

# GCF insight: Gender mainstreaming

*GCF insight* seeks to understand what's working - and what's not working - in Green Climate Fund (GCF) project development. The surveys, interviews and reports spotlight the most topical GCF issues. This eighth edition explores the GCF's gender mainstreaming efforts and existing gender mainstreaming challenges and opportunities as perceived by Accredited Entities and NDAs.

## Spotlight on gender mainstreaming

The GCF's gender policy has been evolving over the last few years and the GCF has been making continuous efforts to integrate gender within its programming architecture.

According to the GCF's website, the Fund is the first climate finance mechanism that considers gender as an important decision-making element for the deployment of its climate finance<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of the GCF's gender mainstreaming requirements on accreditation and project formulation, assess the complexity of compliance processes with gender policy requirements, and the extent of buy-in to the importance of gender mainstreaming among National Designated Authority and Accredited Entities.

## Buy-in to gender mainstreaming

In 2017, the GCF launched its first manual on *Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects* and started reviewing its original gender policy and action plan, which had been adopted in 2015. The updated policy intends to improve gender mainstreaming guidance, processes and procedures throughout GCF operations. Among the proposed improvements are the introduction of a gender sensitivity rating at entry<sup>2</sup> for all projects and strengthening the competencies of the Secretariat, ITAP and

### Key findings

- 76% of the interviewed Accredited Entities and 46% of NDAs believe that gender mainstreaming is very important for the development and approval of GCF projects.
- Complying with the GCF gender standards for accreditation is regarded as moderately complex. Forty-one percent of Accredited Entities have been conditionally accredited inter alia due to their inability to meet gender standards.
- Meeting the GCF requirements for the concept note and full proposals is assessed between moderately challenging to complex.
- Over 90% of respondents (from both NDAs and Accredited Entities) are keen to improve their individual capacities to support gender mainstreaming.
- Readiness support for building institutional gender capacities is in a high demand.
- So far, only one project (FP042) has been conditionally approved due to the lack of a comprehensive gender analysis and action plan.
- The proposal for the new gender equality and social inclusion action plan until 2020 indicates that gender elements of the projects are likely to be assessed more thoroughly in the future.

### Survey overview

- 41 total respondents (23 from NDAs and 17 from entities) participated in the online survey of which 51% were men and 49% were women.
- Interviews were carried out with 7 selected respondents
- Conducted September - December 2017

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/mainstreaming-gender>, accessed 6 February 2018

<sup>2</sup> According to the GESI, the GCF may consider applying the OECD's Gender Equality Policy Intention Marker.

Accreditation Panel to assess the compliance with gender requirements of the GCF's gender policy. Accredited Entities and NDAs are expected to play major roles in the implementation of the GCF's gender policy and the GCF has asked for their feedback on the proposed Gender and Social Inclusion policy and a new gender action plan for 2018-2020.

According to our survey results, four NDAs stated that they were invited to provide comments on the GCF gender policy and action plan, but only one NDA submitted comments. Accredited Entities showed a higher level of involvement, seven Accredited Entities confirmed that they were invited to comment and four provided their feedback on the GCF's Gender policy and action plan.

Despite the fact that 71% of all respondents confirmed that they work with gender issues, the awareness of the latest GCF gender developments is not strong, especially among NDAs - 61% of NDAs and 6% of Accredited Entities are not aware of the GCF gender guidelines; and 61% of NDAs and 47% of Accredited Entities are not aware of the GCF's Gender policy and action plan.

## Accreditation

For accreditation, interested entities are required to have policies, procedures and competencies in place addressing GCF's gender policy. The opinion of the complexity of meeting gender requirements within the accreditation processes varies among Accredited Entities that we surveyed as part of this study. Thirty-eight percent of interviewed Accredited Entities believe that meeting gender requirements for accreditation is challenging, and 44% of Accredited Entities reported that meeting gender standards for accreditation is

The survey results indicate that gender mainstreaming is recognised as an important topic not only by the GCF, but also by Accredited Entities and NDAs. Most notably, 76% of the interviewed Accredited Entities and 46% of NDAs believe that gender mainstreaming is "very important" for the development and approval of the GCF projects.

There are, however, no formal GCF requirements obliging NDAs to have a gender policy: 42% of interviewed NDAs appeared to have such a policy in place and 38% are planning to develop one in the nearest future.

Overall, a number of Accredited Entities and NDAs provided very positive comments on the importance of prioritising gender issues when dealing with climate change and flagged the need for improving gender competencies across all staff members while avoiding treating gender issues as a niche subject.

According to the survey, over 90% of respondents (from both NDAs and Accredited Entities) are keen to improve their individual capacities to support gender mainstreaming.

moderately complex. The evidence from the GCF's Board documents shows that over 50% of Accredited entities received comments and recommendations related to compliance with the GCF's gender standards. Not being able to meet the GCF's gender standards was one of the reasons for conditional accreditation for 41% of Accredited Entities, implying that no disbursements could be made unless an Accredited Entity develops an adequate gender policy, which is fully aligned with the GCF gender policy.

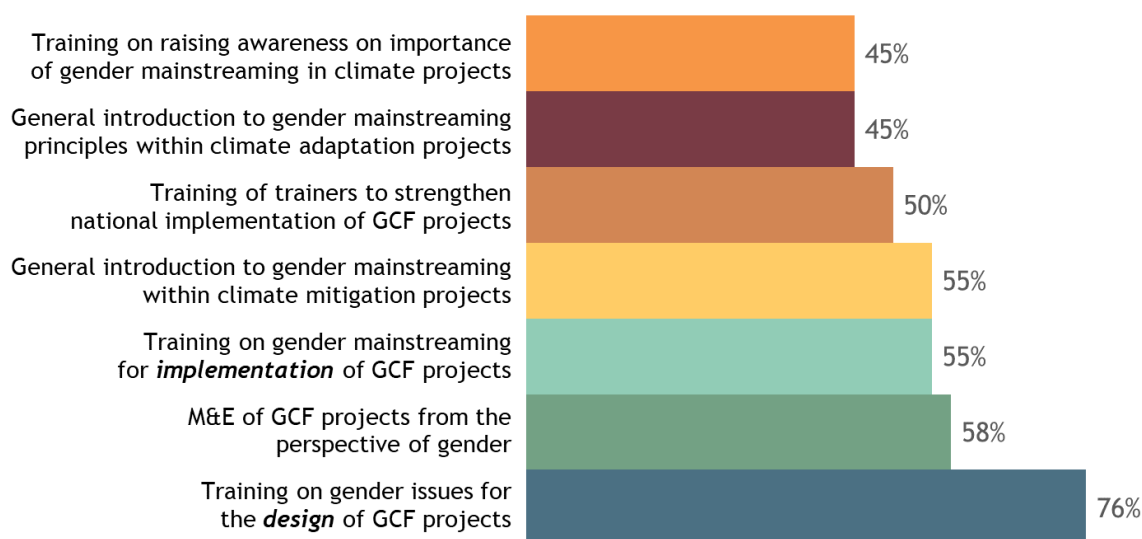
## Building gender mainstreaming capacity

The demand for readiness support to build gender capacity is considerable - 96% of the NDAs respondents confirmed that they would like to receive training on gender mainstreaming, particularly on the integration of gender considerations within climate change mitigation projects and on specific

GCF's requirements related to the development of gender analysis, gender sensitive consultations, gender action plans, gender sensitive results frameworks and budgets. Furthermore, 59% of Accredited Entities noted that they are very likely to request readiness support (from the GCF or

others) for the development of gender mainstreaming capacity within their countries of operation. Accredited Entities and NDAs were asked to identify their top 3 individual capacity development needs, and those of their organisation to improve gender mainstreaming. Training on gender issues for the design of GCF projects, including (1) conducting gender analysis and (2) gender sensitive consultations, (3) development of gender action plans, (4) gender sensitive results frameworks and (5) budgets stood out as the greatest need, receiving 76% of the

votes (see the figure below). For organisations, ‘providing access to tools and guidelines’ and ‘increasing staff skills and knowledge’ were the highest needs selected (71 and 66% respectively). At 50% and 47% respectively were ‘Allocating financial resources’ and ‘Building awareness among employees’. Prioritising gender issues at senior levels (39% of respondents) and allocating human resources (32%) were not high priorities compared the need for tools, guidelines, skills and knowledge.



Top individual training needs identified to improve capacity for gender mainstreaming

## Gender mainstreaming in project development

In Concept Notes, accredited entities should consider gender issues within the baseline analysis of their project proposals. For Full Proposals, entities need to develop a full gender assessment and a gender action plan. The majority of Accredited Entities reported that complying with gender requirements for both a Concept Note and a Full Proposal is “moderately challenging”.

As commented by a number of gender experts from civil society organisations, the quality of gender assessment and gender action plans varies considerably across the GCF’s portfolio and the capacity of the GCF staff (including Board Members, the Secretariat and the ITAP) to evaluate and address gender issues has, in their view, been low.

Feedback from interviews with Accredited Entities indicated that, the development of gender action plans and gender assessments can be resource demanding and it often involves hiring gender consultants. The survey showed that 59% of surveyed Accredited Entities have a gender specialist staff member who is available to support the development of the GCF projects.

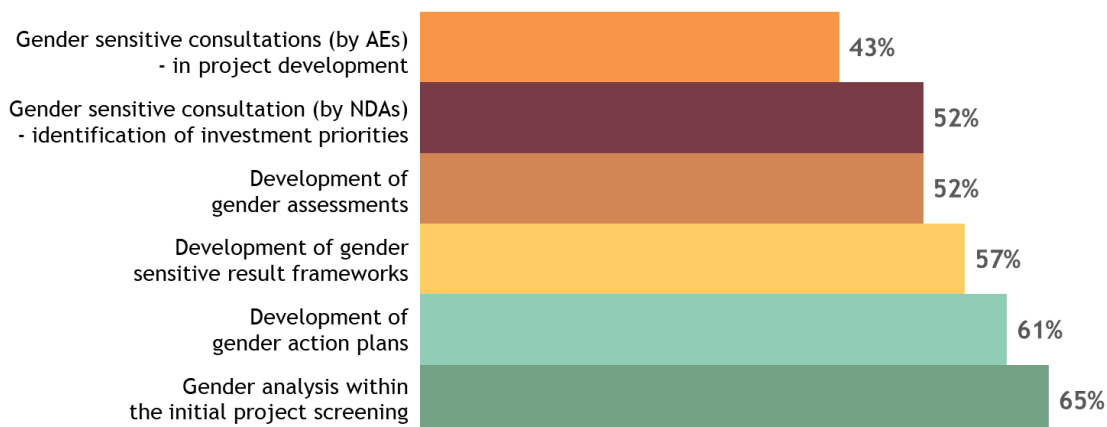
Among those who are aware of the GCF gender guidelines, only 40% stated that they use the guidelines frequently.

NDAs reported that they are mostly involved with gender issues within project identification (61%), followed by the implementation of no-objection procedures, for instance, reviewing the gender

responsiveness of project proposals submitted by Accredited Entities (28%).

Over 50% of NDAs are convinced that the incorporation of gender analysis in the initial

screening of the projects, the development of gender action plans, gender sensitive results frameworks, and gender assessments contribute to better quality proposals (see below).



### NDA view of gender mainstreaming activities that improve the quality of projects

According to the GCF’s gender equality and social inclusion action plan for 2018-2020, the GCF is planning to increase gender competencies of staff and introduce two portfolio indicators: (1) the percentage of adaptation and mitigation projects that include specific gender elements and gender-sensitive implementation arrangements and (2) the number of gender-related complaints resolved by Implementing Entities and Executing Entities. So far, there has been

little evidence that a lack of gender considerations in project proposals has delayed the approval of those projects. Only one project (FP042) has been conditionally approved due to the lack of a comprehensive gender analysis and action plan. However, considering the latest gender developments at the GCF, it is likely that projects will be more thoroughly scrutinized in the future from the perspective of gender mainstreaming.

#### About this survey and report

This survey is an initiative of E Co., emerging from work we are doing to develop low-carbon, climate resilient projects. E Co.’s team of consultants designed and administered the survey and prepared this report. E Co. has conducted this research independently and is not affiliated with the GCF, the GCF Secretariat or donors. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not represent those of the GCF.

#### About E Co.

We are a UK-based consulting company with a long track record in low-carbon, climate-resilient project formulation. We believe that the GCF can make a substantial and lasting change in the world, and we are doing all we can to help it do that. As a consulting company, we are leading the way and we are happy to share the lessons with the GCF community to make all GCF projects better. We would love to hear your thoughts on this edition of *GCF insight*. Please get in touch by email or phone.

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