal's NAP formulation process used an inclusive approach bringing in marginalized communities, indigenous and traditional groups with special consideration for youth, women and people with disabilities. The process included the identification of adaptation options based on the analysis of specific vulnerabilities, risks and impacts of climate change on women and men as well as poor and marginalized groups across seven thematic areas (Agriculture, Health, Water and Energy, Climate Induced Disasters, Tourism, Forests, Urban Settlements). More importantly, the process brought together stakeholders from relevant government ministries and line agencies, representatives from civil society, research and academia, as well as private sector.

Context sensitive

1. **Assess** why gender has not been incorporated in the adaptation plans and actions until now. If gender has already been considered: have gender-sensitive/responsive/ transformative plans and actions been implemented? Why or why not? If plans have been implemented: to what extent? Are marginalised gender groups satisfied? Think about context-specific cultural norms, values, problems, which might have hindered gender incorporation in the adaptation plans.
2. **Anticipate** potential backlash and impact on marginalised gender groups who can sometimes be put at risk by interventions designed to promote their inclusion.
3. **Adapt** technologies and channels that are suitable for marginalised gender groups.

In Bolivia, electric fences for alpacas and lamas breeding, initially in place to improve pasture management, also increased income of poor highland families and free time for women, who are generally in charge of shepherding the cattle.



An example of best practices for gender transformative Early Warning Systems (EWS)

Early warning systems are a key adaptation strategy which can protect the lives and livelihoods of communities vulnerable to disasters. However, to be effective, they need to work for the last mile.

These recommendations identify ways to approach EWS design and implementation so that they meet the needs and leverage the capacities of women and other marginalised groups.

- **Training** on the EWS, preparedness, and response needs to be made more accessible to women and marginalised gender groups, and identify and respond to the barriers that prevent their participation.
- EWS should not rely on only one **form of communication** such as SMS messages. Warnings should be shared in easily accessible and understood ways for all sections of the community.
- Women and marginalised gender groups need to be trained comprehensively in **response and evacuation procedures** so that they know what to do when they receive a warning, and so that this knowledge does not leave the community when men migrate for work.
- Women and marginalised gender groups need to be empowered as **decision makers** in the home and in Community Disaster Management Committees so that they are not dependent on men to undertake preparedness activities or to evacuate, and so that their needs for more time and prompt evacuation are fully accommodated.
- Women and marginalised gender groups need to be provided with training and **knowledge which meets their needs**. This should include support to protect livelihood assets, stress management and counselling, and technical training.
- Women and marginalised gender groups need to be able to **access warnings directly**. Redressing the imbalance in mobile phone ownership and access will be vital in ensuring that women have equitable access to immediate information.
- An emphasis on **long-term preparedness and clear household level decision support tools** may support women to be confident in taking the lead and responding. Exploring options to reduce the risk of loss and damage to property may encourage men to evacuate promptly.
- Women and marginalised gender groups need to be **effectively represented** in community, local government, and national level structures. The promotion and endorsement of women as authoritative voices is vital for their participation in groups, committees, and agencies to be active and meaningful.

Incorporating gender

Gender needs to be incorporated in every steps of national adaptation planning process.

The technical guidelines for the NAP process³ proposes four elements as the building blocks of the NAP process, each being made of several steps. We believe that gender needs to be incorporated in each of these steps, as follows:

	Participatory	Evidence-based	Context-sensitive
Element A. Lay the groundwork and address gaps			
1. Initiating and launching of the NAP process	x		
2. Stocktaking	x	x	x
3. Addressing capacity gaps and weaknesses	x	x	x
4. Assessing development needs and climate vulnerabilities	x	x	x
Element B. Preparatory elements			
1. Analyzing current climate and future climate change scenarios	x	x	x
2. Assessing climate vulnerabilities and identifying adaptation options at the sector, subnational, national and other appropriate levels	x	x	x - Look at gendered manifestations/ impacts of climate change in a given context
3. Reviewing and appraising adaptation options	x	x	x

³ <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans-naps/guidelines-for-national-adaptation-plans-naps>

4. Compiling and communicating national adaptation plans	x	x - Is there evidence of effective means of communicating NAPs?	x
5. Integrating climate change adaptation into national and subnational development and sectoral planning	x		

Element C. Implementation strategies

1. Prioritizing climate change adaptation in national planning	x	x	x
2. Developing a (long-term) national adaptation implementation strategy	x	x	x
3. Enhancing capacity for planning and implementation of adaptation	x	x - Based on evidence of capacity gaps/needs	x
4. Promoting coordination and synergy at the regional level and with other multilateral environmental agreements	x	x - Based on evidence of best practice	x - Specific to context, e.g. institutional

Element D. Reporting, monitoring and review

1. Monitoring the NAP process	x	x	x - Specific to context, e.g. indicators
2. Reviewing the NAP process to assess progress, effectiveness and gaps	x	x	x
3. Iteratively updating the national adaptation plans	x	x	x
4. Outreach and reporting on progress and effectiveness	x	x	x

Remaining gaps

1. **Unconscious adaptation framing**, due to the under-representation of marginalised gender groups in decision-making bodies. There is often a capacity gap in understanding gender issues within climate focal institutions and vice-versa, which limits engagement. Common biases include the conflation of gendered needs with gendered roles; and thinking of gendered groups as vulnerable groups without capability and capacity in planning and implementation.

Solution? Ensure that decision making bodies include marginalised groups; and that these people's voices are represented, heard and acted on. This can be achieved through training of national and local authorities, as well as empowerment of marginalised gender groups, in alliance with Community Based Organizations (CBO) and civil society actors to raise their voice.

2. **Complexity-blindness:** Failure to consider intersectionality, and a strong tendency to contemplate “women” and “communities” as homogenous entities rather than considering the diversity of identities, experiences, needs and capacities within these groups.

Solution? Use gender-disaggregated data and studies, including “grey literature” from civil society actors; consult with members of marginalised groups and communities as far as possible (without creating risk for individuals); consult with specialised organisations who have expert knowledge of the specific contexts, needs, capacities and priorities of marginalised groups. Where possible, collect data which is disaggregated in a way which reflects intersectionality, recognising that individuals have complex identities which affect their adaptation needs and capacities.

3. **Lack of dedicated budget** for gender issues.

Solution? Prioritizing gender responsive budgeting (GRB) to ensure more inclusive plans that meet the needs of gendered groups and ensure resources are allocated where they are needed most. Introducing accountability mechanisms for achieving gender mainstreaming in adaptation.

4. **Lack of mandate or mechanism for interaction between gender focal institutions and climate change focal institutions** limiting collaboration and dialogue towards integrated approaches to address climate and gender linkages.

Solution? Create working groups and guidelines to facilitate joint work between gender and climate change focused institutions. These working groups could be led by climate change bodies inviting gender focused institutions, especially in the NAP process steps related to stock-taking, planning, implementation and updating plans.

Resources

Brown et al., (2019) Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems: Experiences from Nepal and Peru, Rugby, UK: Practical Action. [Link for download.](#)

Kratzer and Le Masson (2016) 10 things to know: Gender equality and achieving climate goals, UK: Climate and Development Knowledge Network. [Link for download.](#)

MoFE (2018). Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process: Reflecting on lessons learned and the way forward. Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) of the Government of Nepal, the NAP Global Network, Action on Climate Today (ACT) and Practical Action Nepal. [Link for download.](#)

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