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REPORT ON THE ADAPTATION FUND'S GENDER SCORECARD IMPLEMENTATION FOR FY26

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1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2016, the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) adopted its first Gender Policy and Action Plan (2017-2019), with the aim to uphold women's rights and to attain the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all Fund operations through a gender mainstreaming approach. In March 2021, the Board reaffirmed its commitment by approving an updated Gender Policy (GP) and Gender Action Plan (GAP 2021-2023). The GP not only emphasized equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, age, race, ethnicity, religion, class, language, or ability, but also instituted measures to systematically assess and monitor how projects affect the resilience of women and men to climate change impacts. This approach ensures that the outcomes and impacts of the Fund-supported activities are tracked, with particular attention to how they address gender-differentiated vulnerabilities and enhance the agency of both women and men in responding to climate change challenges.

In line with the GAP 2021-2023, the Gender Scorecard (GSC) was developed to improve data collection and analysis for tracking gender mainstreaming in projects at entry and during implementation and at exit. The GSC enables the Secretariat to track and report annually on the implementation of the GP at the Fund's portfolio level. It provides a systematic approach for assessing how gender considerations are reflected across the project cycle and for identifying areas where further support, guidance, and quality enhancement may be needed. The GSC consists of two main components: (i) the Gender Scorecard – Quality at Entry, which collects data for projects at the entry stage (both Concept Note and Full Proposal), and (ii) the Gender Scorecard – Quality During Implementation and at Exit, which gathers data on projects during implementation and at exit based on the annual project performance reports, mid-term review reports and final evaluation reports submitted by the Implementing Entities (IE). Each scorecard includes indicators designed to assess the integration of a gender-responsive perspective within their projects in different stages of the project cycle.

The Gender Scorecard was first implemented in FY24¹, followed by a second round in FY25². Now in its third year, the Gender Scorecard contributes to a growing evidence base on how gender considerations are reflected across the Adaptation Fund portfolio. This report presents the findings from the FY26 GSC and provides a portfolio-level analysis of the implementation of the GP by examining the quality of gender integration at project entry and the extent to which gender-responsive approaches are reflected during implementation reporting. The report summarizes the extent to which gender-responsive elements are reflected in project proposals and how gender-related issues, institutional arrangements, interventions, lessons learned, capacity gaps, and grievances are reported during implementation across the Fund's portfolio.

2. METHODOLOGY

This report was prepared using data collected through the GSC for FY26. The Gender Scorecard was applied to analyze Adaptation Fund (AF) funded projects at two stages of the project cycle: Quality at Entry and Quality During Implementation. The analysis is intended to provide a portfolio-level analysis of the integration of gender-responsive approaches across Fund-supported projects and is not designed to evaluate or rate the performance of individual projects.

¹ Report on the Fund's Gender Scorecard Implementation for FY24. Document AFB/B.44/Inf. 1. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/report-on-the-funds-gender-scorecard-implementation-for-fy24/>

² Report on the Adaptation Fund's Gender Scorecard Implementation for FY25. Document AFB/B.45/Inf. 1. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/report-on-the-adaptation-funds-gender-scorecard-implementation-for-fy25/>

For the Quality at Entry component, data were collected from Concept Notes (CNs) and Full Proposals (FPs) for single-country and regional/multi-country projects submitted to the Secretariat for first review between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026. A total of 64 project submissions, comprising 50 Concept Notes (CN) and 14 Full Proposals (FP), were included in FY26 GSC Quality at entry. The review covered first submissions only and was conducted prior to completion of the Secretariat's technical review process. As such, the findings reflect the quality of gender integration at the point of submission or entry and do not capture improvements subsequently made through the Secretariat's review, feedback and proposal refinement process. This enabled the GSC to analyze the extent to which gender-responsive elements were incorporated at the point of submission, including gender analysis, stakeholder consultations, gender-responsive indicators, gender-responsive interventions, Gender Action Plans, institutional arrangements, and grievance mechanisms.

For Quality During Implementation, data were drawn from Project Performance Reports (PPRs) cleared by the Secretariat during the same reporting period. A total of 78 PPRs were reviewed. The GSC collected information reported by Implementing Entities (IEs) on gender equality and women's empowerment issues, institutional arrangements for implementing the GP, gender-responsive interventions, gender-related lessons learned, capacity gaps, and gender-related grievances.

The GSC applies standardized review criteria to assess each indicator based on evidence documented in project proposals and PPRs. Indicators are assessed using a binary scoring approach (Yes/No), with a "Not Applicable" category used where an indicator is not relevant to the project type, project stage, or reporting requirements. The Yes/No coding was based on information reported by IEs in the PPR narratives and project documentation. Quantitative findings are presented as the number and percentage of reviewed projects meeting each criterion, while qualitative findings draw on examples and narrative evidence from project documentation and PPRs to illustrate how gender-responsive approaches have been integrated across the project cycle.

3. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the FY26 GSC for both the Quality at Entry and Quality During Implementation components. The analysis examines the integration of gender-responsive approaches at project entry and during implementation. The findings highlight areas where gender integration was more developed in FY26, recurring issues across the portfolio, and emerging practices that can inform continuous improvement.

3.1 QUALITY AT ENTRY

Table 1 presents the CNs and FPs included in the FY26 GSC Quality at Entry. The review covered submissions received for first review during the reporting period and was conducted prior to completion of the Secretariat's technical review process. During the reporting period, 64 submissions were reviewed at first submission, comprising 50 Concept Notes (78.1%) and 14 Full Proposals (21.9%).

Table 1: Concept Notes and Full Proposals reviewed at first submission in FY26

Submission Type	Number	Percentage
Concept Note	50	78.1
Full Proposal	14	21.9
Total	64	100.0

3.1.1 Gender Analysis/Assessment

The Fund's GP highlights the importance of undertaking a complementary approach towards gender equality that goes beyond merely identifying and mitigating negative impacts and risks (“do no harm”) but also involves proactively promoting opportunities to close gender gaps (“do good”). In this regard, IEs are required to undertake a project-specific gender assessment/analysis at an early stage of project formulation/design to establish a gender baseline, describe gender differences, analyze gender-differentiated impacts and risks, and identify opportunities to promote the empowerment of women. The AF Gender Guidance Document³ offers detailed guidance on how to conduct a gender analysis/assessment (GA) throughout the project lifecycle.

Table 2 presents the results of submissions containing a gender analysis (for CN) and gender assessment (for FP). Out of 64 submissions, 38 included a gender analysis/assessment, representing 59.4 per cent. All FPs included a gender assessment, compared with 48.0 per cent of CNs. This distinction is important because gender analysis at the CN stage is generally expected to be more preliminary, while FPs are expected to provide a more developed gender assessment. The GSC results further show that gender analysis/assessments were presented in different ways across submissions. Some CN submissions included a dedicated gender analysis or assessment section or annex, while others integrated gender considerations across different parts of the proposal. FPs presented a dedicated gender assessment as an annex or standalone section, sometimes combined with a Gender Action Plan.

Table 2: Submissions with a gender analysis/assessment (GA)

Submission Type	No. with GA	Total reviewed	Percentage
Concept Note	24	50	48.0
Full Proposal	14	14	100.0
Total	38	64	59.4

Table 3 presents the components of gender analysis/assessment among submissions. In FY26, 24 CNs and 14 FPs included gender analysis or assessment on first submission. Of these, 83.3 per cent of CNs and 100.0 per cent of FPs identified gender-related risks and impacts. Similarly, 79.2

³ Available at <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/guidance-document-implementing-entities-compliance-adaptation-fund-gender-policy-2/>.

per cent of CNs and 100.0 per cent of FPs identified opportunities or entry points for equal participation and benefits for women and men. Regarding gender statistics, 12.5 per cent of CNs and 14.3 per cent of FPs included project/program-specific gender statistics⁴. General gender statistics⁵ were included, 66.7 per cent of CNs and 78.6 per cent of FPs. In addition, 41.7 per cent of CNs and 78.6 per cent of FPs described local norms and cultural practices shaping gender relations in the project/program area. Intersectional analysis was included in 71.4 per cent of FPs. Overall, among the 38 submissions that included a gender analysis or assessment, 89.5 per cent identified gender-related risks and impacts, 86.8 per cent identified opportunities or entry points for equal participation and benefits, 71.1 per cent included general gender statistics, 55.3 per cent described local norms and cultural practices.

Overall, gender analyses and assessments most identified gender-related risks, impacts, and opportunities for equal participation and benefits. However, the inclusion of project/program-specific gender statistics, contextual analysis of local norms and cultural practices, remained more limited. These elements are important for strengthening the relevance of gender analysis and ensuring that proposed gender-responsive measures are grounded in the specific project context.

Table 3: Components of gender analysis/assessment among submissions

Gender analysis/assessment component	CN n (%)	FP n (%)	Overall n (%)
Identified gender-related risks and impacts	20 (83.3)	14 (100.0)	34 (89.5)
Identified opportunities/entry points for equal participation and benefits	19 (79.2)	14 (100.0)	33 (86.8)
Included project/program-specific gender statistics	3 (12.5)	2 (14.3)	5 (13.2)
Included general gender statistics	16 (66.7)	11 (78.6)	27 (71.1)
Describe local norms and cultural practices shaping gender relations	10 (41.7)	11 (78.6)	21 (55.3)
Considered intersectionality	-	10 (71.4)	10 (26.3)
Total with gender analysis/assessment	24	14	38

Note: Percentages are calculated using only submissions that include a gender analysis or assessment.

The following sections provide further details on the key components of the gender analysis/assessment presented in Table 3, drawing on the qualitative information captured through the GSC. These include the identification and documentation of gender-related risks and impacts; opportunities and entry points for equal participation and benefits for women and men; gender statistics relevant to the project/programme context; local norms and cultural practices shaping gender relations; and intersectionality. Selected examples from CNs and FPs are used to illustrate how these elements were reflected in submissions.

⁴ **Project/program-specific gender statistics** includes sex-disaggregated or gender-relevant data tied to the project's focus, such as access to agricultural resources, women's employment in agriculture, or use of extension services. These should align with the project's goals and outcomes to highlight gender disparities.

⁵ **General gender statistics** highlight differences and disparities between men, women, in areas such as education, employment, health, income, and political participation. This data is often broader and not necessarily tied to a specific project, focusing instead on national or sector-wide trends related to gender

Gender-related risks and impacts

Gender-related risks and impacts refer to the potential or actual effects of a project on women and men arising from existing gender inequalities, differential vulnerabilities, unequal access to resources and decision-making, and barriers to participation and benefit-sharing. These risks and impacts are identified through gender assessment undertaken during project design. During the reporting period, 89.5 per cent of submissions identified gender-related risks and impacts, consistent with ESP Principle 5 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The findings reflect the Fund's complementary approach to gender equality, which requires projects not only to identify and mitigate potential adverse gender-related risks and impacts ("do no harm"), but also to identify opportunities to promote equal participation, equitable access to benefits, and women's empowerment ("do good").

In several submissions, gender analysis moved beyond broad statements of women's vulnerability to identify specific gender-related risks that could affect project implementation. Several proposals analyzed the structural inequalities that shape climate vulnerability, assessed risks to equitable participation and access to project benefits, considered safety and protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH), and recognized intersecting vulnerabilities affecting different groups of women and marginalized populations. Where these risks were clearly linked to project activities and target groups, they provided a stronger basis for gender-responsive project design and risk mitigation. Table 4 summarizes the main risk areas identified.

Table 4. Gender-related risks identified in FY26 project proposals

Category	Gender-related risks identified in proposals
Structural gender inequalities and differentiated vulnerability	Proposals identified existing gender inequalities that increase women's vulnerability to climate change, including limited access to land, finance, productive resources, climate information, technologies, education, employment, and decision-making. Proposals also identified women's disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities and increased workloads during climate shocks as factors that reduce adaptive capacity ⁶ .
Risks of unequal participation and access to project benefits	Proposals identified risks that project design or implementation may exclude women from consultations, leadership and decision-making processes, or limit their access to project resources, training, finance, technologies, early warning systems and adaptation benefits because of social norms, institutional barriers or weak targeting ⁷ .
Gender-based violence, safety and protection risks	Proposals identified risks of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment during water collection, displacement or labor influx, child marriage, transactional sex, and other safety risks that may

⁶ Examples include proposal from the Ministry of Water and Environment (Uganda); World Food Programme (Nepal); International Fund for Agricultural Development (Malawi, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Tajikistan); World Bank (North Macedonia).

⁷ Examples include proposals by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (Zimbabwe and Viet Nam); Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Belize); World Meteorological Organization (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Bangladesh and Nepal); Sahara and Sahel Observatory (Chad and Togo)..

Category	Gender-related risks identified in proposals
	limit women's participation or increase harm during project implementation ⁸ .
Intersectional vulnerabilities	Proposals recognized that climate risks are compounded for women with disabilities, Indigenous women, female-headed households, older women, adolescent girls, displaced women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups because they face multiple and overlapping forms of exclusion that can reduce access to project benefits and services ⁹ .

Opportunities and entry points for equal participation and benefits

The GP requires project proposals to identify opportunities and entry points through which women and men can participate in, influence and benefit equitably from project interventions. Among submissions with a gender analysis or assessment, 79.2 per cent of CNs and 100.0 per cent of FPs identified such opportunities and entry points. Where opportunities were identified, submissions commonly pointed to practical entry points for women and men to participate meaningfully in, and benefit equitably from, project activities. Where opportunities were identified, many submissions moved beyond general commitments to gender equality by specifying how project design could support equal participation and equitable benefits. More developed examples linked identified gender barriers to concrete design measures, including women's participation in governance structures, access to adaptation finance, infrastructure and technologies, gender-responsive livelihoods, technical training, flexible delivery approaches and sex-disaggregated data for monitoring. These examples suggest that, where well developed, gender analysis was used not only to identify risks but also to define practical pathways for gender-responsive adaptation.

Table 5: Entry points for equal participation and equitable benefits

Entry-point	Actions identified in proposals
1. Strengthening participation, leadership and decision-making	Setting participation quotas; involving women in consultations, community committees, water user associations, disaster preparedness structures, project planning and leadership roles; training women as village leaders, gender champions, disaster response leaders and members of water or early warning committees.
2. Improving access to adaptation resources, services and benefits	Expanding women's access to water infrastructure, early warning systems, climate-resilient housing, adaptation finance, climate information, productive land, technologies, and services designed to reduce vulnerability and improve adaptive capacity.

⁸ Examples include proposal from Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Belize); National Environment Management Council (Tanzania); World Health Organization (Libya); United Nations Development Programme (Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia); International Fund for Agricultural Development (Viet Nam); and Sahara and Sahel Observatory (Chad and Togo).

⁹ Examples include proposal from the Pacific Community (Tonga); UN-Habitat (Cambodia); United Nations Development Programme (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines); World Food Programme (Nepal); and Sahara and Sahel Observatory (Chad).

3. Expanding livelihood, enterprise and financial opportunities	Supporting women-led enterprises, MSMEs, cooperatives, producer groups, savings groups, revolving funds, grants, financial literacy, market access, climate-smart agriculture, post-harvest activities, and income-generating activities.
4. Removing barriers to meaningful participation	Using flexible scheduling, accessible locations, childcare support, safe spaces, female facilitators, local languages, targeted outreach to remote or ethnic communities, labor-saving infrastructure, and approaches that address care responsibilities, mobility constraints, restrictive norms, GBV and SEAH risks.
5. Embedding gender commitments into project systems	Translating gender analysis into Gender Action Plans, participation and benefit-sharing targets, sex-disaggregated indicators, gender-responsive monitoring, grievance and accountability mechanisms, and systems to track whether women and men participate and benefit equitably.

Source¹⁰

Use of gender statistics

The FY26 data show that, where gender statistics were included, they were used to explain how gender inequalities affect climate vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and access to project benefits. Some submissions used project- or sector-specific data to identify barriers related to land, finance, productive assets, unpaid care, labor force participation, education, climate information and decision-making, and then linked these barriers to design measures such as participation targets, targeted finance, gender-responsive infrastructure, flexible training arrangements and sex-disaggregated monitoring. However, the quality of statistical evidence varies. Some submissions relied mainly on general national gender statistics, while others provided limited or no gender statistics. Where gender statistics were used effectively, they helped proposals move beyond describing gender differences by identifying specific barriers, justifying targeted interventions, and translating gender analysis into project design measures. Table 6 provides examples of the types of gender statistics used in project proposals and how this evidence informed project design.

Table 6: Use of gender statistics in project design

Type of gender statistics	What the data show	How this informed project design
Demographic, vulnerability and sector-specific gender statistics	Proposals used sex-disaggregated population data, female-headed household data, disability, age and poverty data alongside statistics on gender gaps in education, agriculture, labor force participation, WASH, health and livelihoods to identify which groups were most affected by climate change and how gender inequalities shaped vulnerability across different sectors.	Helped justify targeted outreach, inclusive beneficiary selection and sector-specific interventions by demonstrating how gender inequalities influenced adaptation needs in areas such as agriculture,

¹⁰ Synthesized from proposal reviewed under the FY26 Gender Scorecard, including projects from Uganda, Bangladesh, Nepal, Viet Nam, Tanzania, Belize, Mauritania, Chad, Tonga, Armenia and Georgia, Mexico, Zambia and Malawi, Angola and Mozambique, Kenya–Ethiopia–Somalia, and Chad–Togo

	Examples include female-headed households in Belize, population and displacement data in the Mendera Triangle, girls' education gaps in Uzbekistan, women's agricultural labor in Malawi and the Philippines, and labor force participation data in North Macedonia.	education, WASH, health, climate services and livelihoods.
Access to resources, adaptive capacity and gender roles	Proposals used data on women's access to land, credit, productive assets, technologies, extension services and climate information, together with evidence on unpaid care work, water collection, fuelwood collection, household responsibilities and time poverty. Examples include loan access in Belize, land and wage gaps in Tajikistan, access to credit and extension services in Angola and Mozambique, and unpaid care and water collection data in Uganda, Viet Nam, North Macedonia, Mexico and Burkina Faso.	Helped identify barriers that could limit women's adaptive capacity and access to project benefits, informing measures such as targeted finance, productive assets, extension support, labor-saving infrastructure, flexible training schedules, improved water access and other accessible implementation arrangements.
Participation, leadership and gender-responsive targets	Proposals included statistics on women's participation and representation in parliament, leadership, committees, labor markets, public institutions and education systems, and used quantitative evidence to establish targets for women's participation, women-headed households reached, women in leadership positions and women among project beneficiaries.	Helped justify participation targets, reserved leadership roles, representation in committees, leadership training and sex-disaggregated monitoring, translating gender analysis into measurable design commitments and accountability mechanisms.

Local norms and cultural practices shaping gender relations

In FY26, 55.3 per cent of submissions described local norms and cultural practices shaping gender relations. Rather than simply identifying women as a vulnerable group, several proposals examined the social norms and structural barriers influencing gender-differentiated vulnerability, adaptive capacity and access to project benefits. The findings suggest that consideration of local norms strengthened gender analysis where it explained the underlying social conditions affecting women's and men's ability to participate in and benefit from project interventions. Box 1 provides examples of the types of local norms identified in project proposals and how these informed gender-responsive project designs. However, the depth of analysis varied across submissions. While some proposals provided context-specific analyses that were translated into concrete design measures, others described local norms more generally without clearly linking them to project design.

Box 1. How local norms inform gender-responsive project design

Local norms and cultural practices	Design responses reflected in proposals
Gender roles, unpaid care and time poverty: Women were often responsible for childcare, food preparation, water and fuel collection, household management and subsistence farming, limiting the time available for training, meetings and livelihood activities.	Flexible scheduling, nearby training venues, labor-saving infrastructure, improved water access, childcare-sensitive arrangements and measures to reduce participation barriers.
Decision-making, participation and social expectations: Social norms often limited women's participation in household and community decision-making, leadership, public meetings and mixed-gender consultations, while expectations around women's public roles constrained their voice and influence.	Women-only consultations, separate focus groups, female facilitators, leadership training, participation targets, reserved committee positions and culturally appropriate engagement approaches.
Access to resources shaped by customary and social norms: Customary land tenure, inheritance practices and gender norms constrained women's access to land, productive assets, finance, technologies and livelihood opportunities	Targeted finance, support for women-led enterprises, adapted eligibility criteria, livelihood support, access to productive assets and measures to improve women's access to adaptation benefits.

Intersectionality

In FY26, 71.4 per cent of FPs included an intersectional gender analysis by moving beyond “women” as a single category. Intersectional analysis helped to better identify groups whose vulnerability to climate change is shaped by overlapping factors such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, caste, displacement, poverty, household headship, remoteness and livelihood status. Rather than treating women as a single homogeneous group, these analyses helped identify differentiated barriers affecting women with disabilities, Indigenous women, female-headed households, older women, adolescent girls, displaced women, youth and other marginalized groups.

Where included, intersectional analysis appeared to strengthen project design by helping proposals identify more targeted measures for inclusion and benefit-sharing. For example, the Hydrological Status and Outlook System for Integrated Water Resources Management and Climate Resilience in Bangladesh and Nepal (HydroSOS-BaNe)(Bangladesh-Nepal proposal considered gender, age, ethnicity, ecosystem and livelihood differences in vulnerability and exposure analysis¹¹; the Viet Nam the Climate Resilient and Inclusive Water Infrastructure for Rural Smallholders (CRWIS) proposal identified women, youth, ethnic minorities, women-headed households and persons with disabilities as target groups for participation and benefits¹²; and the Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Extremes Across Diverse African Landscapes in Chad and Togo (ECOVERSE) Chad-Togo proposal considered how gender intersects with age, disability, socio-

¹¹ Hydrological Status and Outlook System for Integrated Water Resources Management and Climate Resilience in Bangladesh and Nepal (HydroSOS-BaNe), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Bangladesh and Nepal

¹² Climate Resilient and Inclusive Water Infrastructure for Rural Smallholders in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An Provinces (CRWIS), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Viet Nam

economic position, household headship, residential context and livelihood status¹³. Other proposals also used intersectional analysis to identify groups facing compounded barriers to information, services, decision-making, safety, and access to adaptation benefits¹⁴. Intersectionality added value where it helped proposals move from general statements about women’s vulnerability to a more precise understanding of which groups may be left behind, why they may be excluded, and what design measures are needed to reach them. This included targeted outreach, inclusive consultations, accessible information, disability-sensitive measures, representation of targets, tailored livelihood support, and monitoring of benefit-sharing. Overall, the examples suggest that intersectional analysis can strengthen quality at entry by making gender analysis more specific, targeted, and useful for project design.

3.1.2 Gender-Responsive Consultations

Stakeholder consultations were widely integrated into project preparation, with 92 per cent of submissions reporting consultations (100% of FPs & 90% of CNs). Across submissions with stakeholder consultations, 62.7 per cent included stakeholders with a gender remit. Among FPs, 71.4 per cent described specific arrangements to promote women’s participation, and 64.3 per cent included sex-disaggregated participant lists. These included separate consultations with women and men, consultations with women’s groups, scheduling meetings at convenient times and locations, providing childcare support, and creating safe spaces for women to articulate their priorities.

Several submissions used consultations not only to validate project design but also to identify gender-specific barriers. For example, HydroSOS-BaNe (WMO, Bangladesh and Nepal) engaged women’s associations and gender focal points and used gender-sensitive consultation approaches, including separate discussions with women and arrangements to facilitate their participation. CRWIS (IFAD, Viet Nam) conducted separate consultations with women and men, including ethnic minority communities, to understand gender-specific constraints related to agriculture, decision-making and access to resources. Similarly, ECOVERSE (OSS, Chad and Togo) used focus group discussions with women, youth and vulnerable households to identify differentiated vulnerabilities and inform inclusive adaptation measures.

Table 7: Quality of gender-responsive consultations in project proposals

Stakeholder consultation	Concept Notes (n=50)	Full Proposals (n=14)	Overall (n=64)
Stakeholder consultations included participation of stakeholders with a gender remit	26 (57.8%)	11 (78.6%)	37 (62.7%)
Stakeholder consultations included specific arrangements to promote women’s participation	N/A	10 (71.4%)	10 (71.4%)*
Stakeholder consultation included sex-disaggregated participant lists	N/A	9 (64.3%)	9 (64.3%)*

¹³ ECOVERSE, Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Extremes Across Diverse African Landscapes in Chad and Togo ,Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) ,Chad and Togo

¹⁴ Improving Food System Resilience of Vulnerable Communities in Nepal through Community-Based Adaptation ,World Food Programme (WFP) , NepalIncreased Climate Resilience of South Caucasus Mountain Communities and Ecosystems through Wildfire Risk Reduction,United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),Armenia and Georgia; Enhancing the Adaptive Capacity and Community Resilience to Climate Extremes and Fragility in Pastoralists and Agro-Pastoralists Communities in the Mendera Triangle , United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia

Submissions that included stakeholder consultations	45 (90%)	14 (100%)	59 (92.2%)
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*Percentages marked with “+” are calculated among FPs only (n=14), as these indicators were assessed for FPs

3.1.3 Gender Integration in Full Proposals

Table 8 presents the results of the Gender Scorecard analysis of gender integration in FPs at the point of submission, prior to Secretariat review. The analysis assesses the inclusion of key gender-responsive design elements, including gender-responsive indicators, interventions, Gender Action Plans, and grievance mechanisms for addressing gender-related concerns. Overall, the findings show that gender considerations were most consistently reflected in results frameworks, 92.9 per cent included gender-responsive indicators. These indicators commonly tracked women’s participation in adaptation activities, access to climate information and services, representation in community institutions, and access to project benefits. Nearly half of the FP (42.9%) explicitly included specific gender-responsive interventions. Gender-responsive interventions proposed included interventions to address women’s participation and leadership, targeted livelihood support, access to productive resources, capacity-building, and measures to reduce gender-specific barriers such as unpaid care burdens, mobility constraints and limited access to services.

Gender Action Plans (GAP) were less common at entry. Two FPs (14.3%) included GAPs. Some proposals included gender-related activities within project proposal components, but these were not always consolidated into a standalone implementation framework with clear responsibilities, timelines, resources, and monitoring arrangements. Since the review was conducted at the point of submission, this finding points to an opportunity for the proposal review process to strengthen gender planning where appropriate. Nearly a third of full proposals (28.6%) included grievance mechanisms that were explicitly capable of receiving and addressing complaints related to gender inequalities. More detailed examples included attention to confidentiality, safe reporting, SEAH-related risks, accessibility for women and vulnerable groups, and gender-sensitive feedback processes. However, many proposals referred only to general grievance mechanisms or did not specify how gender-related concerns would be safely reported and addressed.

Table 8: Gender-responsive design elements in Full Proposals at entry

Gender-responsive design element	Number	Percentage
Gender-responsive indicators included in the results framework	13	92.9
Specific gender-responsive interventions included	6	42.9
Gender Action Plan included	2	14.3
Grievance mechanism capable of receiving and addressing complaints related to gender inequalities included	4	28.6
Total Full Proposals reviewed	14	100.0

3.2 QUALITY DURING IMPLEMENTATION

During FY26, the Secretariat collected GSC data on 78 project performance reports (PPRs) across 68 projects. This section is based on information submitted by IEs on gender equality and women’s empowerment, compliance with the GP, implementation arrangements, gender-responsive interventions, lessons learned, capacity gaps, and grievances. Table 9 provides an

overview of the projects included in the FY26 GSC quality during implementation. Most projects were from Multilateral Implementing Entities (MIEs) (61.5%). National Implementing Entities (NIEs) accounted for 23.1 per cent, while Regional Implementing Entities (RIEs) accounted for 15.4 per cent. Most PPRs were from Africa (33.3%), Asia-Pacific (38.5%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (19.2%). PPRs from Eastern Europe (6.4%) and global or multi-region (2.6%) accounted for the remainder. Overall, 20.5 per cent of PPRs were from the first year of implementation (PPR 1); 15.4 per cent were from the third year of implementation (PPR 3), while 26.9 per cent were from the fifth year or beyond (PPR 5+).

Table 9: Projects PPRs reviewed for FY 26 GSC during implementation

Project Feature	Number of PPRs	Percentage
Type of Implementing Entity		
National Implementing Entities	18	23.1
Regional Implementing Entities	12	15.4
Multilateral Implementing Entities	48	61.5
Region		
Africa	26	33.3
Asia-Pacific	30	38.5
Eastern Europe	5	6.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	15	19.2
Global / multi-region	2	2.6
PPR Number		
PPR 1	16	20.5
PPR 2	13	16.7
PPR 3	12	15.4
PPR 4	16	20.5
PPR 5+	21	26.9
Total	78	100.0

Table 10 summarizes the FY26 GSC results quality during project implementation. Across the portfolio, 76.9 per cent of PPRs reported challenges related to gender equality and women's empowerment. 89.7 per cent reported that the IEs and executing entities (EEs) had put in place arrangements to comply with the GP during the reporting period. 79.5 per cent of PPRs implemented gender-responsive interventions, while 93.6 per cent reported gender-related lessons learned. Capacity gaps affecting compliance with the GP were reported by 7.7 per cent of PPRs, while gender-related grievances were reported by 6.4 per cent of the PPRs.

Table 10: Summary of GSC results during project implementation, FY26

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
PPRs that reported challenges/issues regarding gender equality and women's empowerment during implementation	60	76.9
PPRs that reported IE has put in place arrangements to comply with GP	70	89.7
PPRs that reported EE has put in place arrangements to comply with GP	70	89.7

PPRs that identified capacity gaps affecting GP compliance	6	7.7
PPRs that reported completed gender-responsive interventions	62	79.5
PPRs that reported lessons learned related to gender-responsive interventions	73	93.6
PPRs that reported having received grievances related to gender-related issues	5	6.4
Total	78	100

The following sections provide further details on the main areas captured through the FY26 GSC during project implementation. Building on the summary results presented in Table 10, the analysis examines the types of gender equality and women's empowerment issues reported, the arrangements put in place to comply with the GP, gender-responsive interventions implemented, lessons learned, capacity gaps, and grievances. The discussion draws on qualitative information reported by projects to illustrate the nature of the issues, actions, and lessons emerging during implementation.

3.2.1 Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Issues

The PPR template includes a section for IE to annually report on issues and challenges related to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) encountered during project implementation. More than three quarters of projects (76.9%) reported GEWE issues encountered during project implementation. These encompassed a range of practical and structural issues affecting women's participation, leadership, economic empowerment, and access to capacity-building opportunities within project activities.

Participation, representation and decision-making

Several projects reported challenges related to women's participation, representation, and decision-making during implementation. These challenges were not only logistical, but reflected deeper structural and gender-related barriers, including male-dominated governance structures, unequal care responsibilities, limited mobility, transport constraints, low confidence in mixed-group discussions, cultural norms, safety concerns and limited access to information. For example, in Sri Lanka, care responsibilities, transport constraints, limited confidence in mixed-group discussions affected women's ability to participate fully in mangrove (project) related activities¹⁵. In Lao PDR, women's participation was shaped by male-dominated local governance structures, with most village chiefs and local government staff being men¹⁶. Similar challenges were reported in projects in Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, Viet Nam, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, where women's underrepresentation in leadership, community structures, technical roles, and disaster preparedness systems limited their influence in project implementation. These findings suggest that low or uneven participation is not only a logistical issue, but also reflects underlying gender norms, limited mobility, and women's underrepresentation in local decision-making structures.

Several projects also highlighted that women's participation was constrained by time of poverty arising from the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care responsibilities, limiting their ability to attend training and consultations. For example, in Sri Lanka, women faced difficulties

¹⁵ Build Resilience to Climate Change and Climate Variability of Vulnerable Communities in Mullaitivu District of Sri Lanka, UN-Habitat, Sri Lanka

¹⁶ Enhancing the climate and disaster resilience of the most vulnerable rural and emerging urban human settlements in Lao PDR, UN-Habitat, Lao People's Democratic Republic

attending meetings because of care responsibilities and transport challenges¹⁷, and in Tunisia, women's workload, including seasonal work and household chores, affected their availability for training¹⁸. This shows that many participation barriers are manifestations of underlying gender norms that shape women's time use, mobility, and confidence.

Women's participation is not just a matter of attendance or numerical targets, but also about the quality of participation and whether women could meaningfully influence decisions. In the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) project¹⁹, meeting numerical participation targets alone did not guarantee genuine empowerment when women continued facing barriers such as childcare responsibilities, limited mobility, cultural norms, safety concerns, low confidence, lack of access to information, or limited influence in decision-making spaces²⁰. Vulnerable women may be disproportionately excluded where outreach methods, consultation formats or communication tools do not account for differences in literacy, disability, language, social status or access to information. As a result, women may attend activities yet still be constrained from expressing their views, challenging decisions, or shaping outcomes due to unequal power relations, social norms, or fear of backlash. The findings suggest that projects could benefit from moving beyond participation targets to better understand whether women and other vulnerable groups are able to access information, express priorities and influence project decisions.

Projects reported a range of measures to address these participation and representation challenges. These included encouraging women's representation in committees, setting participation targets, organizing separate or targeted consultations, adjusting meeting times and locations, strengthening women's leadership roles, and working through women's groups or local organizations. In Uganda, women were provided opportunities to serve in key executive positions in catchment management committees where chairperson roles were linked to local political leadership structures²¹. In Sri Lanka, venues were selected close to beneficiaries and meetings were scheduled at times convenient for women, with targeted follow-up support to strengthen women's voice and leadership. In Tunisia, training programmes were adjusted to women's availability through flexible scheduling. In Egypt, women-only sessions and female-friendly spaces were organized to encourage women's participation in project events and capacity-strengthening activities²². These findings suggest the importance of distinguishing between women's physical presence in activities and their meaningful participation in decision-making, reflecting stronger implementation reporting on the conditions needed for women to influence project decisions and benefit equitably from project activities.

Access to resources and adaptation benefits

The FY26 findings suggest that women's participation in project activities does not always translate into equitable access to resources, economic opportunities, or project benefits. While many projects reported improvements in women's participation, several also highlighted persistent inequalities in access to land, finance, productive assets, formal employment opportunities and control over the benefits generated by project investments. In Côte d'Ivoire, women involved in

¹⁷ Build Resilience to Climate Change and Climate Variability of Vulnerable Communities in Mullaitivu District of Sri Lanka, UN-Habitat, Sri Lanka

¹⁸ Economic, Social and Solidarity Insertion for Resilience in the Governorate of Kairouan – IESSAdapt, IFAD, Tunisia

¹⁹ The IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) region (also called the horn of Africa) in its entirety comprises of the countries - Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda.

²⁰ Strengthening drought resilience of small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, Regional: Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda

²¹ Enhancing Community Adaptation to Climate Change through Climate Resilient Flood Early Warning, Catchment Management and WASH Technologies in Mpologoma Catchment, Uganda, Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda, Uganda

²² Building Resilient Food Security Systems to Benefit the Southern Egypt Region – Phase 2, UN World Food Programme, Egypt

market gardening relied on informal land rental arrangements and could be relocated at any time, limiting their ability to invest in climate-resilient practices. Women also faced higher labor burdens because they lacked access to irrigated plots and labor-saving technologies²³. In response, the project supported five-year land-use agreements for beneficiaries, introduced solid rain technology to reduce watering time, and promoted community-based financing mechanisms to improve women's access to productive resources and economic opportunities. Similarly, in the Reducing climate vulnerability and flood risk in coastal urban and semi urban areas in cities in Latin America project, women participated actively in consultations and community engagement, but men captured most formal employment opportunities linked to project infrastructure works, while women mainly benefited through indirect or informal roles, highlighting unequal access to project-generated economic benefits²⁴.

In Sierra Leone, women's access to project benefits was constrained by limited access to land, credit and training within the rice and cocoa value chains, reducing their productivity and income potential. The project addressed these barriers through land agreement negotiations, provision of seeds and inputs, climate-resilient farming techniques through Farmer Field Schools, improved access to infrastructure, and inclusion of women in Farmer Based Organizations. As a result, the project exceeded its target of 40 per cent women's participation, women gained access, often for the first time to climate-sensitive extension services and water management infrastructure, and in some cases assumed local leadership roles²⁵. The findings point to the need to consider not only who participates, but also who accesses, controls and benefits from project resources and investments.

Projects reported several measures to address these barriers, including gender-sensitive beneficiary selection, support for women's access to finance, training, productive assets, and livelihood opportunities. In Egypt the project deliberately targeted women through small-scale livestock production, aquaculture, in-kind loans and revolving cycles to improve their access to productive assets, finance and income-generating opportunities. As a result, women represented 89 per cent of beneficiaries reached through targeted livelihood activities and 92 per cent of beneficiaries reached through in-kind loans and revolving cycles, demonstrating how deliberate targeting can help translate participation into tangible economic benefits and improved access to productive resources²⁶.

Safety and protection

Safety, GBV, SEAH and protection-related risks emerged as an important implementation issue because project activities may expose women and girls to protection risks if these are not adequately identified and managed. The findings suggest that women's ability to participate in and benefit from adaptation project interventions depends not only on access and inclusion, but also on whether participation can take place safely and without fear of violence, exploitation, harassment, discrimination or social backlash. These findings point to the importance of considering women's safety, dignity, and protection throughout implementation, including when designing consultations, training, community engagement, field activities, and grievance mechanisms.

²³ Strengthen the Resilience of Smallholder Farmers to the Effects of Climate Change through the Adoption of Proven Innovative Technologies and Practices, The Interprofessional Fund for Agricultural Research, Côte d'Ivoire.

²⁴ Reducing climate vulnerability and flood risk in coastal urban and semi urban areas in cities in Latin America, Development Bank of Latin America, Regional: Chile and Ecuador

²⁵ Promoting Climate Resilience in the Cocoa and Rice Sectors as an Adaptation Strategy in Sierra Leone IFAD/Sierra Leone

²⁶ Building Resilient Food Security Systems to Benefit the Southern Egypt Region — Phase 2, UN World Food Programme, Egypt

In Haiti, the project identified gender-based discrimination, limited opportunities for women in scientific and technical fields, and protection concerns affecting women and girls in school facilities as factors that could undermine women's resilience and safe participation in adaptation activities. In response, the project incorporated gender considerations into school assessments, contingency planning, staff training and awareness-raising activities, while promoting clean and accessible spaces and greater involvement of women and girls in climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities²⁷. In Cameroon, insecurity and violence, including kidnapping, assault, robbery and GBV, were reported as factors limiting the mobility and participation of women and young people, particularly young women²⁸. This highlights how protection and security risks can constrain women's ability to participate in and benefit from project activities. The IGAD project highlighted that women may face safety concerns, fear of backlash, communication barriers and exclusion from consultations, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities, illiterate women and single mothers. The findings highlight that women's presence in activities does not necessarily translate into safe or empowered participation where women are unable to voice concerns or influence decisions²⁹.

Where risks were reported, projects used grievance mechanisms, community engagement, awareness-raising, safer participation arrangements, and targeted support to reduce protection-related risks. For example, in Nepal, the project reported that women beneficiaries did not report incidents of safety or protection violations while participating in project events or visiting project sites and noted that women preferred to raise concerns through local community leaders, ward offices, municipalities, police stations or community members³⁰. These findings point to the importance of integrating protection measures, accessible grievance mechanisms, and survivor-centered approaches into project implementation to support safe and equitable participation in adaptation interventions.

3.2.2 Implementation arrangements to comply with AF GP

In FY26, 89.7 per cent of projects reported that IEs and EEs had put in place arrangements to comply with the GP. The findings suggest that projects operationalized the GP by (i) embedding gender commitments into project systems and implementation tools, (ii) assigning gender expertise and technical support to guide implementation, and (iii) establishing monitoring, supervision and accountability mechanisms to track progress, verify compliance and respond to implementation gaps.

Gender commitments in project systems and implementation arrangements

Several projects reported arrangements that embedded GP requirements into core project systems and procedures rather than treating gender as a standalone activity. These arrangements included integrating gender commitments into project implementation manuals, workplans, Terms of Reference (ToRs), agreements with executing partners, safeguards instruments, action plans, results frameworks and monitoring tools. For example, the Kyrgyz Republic project incorporated gender requirements into its project implementation manual, recruitment ToRs, Gender and Youth

²⁷ Implementing Measures for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Mitigation of School Facilities in Haiti, UNESCO, Haiti

²⁸ Increasing local communities' resilience to climate change through youth entrepreneurship and integrated natural resources management, IFAD, Cameroon

²⁹ Strengthening drought resilience of small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, Regional: Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda

³⁰ Adapting to Climate Induced Threats to Food Production and Food Security in the Karnali Region of Nepal, UN World Food Programme, Nepal

Action Plan and monitoring framework³¹, while projects in Central America and Peru integrated gender provisions into operational manuals, environmental and social management instruments, agreements with implementing partners and GAPs³². These approaches suggest that compliance was embedded into project governance, planning, and implementation systems rather than being managed through ad hoc activities. In Bangladesh, the GAP was reviewed annually, gender-related results were reported quarterly and biannually, and gender-responsive M&E training was used to support implementation³³. In Central America, gender requirements were incorporated into agreements, the Operations Manual, ESMP, GAP grievance redress mechanism, and supervision systems³⁴. In Peru, agreements with leading partners required application of the AF and IE environmental, social and gender policies and implementation of the project's GAP³⁵. This indicates that projects were more likely to establish systematic arrangements for GP compliance where gender commitments were formally reflected in project rules, procedures, agreements, and planning instruments. Such arrangements help institutionalize gender commitments beyond individual activities and create a basis for accountability during implementation.

Gender expertise and technical support for implementation

Several projects reported that compliance with the GP was supported through dedicated gender expertise, focal points, specialists and technical support arrangements. These arrangements helped operationalize gender commitments by assigning responsibility for gender mainstreaming, guiding project teams and executing partners, reviewing project tools, supporting implementation of GAP, and strengthening institutional capacity. For example, a Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist was recruited to strengthen institutional capacity and support follow-up on gender-related activities³⁶, while a gender specialist supported implementation and supervision of the Gender and Youth Strategy³⁷. In Sri Lanka, a Gender and Communication Analyst and a district-level Women Development Officer were assigned in the Build Resilience to Climate Change and Climate Variability of Vulnerable Communities in Mullaitivu District of Sri Lanka project to support gender mainstreaming across project activities.³⁸

The data also shows that IEs provided technical support to EEs to strengthen compliance with the GP. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, gender expertise was used to support planning, monitoring, reporting and the integration of gender considerations into ToR and beneficiary selection criteria³⁹. The results show that dedicated gender expertise was an important mechanism for translating policy commitments into implementation practice. These arrangements may support operationalization of the GP by assigning responsibility, guiding implementation partners, and strengthening institutional capacity.

³¹ Regional Resilient Pastoral Communities Project-ADAPT, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Kyrgyz Republic

³² Regional Resilient Pastoral Communities Project-ADAPT, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Kyrgyz Republic

³³ Adaptation Initiative for Climate Vulnerable Offshore Small Islands and Riverine Charland in Bangladesh, UN Development Programme, Bangladesh

³⁴ Use of Nature-based Solutions to Increase Resilience to Extreme Climate Events in the Atlantic Region of Central America, Central American Bank for Economic Integration, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras

³⁵ Fund for Innovative Adaptation in vulnerable ecosystems in North of Perú, Peruvian Trust Fund for National Parks and Protected Areas, Peru

³⁶ Regional Resilient Pastoral Communities Project-ADAPT, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Kyrgyz Republic

³⁷ Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience in the Montenegrin Mountain Areas-Gora, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Montenegro

³⁸ Build Resilience to Climate Change and Climate Variability of Vulnerable Communities in Mullaitivu District of Sri Lanka, UN-Habitat, Sri Lanka

³⁹ Scaling up climate-smart agriculture in East Guinea-Bissau, Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement, Guinea-Bissau

Monitoring, accountability and safeguarding arrangements

Several projects reported arrangements to monitor implementation of gender commitments and strengthen accountability for compliance with the GP. These included sex-disaggregated attendance templates, gender-sensitive indicators, project databases, supervision missions, gender audits, regular reviews of GAPs, grievance mechanisms and PSEA/SEAH-related measures. For example, in Mongolia, project teams used attendance templates, Excel databases and beneficiary records to monitor gender equity in participation, community organization composition and access to project benefits⁴⁰. Several projects complemented monitoring arrangements with accountability and safeguarding mechanisms. In Bangladesh, the project conducted a PSEA risk assessment, developed PSEA awareness materials, provided training on gender equality, PSEA and gender mainstreaming, and strengthened gender-responsive monitoring and reporting arrangements⁴¹. In the Colombia-Ecuador regional project, agreements with executing entities and partners included provisions on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, gender equality, protection, accountability to affected populations and zero tolerance for SEAH⁴². In Egypt, the project upgraded its complaints feedback mechanism and introduced a shortened hotline to improve beneficiaries' access to reporting channels⁴³.

Other projects reported grievance mechanisms, toll-free reporting lines, separate consultations, and community feedback systems designed to support safe, inclusive, and accountable participation. In El Salvador and Honduras, a gender-sensitive grievance mechanism was established and communicated across 75 communities, alongside measures to identify barriers to women's participation, including domestic and caregiving workload⁴⁴. In Mongolia, the project established a grievance redress mechanism using grievance boxes, email, phone, Facebook, website, complaint templates and training for field staff and community leaders on receiving, recording and reporting grievances⁴⁵. These findings suggest that projects are strengthening accountability for implementation of the GP through monitoring, supervision and reporting systems, alongside grievance and protection mechanisms. These arrangements provide a basis for tracking progress, identifying implementation gaps, and responding to concerns.

3.2.3 Gender-responsive interventions

In FY26, 79.5 per cent of projects reported implementing gender-responsive interventions. The qualitative data suggests that the reported interventions moved beyond women's participation alone and focused on three related objectives: strengthening women's participation and leadership in adaptation processes, improving women's access to adaptation benefits, and building women's capacities to engage in and sustain adaptation outcomes. Together, these interventions indicate an emphasis on addressing barriers that limit women's participation, access to resources and benefits, and ability to influence adaptation processes.

⁴⁰ Flood Resilience in Ulaanbaatar Ger Areas, UN-Habitat, Mongolia

⁴¹ Adaptation Initiative for Climate Vulnerable Offshore Small Islands and Riverine Charland in Bangladesh, UN Development Programme, Bangladesh

⁴² Building adaptive capacity through food and nutrition security and peacebuilding actions in vulnerable Afro and indigenous communities in the Colombia-Ecuador border area, UN World Food Programme, Regional: Colombia and Ecuador

⁴³ Building Resilient Food Security Systems to Benefit the Southern Egypt Region – Phase 2, UN World Food Programme, Egypt

⁴⁴ Strengthening the Adaptive Capacities of Climate-Vulnerable Communities in the Goascorán Watershed of El Salvador and Honduras through Integrated Community-Based Adaptation Practices and Services, UN World Food Programme, Regional: El Salvador and Honduras

⁴⁵ Flood Resilience in Ulaanbaatar Ger Areas, UN-Habitat, Mongolia

Participation, inclusion and leadership

Projects reported gender-responsive interventions and measures aimed at strengthening women's participation, representation and leadership in adaptation planning and implementation. These interventions sought to address practical, social, and institutional barriers that can limit women's ability to engage in consultations, community structures, and decision-making processes. Common measures included participation targets, transparent beneficiary selection processes, women-focused consultations, women-only sessions, leadership opportunities and requirements for women's representation in project governance structures. In Bangladesh, minimum female participation requirements were embedded into agreements with implementing partners, including at least 50 per cent women beneficiaries for farmers' training and livelihood support, minimum female participation in Cyclone Preparedness Programme training and equipment distribution, and prioritization of female-headed and vulnerable households for climate-resilient housing⁴⁶. In the IGAD (Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda) regional project, women's participation was required in committees, stakeholder consultations and project grant-related structures, including requirements for women's membership in committees that award competitive grants creating a favorable environment for increasing the presence of women in leadership positions⁴⁷.

Several projects reported adapting implementation approaches to create conditions for more meaningful participation. In Egypt, women-only sessions, female-friendly spaces, home visits by female volunteers, flexible scheduling and nearby training venues were used to encourage women's participation in project activities and village-level support committees⁴⁸. The project reported high levels of women's participation, including women representing 89 per cent of beneficiaries reached through one training intervention. Similarly, in Djibouti women comprised 52 per cent of local committee members. In the Colombia-Ecuador regional project, activities were scheduled around caregiving responsibilities, and a "Children's Corner" was established to facilitate mothers' participation⁴⁹. These approaches were complemented by efforts to strengthen women's leadership roles in local organizations, water governance structures, and climate reporting networks.

Projects also reported measures to expand women's influence on project implementation and decision-making. In Nepal, women's representation in user committees, community-based organizations and management structures increased their role in project scheme selection, implementation and monitoring⁵⁰. The reported examples were more comprehensive where projects combined participation targets with practical measures that addressed women's time, mobility, caregiving responsibilities, and representation. The reported examples illustrate that participation is not only about attendance, but also about women's ability to influence decisions and implementation processes.

Economic empowerment and access to productive resources

Women's vulnerability to climate change is often linked to unequal access to financial resources, land, productive assets, technologies, and livelihood opportunities. Adaptation interventions can strengthen women's resilience when they address these structural inequalities

⁴⁶ Adaptation Initiative for Climate Vulnerable Offshore Small Islands and Riverine Charland in Bangladesh, UNDP, Bangladesh

⁴⁷ Strengthening drought resilience of small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, Regional: Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda

⁴⁸ Building Resilient Food Security Systems to Benefit the Southern Egypt Region – Phase 2, UN World Food Programme, Egypt

⁴⁹ Building adaptive capacity through food and nutrition security and peacebuilding actions in vulnerable Afro and indigenous communities in the Colombia-Ecuador border area, UN World Food Programme, Regional: Colombia and Ecuador

⁵⁰ Adapting to Climate Induced Threats to Food Production and Food Security in the Karnali Region of Nepal, UN World Food Programme, Nepal

and enable women to benefit economically from climate adaptation investments. Projects reported interventions designed to improve women's access to adaptation benefits such as interventions focused on strengthening women's access to productive resources, finance, livelihood opportunities, infrastructure, services and technologies that support resilience and adaptive capacity. In Egypt, women were specifically targeted through livestock production, aquaculture, in-kind loans and revolving cycles. Women represented 92 per cent of beneficiaries reached through loan and revolving-cycle activities, illustrating a deliberate effort to improve women's access to productive assets and financial resources⁵¹. In Djibouti, interventions supported women's economic empowerment through income-generating activities, entrepreneurship training and participation in natural resource management. Women represented 64 per cent of direct beneficiaries of income-generating activities⁵².

Several projects addressed structural barriers that limited women's ability to benefit from project activities. In Côte d'Ivoire, women market gardeners with insecure land arrangements were supported through five-year land-use agreements, while the introduction of solid rain technology reduced watering time and labor burdens, improving working conditions and creating opportunities for women to engage in additional income-generating activities⁵³. As a result, "62 percent of women from Pluie solide and 48% from rice farming communities benefited equally with men from the opportunities of the project". In Jordan, access to productive land was expanded for 14,731 women-headed households, demonstrating an intervention focused on improving women's access to productive resources. In Georgia, the project prioritized women and youth in the allocation of grants for non-extractive activities, particularly greenhouses, and used a selection system intended to increase the share of women and youth among grant recipients⁵⁴. In Costa Rica, the project reported actions to strengthen women-led MSMEs, including training, field days, exchange opportunities, and improvements to calls for proposals to promote the participation of women and vulnerable groups⁵⁵.

Other interventions focused on improving women's access to adaptation-related infrastructure, technologies, and services. In Bangladesh, female-headed and vulnerable households were prioritized for climate-resilient housing and women were consulted during the design process to ensure housing reflected their needs and safety considerations⁵⁶. In Nepal, irrigation canals and water taps reduced the time women spent fetching water and supported agricultural production⁵⁷. In Armenia, women represented 66.3 per cent of beneficiaries of climate-smart technologies, 70 per cent of greenhouse beneficiaries and 95 per cent of solar dryer beneficiaries⁵⁸. The findings show that more comprehensive economic empowerment interventions were those that went beyond women's participation and reported concrete measures to improve women's access to capital, grants, livelihood assets, technologies, land-use arrangements and income-generating opportunities.

⁵¹ Building Resilient Food Security Systems to Benefit the Southern Egypt Region – Phase 2, UN World Food Programme, Egypt

⁵² Integrated Water and Soil Resources Management Project – PROGRES, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Djibouti

⁵³ Strengthen the Resilience of Smallholder Farmers to the Effects of Climate Change through the Adoption of Proven Innovative Technologies and Practices, The Interprofessional Fund for Agricultural Research, Côte d'Ivoire

⁵⁴ Dairy Modernization and Market Access: Adaptation Component — DiMMAdapt, International Fund Agricultural Development, Georgia

⁵⁵ Increasing the Resilience of Vulnerable Populations in Costa Rica by Scaling Up Adapta2+, Fundecooperación para el Desarrollo Sostenible, Costa Rica

⁵⁶ Adaptation Initiative for Climate Vulnerable Offshore Small Islands and Riverine Charland in Bangladesh, UN Development Programme, Bangladesh

⁵⁷ Adapting to Climate Induced Threats to Food Production and Food Security in the Karnali Region of Nepal, UN World Food Programme, Nepal

⁵⁸ Strengthening land-based adaptation capacity in communities adjacent to protected areas in Armenia, Environmental Project Implementation Unit, Armenia

Capacity development and strengthening skills

Women's and men's ability to participate effectively in adaptation depends on access to knowledge, technical skills, climate information, and leadership opportunities. Capacity development enables men and women to contribute to adaptation solutions and sustain outcomes beyond project implementation. Projects also reported interventions aimed at strengthening women's knowledge, technical skills, leadership capacities, and ability to engage in adaptation project activities. These interventions recognized that women's participation and access to benefits are often influenced by their ability to access information, develop technical competencies, and engage confidently in implementation and decision-making processes.

In Haiti, women, particularly civil engineering students and young professionals, participated in school-building assessments using the Visual Inspection for defining Safety Upgrading Strategies (VISUS) methodology, gaining experience in technical aspects of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction⁵⁹. In Lesotho, training supported the integration of weather and climate information into agriculture, strengthening the capacity of extension workers to tailor climate information to women farmers and other community members⁶⁰. Several projects adapted training approaches to respond to barriers faced by women and other underrepresented groups. In West Africa, the climate-resilient rice programme interventions included gender quotas, local languages, visual tools, farmer field schools, and peer mentoring to improve access to technical knowledge and skills⁶¹. Reporting showed that 488 officers and technicians were trained, including 107 women, while 262(101 women) participants attended workshops on tailored agro-meteorological information. Some projects also focused on strengthening capacities related to innovation and leadership. The Climate Adaptation Innovation Accelerator Programme uses gender diagnostics, coaching, self-assessments, gender sensitization, and mentoring to strengthen gender integration in climate adaptation solutions. The programme reported that women represented 45 per cent of bootcamp participants, 60 per cent of facilitators and 83 per cent of experts and speakers, while female leadership accounted for 25 per cent of selected early-stage ventures and 58 per cent of growth-stage ventures⁶². In Cambodia, training on climate-resilient housing construction techniques was provided to subcontractors and community laborers, including women, with the intention of strengthening local technical capacity and livelihood opportunities beyond the project⁶³. The findings suggest that several capacity development interventions went beyond awareness-raising to strengthen women's technical, professional and leadership capacities. These interventions were particularly important where project outcomes depended on women's ability to access climate information, engage with technical processes, utilize new technologies, and participate in adaptation planning and implementation.

3.2.4 Lessons learned

In FY26, 93.6 per cent of projects reported lessons learned related to gender-responsive implementation. The qualitative information shows that lessons were strongest where projects explained not only what was implemented, but also what was learned about improving participation, access to benefits, institutional accountability, and adaptive management. First, the reported

⁵⁹ Implementing Measures for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Mitigation of School Facilities in Haiti, UNESCO, Haiti

⁶⁰ Improving Adaptive Capacity of vulnerable and food insecure populations in Lesotho, UN World Food Programme, Lesotho

⁶¹ Scaling-up Climate-resilient Rice Production in West Africa, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, Regional: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

⁶² Climate Adaptation Innovation Accelerator Programme, UN World Food Programme, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan and Philippines

⁶³ Climate Change Adaptation through small-scale and protective infrastructure interventions in coastal settlements of Cambodia, UN-Habitat, Cambodia

lessons suggest that gender-responsive implementation is strengthened when gender commitments are embedded in project systems from the outset. In Bangladesh, official agreements with implementing partners included clear gender targets and were reported to improve compliance and accountability. The Climate Adaptation Innovation Accelerator Programme also highlighted the importance of embedding gender from inception, including through gender-responsive programming, human-centered design, gender tools, user mapping and mentoring for innovation ventures. These examples suggest that gender responsiveness is strengthened when it is integrated into project design, implementation arrangements, and accountability mechanisms from the beginning.

Second, projects reported that women's participation improves when implementation approaches are adapted to local realities and participation barriers. Several projects showed that participation depends on timing, location, facilitation, cultural norms, care responsibilities, and trust. In Sri Lanka, convenient meeting venues and times improved women's accessibility; in the Mekong EbA South project, female facilitators helped women share concerns about climate impacts; and in Micronesia, separate consultations led by locally trusted facilitators were identified as necessary in some outer island contexts⁶⁴. These lessons highlight that participation requires more than setting targets; it requires practical approaches that enable women to engage. Third, the lessons suggest that participation is most meaningful when women have opportunities to influence decisions, not only attend activities. In Indonesia, women's participation was reported as more meaningful when women held positions such as chair, treasurer and focal point in climate change village working groups and livelihood groups. Similarly, in Nepal, women's representation in user committees and community-based organizations supported their engagement in scheme selection, implementation, monitoring and operation of assets⁶⁵.

Finally, several projects showed that gender-responsive monitoring is most useful when data are used to adjust implementation. Bangladesh reported that disaggregated data helped identify disparities and support corrective measures, while Costa Rica highlighted the usefulness of forms, step-by-step guidance and tools to periodically verify gender considerations in monitoring. At the same time, some reports mainly described data collection or activities without explaining how the information was used, suggesting the need for clearer reporting on how gender data inform implementation decisions. Overall, the FY26 lessons suggest that gender-responsive adaptation is more effective when gender is treated as an integrated implementation approach rather than a standalone activity: embedded in project systems, adapted to local realities, translated into meaningful participation and access to resources, and strengthened through evidence and learning.

3.2.5 Capacity Gaps and Grievances

Capacity gaps affecting compliance with the GP were reported by 7.7 per cent of projects. Where details were provided, the gaps mainly related to limited institutional gender expertise, weak systems for collecting and using sex-disaggregated or socially disaggregated data, and limited awareness of GP requirements among project teams and partners. For example, one project reported low capacity among project teams to provide and track disaggregated data on minority

⁶⁴ Build Resilience to Climate Change and Climate Variability of Vulnerable Communities in Mullaitivu District of Sri Lanka, UN-Habitat, Sri Lanka; Mekong EbA South: Enhancing Climate Resilience in the Greater Mekong Subregion through Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the Context of South-South Cooperation, UN Environment Programme, Regional (Thailand, Viet Nam); Enhancing the Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Island Communities in Federated States of Micronesia, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Federated States of Micronesia.

⁶⁵ Safekeeping-Surviving-Sustaining towards Resilience: 3S Approach to Build Coastal City Resilience to Climate Change Impacts and Natural Disasters in Pekalongan City, Central Java Province, Partnership for Governance Reform (Kemitraan) of Indonesia, Indonesia; Adapting to Climate Induced Threats to Food Production and Food Security in the Karnali Region of Nepal, UN World Food Programme, Nepal.

target groups, including Indigenous peoples and internally displaced persons. In response, the IE recommended backstopping from a gender specialist and additional external thematic expertise⁶⁶. Another project reported more detailed institutional capacity gaps, including limited gender expertise among national executing entities, weak gender-disaggregated data systems, and insufficient awareness of GP requirements among some project staff and local partners. Reported responses included strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, integrating sex-disaggregated indicators into national monitoring frameworks, providing technical support to collect and report gender data, conducting awareness and sensitization activities, and planning a gender mainstreaming module for future regional training of executing entities, project staff and extension agents⁶⁷.

Gender-related grievances were reported in 5 PPRs, representing 6.4 per cent of PPRs reviewed. This low level of reporting should be interpreted cautiously, as it may reflect underreporting or uneven documentation rather than the absence of gender-related grievances. Where details were provided, the grievances related to project benefits, payment issues, registration processes, and accessibility of infrastructure or services. In Malawi, grievances included dissatisfaction with payout amounts in two communities, which particularly affected women farmers with smaller plots; delayed wages affecting workers, including women laborers; and early closure of registration, which excluded some farmers, especially women balancing multiple responsibilities. The project reported that these issues were addressed through dialogue meetings, discussions with contractors and workers, and extension of the registration period, and that the grievances were resolved⁶⁸. In Mongolia, the project reported receiving 30 grievances and feedback items during the reporting period, including requests for appropriate toilets for persons with disabilities, children with disabilities, and elderly household members. The project recorded the complaints in a logbook, informed communities in writing through the Community Development Council, and helped households connect with local structures or other water and sanitation projects where support fell outside the project target area⁶⁹. Capacity gaps affecting compliance with the AF GP were reported in 6 PPRs, representing 7.7 per cent of PPRs reviewed, while gender-related grievances were reported in 5 PPRs, representing 6.4 per cent. These figures should be interpreted cautiously. Low reporting of capacity gaps or grievances may reflect limited systems for identifying and documenting gender-related issues, uneven capacity to collect and report gender-disaggregated information, limited awareness of GP reporting expectations, or barriers that prevent affected people from raising sensitive concerns through formal grievance channels. The key issue is therefore not only the number of PPRs that reported such issues, but whether projects have the systems, capacity and reporting practices needed to identify, document and respond to them. Future reporting could be strengthened by encouraging projects to clearly describe the nature of capacity gaps or grievances, who were affected, what action was taken, whether the issue was resolved, and what lessons were learned for improving gender-responsive implementation.

⁶⁶ Increasing local communities' resilience to climate change through youth entrepreneurship and integrated natural resources management, IFAD, Cameroon

⁶⁷ Scaling-up Climate-resilient Rice Production in West Africa, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, Regional: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

⁶⁸ Adapting to climate change through integrated risk management strategies and enhanced market opportunities for resilient food security and livelihoods, WFP, Malawi)

⁶⁹ Flood Resilience in Ulaanbaatar Ger Areas – Climate Change Adaptation through community-driven small-scale protective and basic-services interventions, UN-Habitat, Mongolia

Box 2. Translating gender commitments into implementation practice: Bangladesh

The Adaptation Initiative for Climate Vulnerable Offshore Small Islands and Riverine Charland in Bangladesh provides an example of how Gender Policy commitments can be translated into implementation practice. The project identified a risk that women may not benefit equitably from climate change adaptation and capacity-building interventions because men occupy most leadership positions in the targeted communities. In response, gender inclusion requirements were embedded into Letters of Agreement with key implementing partners, including targets for women's participation in farmers' training and livelihood support, Cyclone Preparedness Programme volunteer training and equipment distribution, and prioritization of female-headed and vulnerable households for climate-resilient housing.

These commitments were supported by annual review of the Gender Action Plan, quarterly and biannual reporting on gender-related results, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation training, review of participant lists, monitoring of beneficiary selection, and oversight by the Project Implementation Committee, Project Steering Committee, Project Director, Gender Focal Point and UNDP Country Office Gender Analyst. The project also conducted a PSEA risk assessment and developed awareness materials to support safer implementation.

During the reporting period, female participation in Cyclone Preparedness Programme leadership training reached 34 per cent, 556 female volunteers received equipment, and women represented 51 per cent of participants in six community consultations in Lakkhitari Union. The project reported that embedding gender targets in partner agreements improved compliance and accountability, while disaggregated data helped identify disparities and support corrective measures.

This example shows how gender-responsive implementation can be strengthened when gender commitments are embedded in agreements, targets, monitoring systems, reporting processes and accountability structures.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The FY26 Quality at Entry findings indicate that gender considerations were reflected in many project proposals at first submission, although the depth and quality of integration varied. Gender analysis, stakeholder consultations, gender-responsive indicators, and consideration of gender-related vulnerabilities were commonly included, with the more developed submissions demonstrating a clear link between evidence and project design. These proposals used gender statistics, intersectional analysis and an understanding of local norms to identify barriers to participation, access to resources and project benefits, and translated these findings into context-specific gender responsive measures.

However, opportunities remain to strengthen the systematic translation of gender analysis into implementation and accountability arrangements, particularly through targeted gender-responsive interventions, GAPs, and grievance mechanisms. As the assessment was conducted prior to Secretariat technical review, the findings provide an important baseline of the quality of gender integration at entry and highlight the important role that the Secretariat review process can play in strengthening gender-responsive project design. They also provide insights into areas where additional guidance and capacity development may further strengthen the quality of proposals submitted by IEs.

The Quality During Implementation findings indicate that gender considerations are reflected in project implementation and reporting across the AF portfolio. Projects reported a broad range of gender-responsive interventions aimed at strengthening women's participation, leadership, access to resources, livelihoods and adaptive capacity, supported by institutional arrangements for implementing the GP. Reporting also documented GEWE issues, lessons learned, capacity gaps and grievances, providing valuable insights into implementation experiences and the practical application of gender-responsive adaptation approaches providing portfolio-level evidence on how gender considerations are being operationalized during implementation. Continued efforts to strengthen the consistency and quality of reporting would further enhance portfolio-level learning and support continuous improvement in the implementation of the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy.

The FY26 Gender Scorecard findings provide complementary evidence on how the GP is being operationalized across the project cycle. Quality at Entry provides a picture of the quality of gender integration in project design before Secretariat review, while Quality During implementation shows how gender commitments are translated into implementation and reported over time. Together, these two components provide a more complete understanding of how gender considerations are reflected at entry and reported during implementation, as well as opportunities for strengthening gender-responsive adaptation across the Fund's portfolio.

The most informative examples were those where evidence was used to inform project design and implementation, including decisions on participation, leadership, access to resources, livelihood support, and accountability mechanisms. Similarly, implementation reporting was most informative where it documented not only activities undertaken but also the challenges encountered, lessons learned and evidence of change. These findings suggest that the value of gender analysis lies not simply in its inclusion, but in its ability to inform evidence-based adaptation planning and implementation.

The findings also indicate that future efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming could focus on translating commitments into implementation and results. While proposals generally demonstrated stronger integration of gender analysis and monitoring frameworks, implementation and accountability measures, including targeted interventions, GAPs, grievance mechanisms and results reporting, were less consistently documented across the project cycle. Strengthening these elements could further support the systematic implementation, monitoring, and verification of gender-responsive commitments made during project design throughout project delivery.

Now in its third year of implementation, the GSC is beginning to generate a stronger portfolio-level evidence base on gender mainstreaming across the AF. Beyond monitoring implementation of the GP, the GSC is helping to identify recurring strengths, common challenges and emerging good practices across projects and IEs. As such, GSC has the potential to function not only as a monitoring instrument, but also as a portfolio-level learning and quality enhancement tool that can inform future guidance, capacity development, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. By strengthening both the quality of project design before approval and the evidence generated during implementation, the GSC can continue to support more effective, equitable and gender-responsive climate adaptation across the Adaptation Fund portfolio.